




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Home > No 9 (2009) > Steinroetter

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### 'Pioneers! O Pioneers!' and Whitman's Early German Translators

Vanessa Steinroetter

#### Abstract

*This response to Kirsten Harris's essay on British socialist reactions to Walt Whitman's poem "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" traces some of the political and cultural issues raised by Harris in the context of Whitman's early German translators, inviting a comparative discussion of key aspects of the poem's transatlantic reception in these two important European cultural contexts. While Whitman's poetry often represented an ideal vehicle for progressive and even revolutionary messages in the eyes of his early German translators, its political complexity and ambiguity allowed it to appeal to translators and readers of different, sometimes even opposed political leanings, both left and right. Given the interest that 'Pioneers!' held for British socialists, as Harris describes, the poem's translation history in Germany provides an intriguing counterpoint in some notable aspects. It seems to have been largely ignored by early German socialists, while for the nationalist Wilhelm Schölermann, one of the first German translators of Whitman's poetry to include the poem in his selection (1904) and single it out for its significance, the poem was of special interest as a vision of what his country could aspire to after a cultural rebirth.*

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