



Democratic Vistas: The Original Edition in Facsimile

Walt Whitman , Ed Folsom

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Democratic Vistas: The Original Edition in Facsimile

Walt Whitman , Ed Folsom

Democratic Vistas: The Original Edition in Facsimile Walt Whitman , Ed Folsom

Written in the aftermath of the American Civil War during the ferment of national Reconstruction, Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas* remains one of the most penetrating analyses of democracy ever written. Diagnosing democracy's failures as well as laying out its vast possibilities, Whitman offers an unflinching assessment of the ongoing social experiment known as the United States. Now available for the first time in a facsimile of the original 1870–1871 edition, with an introduction and annotations by noted Whitman scholar Ed Folsom that illuminate the essay's historical and cultural contexts, this searing analysis of American culture offers readers today the opportunity to argue with Whitman over the nature of democracy and the future of the nation.

Living in Washington, D.C., where Congress granted male African Americans the right to vote nearly five years before the fifteenth amendment extended that right across the nation, and working for the office charged with enforcing the new civil rights amendments to the Constitution, Whitman was at the volatile center of his nation's massive attempt to reconstruct and redefine itself after the tumultuous years of civil war. In the enduring cultural document that *Democratic Vistas* has become, the great poet of democracy analyzes the role that literature plays in the development of a culture, the inevitable tensions between the "democratic individual" and the "democratic nationality," and the corrosive effects of materialism on the democratic spirit

His own conflicting racial biases notwithstanding, Whitman in *Democratic Vistas* offers his most eloquent and extended articulation of the beckoning American democratic future. At a time when the nation has elected a president whom Whitman could never have imagined, his controversial and provocative book is a timely reminder of those occasions when we experience the expansion of America's democratic dream.

Democratic Vistas: The Original Edition in Facsimile Details

Date : Published April 10th 2009 by University Of Iowa Press

ISBN : 9781587298707

Author : Walt Whitman , Ed Folsom

Format : Paperback 214 pages

Genre : Literature

 [Download Democratic Vistas: The Original Edition in Facsimile ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Democratic Vistas: The Original Edition in Facsimile ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Democratic Vistas: The Original Edition in Facsimile Walt Whitman , Ed Folsom

From Reader Review Democratic Vistas: The Original Edition in Facsimile for online ebook

Illiterate says

Mystical poetry doesn't translate well into social and political theory. It collapses into vacuous abstraction, empty optimism, and cultural imperialism.

Kirsten says

stop whitman u are not a politician

Abby says

Democratic Vistas is a long essay written by Walt Whitman shortly after the end of the Civil War. In this essay, Whitman argues that the United States has never been able to embrace the democratic spirit. Yet he doesn't believe that the United States will engender democracy through policy changes (like suffrage, Reconstruction, campaigns for civil rights), but through producing a democratic literature. In his essay, he charges the "literatus," a priestly class [of writers] that can speak to common people," to write a literature that embraces populism and challenges elitist structures. Through literature, he believes that the American people can reconnect with their inner spirit--a universalist spirit that can connect them with the whole of humanity and nature.

There are things that I really love about transcendentalist writing: I love the charge to connect with an inner self that is linked to the universe. In my darkest moments, I find this a powerful idea to meditate upon. I also like the idea that writers who write honestly and compassionately can effect change. Art can act as impetus for social change; this I believe.

But it's also pretty irritating to read Whitman dismiss campaigns for increased suffrage and civil rights. He makes it clear that he isn't opposed to either, he just doesn't think it really matters. In this sense, I would caution anyone reading Democratic Vistas to read it skeptically. Question Whitman when he makes assertions you don't agree with it. I'd like to think that Whitman would like this.

Democratic Vistas isn't the easiest read--it's winding, clearly written out of order, and its sentence structure can be challenging. But it's a really interesting historical document and under-read 19th century text that fundamentally interrogates what democracy is and thinks through how to get there.
