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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO



WALT WHITMAN

沃尔特·惠特曼

EZRA GREENSPAN 编

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剑桥文学指南

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EDITED BY
EZRA GREENSPAN

University of South Carolina



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出版前言

《剑桥文学指南》是上海外语教育出版社从海外引进的一套研究、介绍外国文学的丛书，内容涉及作家、作品、文学流派、文学史等诸多方面。作者均为在该领域有着较深造诣的专家、学者。

《沃尔特·惠特曼》是该丛书中的一本。

沃尔特·惠特曼是 19 世纪美国杰出的诗人。他的诗作汪洋恣肆、大气磅礴，充满了对大自然的热爱，对自由平等的渴望。他的创作给美国诗坛带来了一股清新的空气。惠特曼在他的《草叶集》前言中明确指出，诗人应该是预言家、先知、吟游者、导师、为未来和民主发言的道德家。他在作品中热情讴歌了美洲大陆，表达了对于这块土地的爱，对于生活在这块土地上的男女同胞的爱，对于儿童的爱，对于集体生活的爱，以及对于群众不幸的同情。更重要的是，他在作品中体现出一种与欧洲文化以及这一文化所包含的等级制度、狭隘偏见的决裂的精神。在诗歌的形式上，惠特曼对传统进行了彻底的革命，他大胆地运用自由诗的形式，将诗歌从恪守韵脚的束缚中解放了出来。

作为一本纪念惠特曼逝世 100 周年的论文集，本书集中反映了当代西方文学评论界对这位美国

本土诗人的生平和作品的最新研究。论文的作者系来自欧美各国的教授、学者，他们以当代人的视角，从多个方面对这位影响巨大而又颇具争议的诗人及其作品进行了新的诠释。探讨的内容涉及美国内战、女权主义、现代主义、摄影、舞蹈，以及诗人晚年诗歌创作风格的变化等。有的论及诗人在美国内战期间的创作活动，尤其是在战争中服役的弟弟对他的创作和情感的影响；有的重新审视了《草叶集》中对女性的处理，并从女权主义视角对作品进行了分析；有的探讨了 19 世纪中叶美国的社会和政治运动对诗人的影响；有的对惠特曼与非印刷媒体的密切关系的思想框架进行了追溯，分析了诗人对摄影的毕生爱好以及他在书籍装帧上对新技术进行的实验；有的就诗人对现代人的影响进行了回顾；有的论述了惠特曼与现代舞蹈的关系；有的则探讨了诗人对 20 世纪 50 年代拉丁美洲文学的影响。

本书的读者对象为大学外语教师，外国文学研究人员，外国文学专业的研究生、博士生，以及具备了较高英语阅读能力的外国文学爱好者。

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CONTRIBUTORS

FERNANDO ALEGRÍA – is the Sadie Dernham Patek Professor in the Humanities, Emeritus, at Stanford University. His scholarly books include *Walt Whitman en Hispanoamérica* and *Nueva historia de la novela hispano-americana*.

RUTH L. BOHAN – teaches in the art history department at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. She is the author of *The Société Anonyme's Brooklyn Exhibition: Katherine Dreier and Modernism in America*. Her current project is a book on Whitman and the visual arts.

SHERRY CENIZA – teaches in the English department at Texas Tech University. She is the author of articles on Whitman and other topics and of a recently completed book manuscript, *Walt Whitman and "Woman under the New Dispensation."*

ED FOLSOM – teaches in the English department at the University of Iowa. He is the longtime editor of the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*. His recent works include, as editor, *Walt Whitman: The Centennial Essays* and, as author, *Walt Whitman's Native Representations*.

EZRA GREENSPAN – teaches in the English department at the University of South Carolina. He is the author of *Walt Whitman and the American Reader*, among other works, and is currently writing a cultural biography of the publisher George Palmer Putnam.

STEPHEN RAILTON – teaches in the English department at the University of Virginia. His most recent book is *Authorship and Audience: Literary Performance in the American Renaissance*. He is currently at work on a study of Samuel Clemens's career as "Mark Twain."

DAVID REYNOLDS – teaches in the English department at Baruch College and the Graduate School of the City University of New York. His books include *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in*

CONTRIBUTORS

the Age of Emerson and Melville. He is currently at work on a cultural biography of Whitman.

M. WYNN THOMAS – teaches in the English department at the University of Wales, Swansea. Among his books are *The Lunar Light of Whitman's Poetry* and *Wrenching Times* (a limited edition of Whitman's war poetry). He recently edited *The Page's Drift: R. S. Thomas at Eighty*, and his translations of Whitman's poetry into Welsh are to be published shortly.

ALAN TRACHTENBERG – teaches in the American Studies program at Yale University. His books include *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol*, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*, and *Reading American Photographs: Images as History from Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*.

JAMES PERRIN WARREN – teaches in the English department at Washington and Lee University. He is the author of *Walt Whitman's Language Experiment* and is currently writing a book called *Culture of Eloquence*.

CHRONOLOGY OF WHITMAN'S LIFE

- 1819 Born Walter Whitman on May 31 at West Hills, Long Island, the second of the eight children of Louisa Van Velsor and Walter Whitman.
- 1823 Family moves from its Long Island farm to Brooklyn, then still a village, where Whitman's father seeks to improve his fortunes.
- 1825-30 Attends public schools in Brooklyn.
- 1830-1 Begins doing odd jobs; formal schooling ends.
- 1831 Sent to begin formal apprenticeship at the printing office of the *Long Island Patriot*, a Democratic paper read by his father.
- 1832 Transferred to the printing office of the *Long Island Star*, the leading paper in Brooklyn, where he remains until 1835.
- 1836-8 Unable to find employment as a printer in Manhattan, reunites with his family, now back on Long Island, and begins his first period of school teaching.
- 1838 Launches his first publishing project as editor/proprietor of the *Long Islander*, a weekly newspaper.
- 1839-41 Suspends the *Long Islander*, works briefly as a writer for James Brenton's *Long Island Democrat*, and then returns to teaching on Long Island.
- 1841 Returns to Manhattan in the spring as a printer, finding employment in the printing office of Park Benjamin's popular weekly, the *New World*. Begins placing stories and poems with New York's leading magazine, the *Democratic Review*.
- 1842 Becomes editor in February of a penny daily, the New York *Aurora*. Fired in late April. Accepts an invitation from Park Benjamin to write a temperance novel; *Franklin Evans* published in November in the *New World's* "Books for the People" series.

- 1843-5 Edits a variety of Manhattan papers and publishes occasional poems and stories in the press.
- 1845 Moves back to Brooklyn in August and reunites with his family. Begins contributing to the Brooklyn *Evening Star*.
- 1846-8 Becomes editor in February of the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle*, a position he holds for two years.
- 1848 Fired in January by publishers of the *Daily Eagle* for political views. Accepts an offer to write for the New Orleans *Crescent*. Spends the spring in New Orleans, then returns home to Brooklyn. Founds and edits a Free Soil newspaper, the Brooklyn *Freeman*.
- 1849 Resigns editorship of the *Freeman* in September. Writes freelance articles for the New York *Sunday Dispatch*.
- 1850 Edits briefly the New York *Daily News*, his last regular editorial position until after the publication of *Leaves of Grass*.
- 1851-4 Works as a house builder in Brooklyn and contributes occasional articles to the press. Works on free verse style and poems.
- 1855 Self-publishes the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, issued in Brooklyn in July. Emerson's congratulatory letter soon follows.
- 1856 Publishes the second edition of *Leaves of Grass* in September. Visited at home by Bronson Alcott and Henry David Thoreau.
- 1857-9 Unable to find a publisher for the third edition of *Leaves of Grass*, returns to journalism as editor of the Brooklyn *Daily Times*.
- 1859 Leaves the *Daily Times* in the summer and returns to composition of poems and preparation of an expanded and revised edition of *Leaves of Grass* for the press.
- 1860 Publishes the third edition of *Leaves of Grass* with Thayer and Eldridge in Boston. Intends to issue a follow-up volume, tentatively titled *Banner at Day-Break*, but the plan falls through when Thayer and Eldridge fails in December, leaving Whitman without a publisher or clear direction.
- 1862 Journeys in December to northern Virginia to locate his soldier brother, reported as wounded in the New York *Herald*. Moved by the spectacle of war and comradeship, he chooses to remain near the front and relocates in Washington, D.C., his primary place of residence until 1873.

CHRONOLOGY OF WHITMAN'S LIFE

- 1863-4 Finds employment in a government office as a copyist and begins voluntary service as a male nurse in army hospitals. Unsuccessfully seeks a publisher for a book of hospital sketches while continuing to compose war poems. Begins a long friendship with Ellen and William Douglas O'Connor and with the people in their Washington circle.
- 1865 Publishes *Drum-Taps* in May and *Sequel to Drum-Taps* (featuring the newly composed "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd") in the fall. Fired in June from his new clerkship in the Department of the Interior for the alleged obscenity of *Leaves of Grass*, but soon afterward employed in the office of the attorney general. Meets and befriends an ex-Confederate soldier, Peter Doyle, who becomes his most intimate friend during the remainder of his Washington years.
- 1866-7 Publishes the fourth edition of *Leaves of Grass* in New York.
- 1868 First foreign edition of Whitman's poetry, *Poems*, selected and edited by William Michael Rossetti, brought out in England.
- 1870 Book publication of *Democratic Vistas*, two parts of which had been issued several years previously in the *Galaxy*.
- 1871 Publishes the fifth edition of *Leaves of Grass* in Washington, D.C. Separate publication of *Passage to India*. Reads his new poem, "After All, Not to Create Only," written specially for the occasion, at the opening of the American Institute in New York.
- 1872 Reads a poem ("As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free") by invitation of students at the Dartmouth College commencement. Publishes *As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free and Other Poems* as a pamphlet in New York. A pirated edition (technically, the sixth) of *Leaves of Grass* published by John Camden Hotten in London (but not actually issued until the following year).
- 1873 Suffers his first paralytic stroke January 23. Left partially disabled and further depressed by the death of his mother in July, he moves in with his brother in Camden, New Jersey, which becomes his home for the rest of his life.
- 1874 Loses his government position and, with it, his main source of income.
- 1875 Hopes to be named official poet at the Centennial Exposition, to be held in Philadelphia, but is disappointed when Bayard Taylor, his onetime admirer, is chosen instead.

CHRONOLOGY OF WHITMAN'S LIFE

- 1876 Marks the Centennial by publishing *Two Rivulets* and an "Author's Edition" of *Leaves of Grass*. Anne Gilchrist, a widowed Englishwoman and admirer of Whitman and his poetry, moves to Philadelphia to be close to him. Whitman begins his recuperative visits to the Pennsylvania farm of the Staffords, with whose son he is particularly close.
- 1877 Receives visits from the English intellectual Edward Carpenter and the Canadian alienist Richard Maurice Bucke. The latter quickly becomes his vocal supporter, biographer, and all-purpose adviser.
- 1878 His health improved, he visits in Manhattan and travels up the Hudson to stay with his old friend and first biographer, John Burroughs.
- 1879 Travels for the first time across the Mississippi, stopping first briefly at St. Louis to visit with his favorite brother, Jeff, and his family before continuing as far west as Colorado. This, the longest trip of his life, dissolves into a fiasco; Whitman is stranded in St. Louis until given a loan from the publisher James Fields, with which to return east.
- 1880 Visits with Bucke in London, Ontario, his first trip outside the United States.
- 1881 Publishes the seventh edition of *Leaves of Grass* with James Osgood of Boston.
- 1882 Threatened with prosecution for obscenity by the Boston district attorney, Osgood removes *Leaves of Grass* from circulation. Whitman purchases the plates and arranges first with Rees Welsh, then with David McKay, both of Philadelphia, for its publication. Whitman's prose autobiography, *Specimen Days and Collect*, is published by McKay. Visited by Oscar Wilde, one of many notable men of letters to visit him during his last decade, as his reputation spreads nationally and internationally.
- 1883 Spends time at the Jersey shore with John Burroughs.
- 1884 Buys his own home, easily accessible to the Philadelphia ferry, at 328 Mickle Street, the residence of his final years.
- 1885-7 Quiet years of declining health spent mostly at or near home with friends and visitors.
- 1888 Horace Traubel, a frequent visitor at Mickle Street, begins to take notes of their conversations. With Traubel's help, Whitman publishes *Complete Poems and Prose* in an edition of

CHRONOLOGY OF WHITMAN'S LIFE

- 600 copies and *November Boughs*. Whitman suffers a stroke in June.
- 1889 Enjoys the public festivities held in Camden to celebrate his seventieth birthday.
- 1891 With Traubel's aid, publishes *Good-Bye My Fancy* and prepares for the press a final issue of *Leaves of Grass*, complete with annexes.
- 1892 Dies March 26.

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