

with the fact that there exists a wide range of emotional attachments and sexualities. Whitman identifies a neglected dimension of this struggle when he focuses on the relative absence of a lexicon of love and friendship.

Not at all uncommon in the present era is the editorial sanitizing of movies and television programs, the purging of high school reading lists, the bowdlerizing of textbooks and other classroom materials, the "regulation" of so-called adult bookstores, and the removal of books from library shelves. Usually performed in the name of wholesomeness or morality, such practices often reflect instead a lack of candor, prudery, intellectual dishonesty, and ignorance of the concept of aesthetic integrity. Acts of censorship also afflicted the 19th century, and Whitman roundly condemns them in *An American Primer*: "The blank left by words wanted, but unsupplied, has sometimes an unnamably putrid cadaverous meaning. It talks louder than tongues. What a stinging taste is left in that literature and conversation where have not yet been served up by resistless consent, words to be freely used in books, rooms, at table, any where, to specifically mean the act male and female."

Although fragmentary, rambling, and occasionally marred by loutish assertions (e.g., "masturbation [and] inordinate going with women . . . rot the voice"), *An American Primer* makes for delightful and stimulating reading. Perhaps above all else, as Gay Wilson Allen states in his eight-page "Afterword," the booklet is "really a prose poem." The Holy Cow! Press deserves congratulations for getting the work back into print.

—Donald D. Kummings
University of Wisconsin—Parkside

Edward F. Grier, ed. *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts*, by Walt Whitman. New York: New York University Press, 1984. 6 vols. 2354 pp. \$395.00.

Whitman's idea of inventing "A New Way" of writing "History Geography Ethnology Astronomy &c &c &c by long lists, dates,

terms, summary paragraphic statements, &c." might well serve as key and coda to the six-volume edition of *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts*, edited by Edward F. Grier (V, 1614). These manuscript notes and lists and daybooks and diaries span half a century, from Whitman's years as a political journalist in the forties to his death in 1892.

The *Notebooks* is part of the *Collected Writings of Walt Whitman*, under the general editorship of Gay Wilson Allen and Sculley Bradley. Volumes already published by New York University Press include *The Correspondence* (5 vols., 1961-69), *The Early Poems and Fiction* (1963); *Prose Works 1892* (2 vols., 1963); *Leaves of Grass: A Comprehensive Reader's Edition* (1965); *Daybooks and Notebooks* (3 vols., 1978); and *Leaves of Grass: A Textual Variorum* (3 vols., 1980). Future volumes will include Whitman's *Journalism: a Manuscript Variorum of Leaves of Grass*; and a *Bibliography*.

In the beginning stages of the project, Whitman's prose manuscripts were to be coedited by William White and Edward Grier in a collection titled *Notebooks, Diaries, and Miscellany*. The task of editing was divided, so that William White was to edit the manuscripts in Charles Feinberg's massive collection of Whitman material (now in the Library of Congress); and Edward Grier was to edit "everything else." Since Mr. White finished first, his edition was published in 1978 as *Daybooks and Notebooks*. Now with the publication of Mr. Grier's *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts* this monumental editorial project is complete.

The product of two decades of exhaustive bibliographic work, Mr. Grier's collection is "a scholarly edition of all Whitman's notebooks and all of his miscellaneous prose manuscripts left incomplete or unpublished, except those in the collection of Mr. Charles E. Feinberg." The edition also includes material from the Feinberg Collection not published in *Daybooks and Notebooks*. "Since some forty of the manuscripts left unpublished, especially those before 1865, are of striking importance, I have taken them on at the last minute as my responsibility," Mr. Grier explains in his Introduction.

These *Notebooks* cull Whitman material from libraries throughout the country, including Duke University (The Trent Collection), the University of Virginia (The Barrett Collection), the University of Texas (The Hanley Collection), the New York Public Library (The Berg Collection), and the Library of Congress. The collection also includes material drawn from already published works, including Richard Maurice Bucke's *Notebooks and Fragments* (1902), Emory Holloway's *Uncollected Poetry and Prose* (1921), Clifton Furness's *Walt Whitman's Workshop* (1928), Charles I. Glicksberg's *Walt Whitman and the Civil War* (1933), and Clarence Gohdes and Rollo G. Silver's *Faint Clues and Indirections* (1949).

Over half the material in this collection has never been published before. Now for the first time, both published and unpublished manuscripts can be found in a single collection. For this reason alone, the six volumes are well worth their price of \$395.00. But the collection offers much more. In fact, Mr. Grier's *Notebooks* along with Mr. White's *Daybooks* were the only editions in *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman* to receive the designation "An Approved Edition" from the Modern Language Association's Center for Scholarly Editions.

The material in the *Notebooks* is divided into Manuscripts and Notes: the first three volumes of Manuscripts are organized chronologically under the titles Family Notes and Autobiography, and Brooklyn and New York (volume I); Washington (volume II); and Camden (volume III). The three volumes of Notes are organized topically as follows: Proposed Poems, Explanation/Introductions to *Leaves of Grass*, Attempts to Define the Poet's Role and Tradition, and Needs of American Literature (Volume IV); Study Projects, Words, American Writers, English Writers, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Scandanavian and Classical Writers; English History, World History, United States Geography, World Geography, and Natural History (Volume V); and Philosophy, History of Religion, Religion, American Politics, Slavery, Education, Oratory, and Health (Volume VI).

All of the items in the collection are accompanied by detailed headnotes giving the location and physical condition of the manuscript, a

possible date, and other pertinent information about the relation of the material to Whitman's life and work. Each new item is presented on a separate page, with Whitman's numerous changes, deletions, and revisions indicated in copious footnotes; explanatory notes are included along with the textual notes at the bottom of the page. The entire edition has a clean, uncluttered appearance making the material easy and even pleasant to read.

In collecting Whitman's notebooks and miscellaneous prose manuscripts Edward Grier had to surmount several major difficulties. First, there is the problem of dating individual manuscripts—a task to which Mr. Grier sets himself with admirable perseverance and zeal. In fact, his detective work on individual manuscripts is often breathtaking, as he examines internal and external evidence to arrive at a probable date or range of dates wherever possible. Because several manuscripts have been lost—including ten notebooks that disappeared from the Library of Congress under mysterious circumstances—Mr. Grier sometimes has to rely on printed versions of his editorial predecessors, including Clifton Furness and Richard Maurice Bucke, who frequently ran disparate manuscripts together in the interest of creating a coherent text.

The problem of establishing an accurate text is complicated by Whitman's own self-conscious representation—and misrepresentation—of himself even in his manuscript notes. He was not above erasing and altering evidence, particularly related to his intimate emotional relationships with men. Thus, in his notes on his relationship with the streetcar driver Peter Doyle, with whom he maintained close ties for over a decade, Whitman erased *he* and substituted *she* in some of his notes. In the following note, for example:

Cheating, childish abandonment of myself, fancying what does not really exist in another, but all the time in myself alone—utterly deluded & cheated by *myself*, & my own weakness—REMEMBER WHERE I AM MOST WEAK, & most lacking. Yet always preserve a kind spirit & demeanor to 16 [code number for P]. PURSUE HER NO MORE (II, 887).

Whitman originally wrote PURSUE HIM NO MORE, then erased HIM and substituted HER. In another note, written in July 1870, he made the same kind of erasures:

TO GIVE UP ABSOLUTELY & for good, from the present hour, this FEVERISH, FLUCTUATING, useless UNDIGNIFIED PURSUIT OF 16.4—too long, (much too long) persevered in,—so humiliating—It must come at last & had better come now—(It cannot possibly be a success) LET THERE FROM THIS HOUR BE NO FALTERING, NO GETTING at all henceforth, (NOT ONCE, UNDER any circumstances)—avoid seeing her, or meeting her, or any talk or explanations—or ANY MEETING WHATEVER, FROM THIS HOUR FORTH, FOR LIFE (II, 888-89).

Whitman originally wrote—“avoid seeing him, or meeting him, or any talk or explanations.” He was also not above destroying manuscripts and letters, which he did in the years 1873 and 1888; thus, most of Doyle’s correspondence with Whitman is missing.

On the other hand, one of the most striking features of the notebooks is the number of men who are named and described. The first of these long “lists” of men appears around 1856-57, but he may have begun keeping similar records of his encounters at an earlier date. The following note is part of a list of titles and names—mostly men—that spans 29 manuscript pages:

Bill—(big, black round eyes, large coarse (formerly
Madison Jo—(smallish gallus
on Fort Greene (Irish descent playing ball).
Playing ball Abe (round red pleasant grayish
keeping tally
John Campbell, round light complex lymphatic, good-
look
John (light complex—light gray eyes light hair
Tom Gray—smallish (legs)

Edward Smithson (20) full-eyed genteel boy I meet often
at the ferries—
Irish or English
Jack Swinton English (23) at Showery’s porter Lewis
(in Bangs & Platts)
William Phillips—large, light, No 8 engine) (26)
Leo (22) No 8 engine (in Showery’s)
Henry Post (stout, mechanic, (26)
George Applegate (tallest)
Bob Fraser (28) policeman (5-6), slow mild Cor Myrtle &
Raymond (I, 249)

One entry in this list reads “Bob—(hermaphrodite [?],” a possible reference to Bob’s sexual identity and habits at a time when neither the term *homosexual* nor *gay* existed to describe physical love among men. Perhaps Whitman intended to transform some of these lists into poems. A notebook entry written around 1860 under the title “*Companions*, (viz *Poems—Cantos*—of my various Companions—each one to be celebrated in a verse by himself or herself” suggests that he was planning a sequence of poems to his companions. Had he followed through, the poems would have represented a complete departure from his usual practice of representing individuals in the abstract rather than presenting poetic portraits of his actual acquaintances.

Even those scholars who are fairly familiar with Whitman’s manuscripts will, I think, find this new collection consistently absorbing and informative. The *Notebooks* clearly mark the process whereby several prose notes, written between 1846 and 1855, were transformed into the free verse poems of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1855). One note reads:

I will not descend among professors and capitalists—I
will turn up the ends of my trowsers around my boots,
and my cuffs back from my wrists, and go with drivers
and boatmen and men that catch fish or work in the field.
I know they are sublime (I, 67).

This prose note was later transformed into Whitman’s vision of himself around the chowder-kettle in “*Song of Myself*”:

The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early and stopt me,
I tuck'd my trowser-ends in my boots and went and had a
good time;
You should have been with us that day round the
chowder-kettle.

(LGC, p. 37)

An entry from what appears to be one of Whitman's earliest notebooks indicates that he initially planned "Song of Myself" as a poem in the third person:

Poem incarnating the mind of an old man, whose life has been magnificently developed—the wildest and most exuberant joy—the utterance of hope and floods of anticipation—faith in whatever happens—but all enfolded in Joy Joy Joy, which underlies and overtops the whole effusion (I, 102).

Whitman's famous lines from "Song of Myself"—"I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there"—were originally written in the third person: "All this he swallows in his soul, and it becomes his, and he likes it well, he is the man; he suffered, he was there" (I, 109).

Lest there is still any doubt, the *Notebooks* will completely undo the image of Whitman as a spontaneous, careless, and relatively haphazard creator. Whitman's famous masturbatory sequence in section 28 of "Song of Myself" was worked and reworked in his notebooks. The following lines are an early version of the conclusion of the "Touch" sequence:

Unloose me touch you are taking the breath from my
throat
Unbar your gates—you are too much for me.—
Fierce Wrestler! do you keep your heaviest grip for the
last?
Will you sting me most even at parting?
Will you struggle even at the threshold with spasms more
delicious than all before?
Does it make you ache so to leave me?

Do you wish to show me that even what you did before
was nothing to what you can do
Or have you and all the rest combined to see how much I
can endure
Pass as you will; take drops from my life if that is what
you are after
Only pass to some one else, for I can contain you no
longer.
I held more than I thought
I did not think I was big enough for so much exstasy
Or that a touch could take it all out of me

(I, 77)

In the final version of "Song of Myself," the poet's sexual confusion and his apparent loss of control in this heavily edited and suggestively (homo)erotic passage is contained in an economical four lines:

You villain touch! what are you doing? my breath is tight
in its throat,
Unclench your floodgates, you are too much for me.

Blind loving wrestling touch, sheath'd hooded sharp-
tooth-d touch!
Did it make you ache so, leaving me?

(LGC, p. 58)

The first poem in *Calamus*, "In Paths Untrodden," is similarly worked and reworked in the notebooks, as Whitman seeks to articulate the "not yet publish'd" standard of love among men. The opening lines of the poem initially read:

Long I was held by the life that exhibits itself,
By what is done in the houses, or the streets, or in
company,
The usual pleasures and aims—the intercourse to which
all conform, and which the writers celebrate
But I escape and celebrate the untold and carefully
concealed life,

I celebrate the need of the love of comrades.

(I, 406)

The final version is more coded and ambiguous: the poet's escape from "the intercourse to which all conform, and which the writers celebrate" becomes an escape "From all the standards hitherto publish'd, from the pleasures, profits, conformities"; and his desire to "celebrate the untold and carefully concealed life" is rewritten as a desire "To tell the secret of my nights and days,/To celebrate the need of comrades" (*LGC*, 112-113).

Ideas that began as prose notes often gestated for years before they were transformed into poems or prose works. Parts of Whitman's projected lecture on "Slavery—The Slaveholders," which was begun around 1846, were transformed into lines in his early political poems, "The House of Friends" (1850), "Dough-Face Song" (1850), "Blood Money" (1850), and "A Boston Ballad" (1854). Later, Whitman drew upon his 1856 political pamphlet "The Eighteenth Presidency!" in composing *Memoranda During the War* (1875-76), "Origins of Attempted Secession" (1876), and his lecture on "The Death of President Lincoln" (1879).

The notebooks also clearly indicate Whitman's early interest in oratory and his desire—particularly strong in the fifties—to take his democratic program on the road in a series of lectures delivered directly to the American people. On his birthday in 1858, Whitman made the following entry under the title "Lectures" or "Lessons":

The idea of strong live addresses directly to the people, adm. 10 c., North and South, East and West—at Washington—at the different State Capitols—Jefferson (Mo.)—Richmond (Va.)—Albany—Washington &c—promulging the grand ideas of American ensemble liberty, concentrativeness, individuality, spirituality &c &c. (VI, 2234)

At about this time, Whitman began to see his poems and lectures as a co-production. In 1858, under the title "*Notice—Random Intentions—Two Branches*," he wrote:

Henceforth two co-expressions.—They expand, amicable, from common sources, but each with individual stamp, by itself.

First, POEMS, Leaves of Grass, as of Intuitions, the Soul, the Body, male or female? descending below laws, social routine, creeds, literature, to celebrate the inherent, the red blood, one man in himself, or one woman in herself—Songs of thoughts and wants, hitherto repressed by writers. . . .

Second, LECTURES, as of Reasoning, Reminiscences, Comparison, politics, the Intellectual, the Esthetic, the desire for Knowledge, the sense of richness, refinement, and beauty in the mind, as an art, a sensation—from an American point of view. . . .

While Whitman never carried out his plan to join the lecture circuit, he later realized his concept of his poems and prose works as "two co-expressions" when he published *Specimen Days and Collect* (1882) as a companion volume to *Leaves of Grass*.

The notebooks will help to repair the seeming split between the political journalist of the forties and the poet-prophet of the later period. The first three volumes on Brooklyn and New York, Washington, and Camden, and the sections of "American Politics" and "Slavery" in volume VI reveal Whitman's deep engagement and abiding interest in the political struggles of his time, particularly the struggle over slavery in the forties and fifties, the struggle to preserve democracy and the Union during the Civil War, and, in the postwar period, the struggle between labor and capital.

In addition to his projected lecture on "Slavery—The Slaveholders" and "The Eighteenth Presidency!," there are a number of entries in which Whitman stews and steams and rages over the contradiction of slavery in the American republic. In response to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, he wrote: "Have we squashed in the mud so far, that you make a parley about the freedom of our own personal flesh, on our own independent soil, and assure us as if there were any debate about it" (VI, 2170). "What real Americans

can be made out of slaves? What real Americans can be made out of the masters of slaves?," he asked in another entry (VI, 2193). Like others in the country, including Emerson and Thoreau, he was outraged by Justice Taney's 1857 Dred Scott decision: "Does the whelp [slavery] fall howling and dead under the blows of an English Judge, and have his full swing with meat and drink to boot, from the caressing hand of an American judge?—" (VI, 2182-83).

As Whitman lost faith in political parties and the national government's policy of making slavery rather than freedom the law of the land, he came to see his poems as a form of political action. "The poets I would have must be a power in this state, and an engrossing power in the state," he wrote in an early note that was later echoed in the 1855 Preface to *Leaves of Grass*. In another entry titled "Address on literature," he wrote, "you must become a force in the state—and a real and great force—just as real and great as the president and congress—and greater than they" (I, 144; 154).

While Whitman sought in his poems to affirm the necessity of the Civil War and the forward advance of the democratic Union, his notebooks of the period reveal a much less sanguine response to the state of the nation. "All the steam engines in the world will not make up for deterioration," he noted in response to the growing gap between labor and capital in America. "In the labors of business manufacturers employments products & commerce," he wrote, "a vast gap has formed and is every year growing wider" between "the few capitalists" and "the bulk of the laborers" (III, 1154; 1159).

In his poetry and prose of the postwar period, Whitman sought to counter the greed and selfishness of the time with a new emphasis on collectivity and union. An entry dated in the seventies shows him working and reworking lines that announce his turn away from the "wide-denying Self" of his earlier poems toward a new emphasis on "The Aggregate," figured as "The Mother with her brood." In their final manuscript version the lines read:

(Not now that haughty single Self I sang erewhile

Not now that striding loud-mouth'd Self—not You or I
now:)
My vast, compacted New World States, as a Single
Identity only,
The Aggregate entire—
American condens'd—melanged—the varied, compact
Whole—the Aggregate;
(While the strength of my voice holds out, and the after-
day holds out,)
Of these, in the love of these, I sing.

(III, 986)

But for all Whitman's attempt to counter the capitalist values of money, competition, and unleashed individualism with a utopic vision of love, communalism, and social union, his notebooks reveal his continued alarm about conditions in late nineteenth-century America. "Go on, my dear Americans," he wrote in the late seventies, "whip your horses to the utmost excitement! energy! money! politics!—cram your brains—open all the valves, & let her go, hit or miss . . . Only make provision betimes, old States and new States, for several thousand Insane Asylums—for I think you are in a fair way to create a whole Nation of Lunatics" (III, 1008).

Perhaps uneasy with his darkening mood, Whitman noted in another entry: "I shall only be too happy if these black prophecies & fears can be attributed, (as of course they will be,) to my old age and sickness & a growling temper" (III, 1152). But the "black prophecies & fears," which were already evident in *Democratic Vistas* (1871), continued to haunt him. In the last year of his life, he wrote on an envelope dated February 26, 1891: "I shd say we are in danger of being the cutest trickiest, slyest, even cheatingest, people that ever lived. Those qualities are all getting in our business, politics, literature, manners; and are filtering steadily in our essential character" (VI, 2166).

Although the *Notebooks* provide insight into Whitman's energetic and often uneasy engagement with his times, they do not solve some of the enduring mysteries of his life. For someone who wanted to give open expression to "what makes the manhood of a

man," to "sex, womanhood, maternity, desires, lusty animations, organs, acts," his notebooks are curiously lacking in comments on his own sexual and emotional life (*LGC*, p. 739). For all his literary and political emphasis on "Personalism," Whitman's notebooks and diaries are marked by a certain opaqueness and impersonality. While he has left us endless lists of men, complete with notations about their occupations, physical appearance, and temperament, he gives us no information about their precise role or significance in his life. Without the supporting evidence of outside letters, the names of Peter Doyle and Harry Stafford—with whom Whitman had emotionally close relationships over many years—might blend with the names of the countless other men who people his diaries.

As in any undertaking of this magnitude, the *Notebooks* are not free from some minor typographical errors and a few inconsistencies. One might also quibble with Mr. Grier's decision to edit "everything." There are over a hundred entries of a few words—or mere mumble jumble—complete with scholarly machinery. Entries like the following would appear to have little significance or value:

[*illeg.*] of America!
nothing yet done to write about [?] unless what the
[*illeg.*] instruments does etc
perhaps [?] the playing of the [*illeg.*] does to an opera
(I, 452)

On the other hand, one might argue that items that appear to be mere noise in our current readings of Whitman might turn out to be sites of meaning and significance in future analyses of his life and work.

In any case, whatever minor flaws one might find in the *Notebooks* are far outweighed by the sheer weight of the scholarship in the volumes, and the really magisterial introductions and appendices that accompany Whitman's first known notebooks, "Slavery—The Slaveholders," "The Eighteenth Presidency!," the notes on Peter Doyle, *Rambles Among Words*, and other items too numerous to name.

In *The Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts of Walt Whitman*, Edward F. Grier has done patient, painstaking, and heroic work. Anyone who has worked with Whitman's published and unpublished manuscripts will fully appreciate the meticulous and scholarly care that he has brought to this edition. He has given us a useful, informative, well-organized, and beautifully presented work of literary scholarship and detection that will be invaluable to future scholars, teachers, and students of Whitman. Because this material is collected together here for the first time, and because so much of the material is tantalizingly new, I would imagine that the volumes will have an immediate and far-ranging impact on the future course of Whitman studies here and abroad.

—Betsy Erkkila
University of Pennsylvania

