




## 19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century, No 9 (2009)

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### 'Have the elder races halted?': British Socialist Readings of 'Pioneers! O Pioneers!'

Kirsten Harris

#### Abstract

*This short essay analyses British socialist readings of Walt Whitman's 'Pioneers! O Pioneers!' and explores some of the ways in which the poem was appropriated for the socialist movement. Despite its overt American nationalism, 'Pioneers' was one of the key Whitman poems for British socialists: extracts were frequently reprinted in socialist newspapers and periodicals, it was referred to in articles and obituaries, and it was invoked in speeches. It was assimilated into a familiar fin de siècle socialist spiritual discourse and used directly as political propaganda. This paper discusses the means by which the 'Americanness' of 'Pioneers' was either overlooked or actively edited out and its militaristic components were emphasised. By focusing on the martial imagery and rhetoric of 'Pioneers', nineteenth-century British socialists were able to translate Whitman's call to America into a rallying cry for the extension of a global socialist democracy.*

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