

## WHITMAN'S DEMOCRATIC CITIZEN

## O CIDADÃO DEMOCRÁTICO DE WHITMAN

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In 1858 a series of essays titled *Manly Health and Training* made their appearance in the New York Atlas, written by Walt Whitman under the penname of Mose Velsor. The professed goal was to discuss suggestions and ideas to improve the general physical condition of its readers. Whitman regarded this as a necessary condition to match America's democratic character. Indeed, from reading his guide we can see how for him the health of the body politic is dependent on the health and physical vigour of its citizens. In typical Whitman fashion, the essays address a multitude of topics other than the usual issues expected of a fitness manual. Besides the customary issues of diet and exercise, he also talks politics, morality, the weather, longevity, Greek athleticism, hygiene habits. This article will focus on Whitman's thoughts about the physical standards he believed the American people ought to meet to sustain American democracy, link this with Whitman's view of Ulysses Grant as an example of the 'ideal' American citizen and also venture why he was so understanding towards the latter during his troubled presidency.

**Keywords:** Whitman. America. Democracy. Citizen. Grant.

Em 1858, uma série de ensaios sob o título *Manly Health and Training* foi publicada no New York Atlas, escrita por Walt Whitman sob o pseudónimo Mose Velsor. O objectivo declarado era discutir sugestões e ideias para melhorar a condição física geral dos leitores. Whitman via esta como uma condição necessária para ir ao encontro do carácter democrático do país. Da leitura do seu guia percebemos como, para ele, a saúde do corpo político depende da saúde e do vigor físico dos seus cidadãos. De uma forma típica a Whitman, os ensaios abordam uma multiplicidade de tópicos para além das questões habituais esperadas de um manual de saúde e condição física. Para além das questões habituais de dieta e exercício, Whitman fala também de política, moralidade, clima, longevidade, atletismo grego, hábitos de higiene. Este artigo centrar-se-á nas ideias de Whitman sobre os padrões físicos que, na sua opinião, o povo americano deveria alcançar para escorar a democracia americana, relacionando-as com a visão que Whitman tinha de Ulysses Grant como um exemplo do cidadão americano 'ideal' e aventurando-se também a explicar por que razão o poeta foi tão compreensivo para com este último durante a sua conturbada presidência.

**Keywords:** Whitman. América. Democracia. Cidadania. Grant.

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## 1. Introduction

In 1858, Walt Whitman published a series of essays on *Manly Health and Training* under the penname Mose Velsor. His goal was to discuss tips and ideas on how to improve the general physical condition of his readers as a necessary requisite to match America's democratic character. Indeed, from reading this guide it is clear that, for him, the health of the body politic is dependent on the health and physical vigour of its individual citizens. In typical Whitman fashion the essays address a multitude of topics other than the usual issues expected of a fitness manual. Besides the customary issues of diet and exercise, he also talks politics, morality, the weather, longevity, Greek culture, hygiene habits. The list goes on, but the general purpose is the organic welfare of the American community. Likewise, in Whitman's poetic work we can see him trying to work out the outline of a democratic citizen in keeping with the country's project of equality. As will be pointed out ahead, Whitman was a firm believer in the founding principles of the country as expressed in the Declaration of Independence. Thus, both his prose and his poems can be seen as working in tandem with the goal of improving the American experiment.

Although *Manly Health and Training* focuses on the encouragement of standards of male beauty, his overall artistic intentions might be better understood if we look at them as pointing to a purpose or finality associated with being a citizen - man or woman - for as he declared "I am the poet of the woman the same as the man, And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man." (Whitman, 2004, p. 49). I will begin by arguing that in Whitman's thoughts regarding the development of the democratic citizen we can see him concerned with ensuring the fulfilment of three key aspects. I will try to show how his ideas about the most appropriate physical standards sketched in *Manly Health* address two of those purposes: one is for each individual to attain the best possible condition of body and mind, a sound physical constitution that will strengthen a second condition which is the development of individual virtues most appropriate for a successful democratic society. The third one points to a solid commitment to the principles of the country's founding, an aspect which emerges from a lesser-known composition of his. In the end, I will highlight Whitman's admiration for Ulysses Grant whom he considered to contain the best portion of all three features, and someone whom he believed exemplified the best qualities of what it meant to be an American. I will argue that Whitman's praise for Grant can be traced to the poet's pre-war articulation of what he considered to be the necessary virtues in an ideal democracy.

## 2. Physical and political health

The Greek philosopher Plato was among the first to equate the political community to a human body. His metaphor stressed fitness and well-being as essential to overcome illness, a disorder occurring whenever the various 'organs' of the polis fail to carry out their proper functions. Walt Whitman's *Manly Health* is an attempt at reconciling and maintaining the harmony of the different elements of the system. His main concern is the nation, but his worries concerning the overall health of his countrymen arise from profound changes that were taking place in American society. Immigration,

industrialization, westward expansion, all were challenges that the country needed to meet head-on and which placed deliberate emphasis on the role of citizens. Such anxieties would be compounded during the final decades of the 19th century and give rise to worried debates about the most important qualities Americans should possess. A wide array of manuals and pamphlets were published with instructions on personal fitness, health, and physical culture. *Manly Health* can be seen as an early, and quite particular, example of response to this sociocultural alarm which would continue into the early 20th century and find expression, for example, in Theodore Roosevelt's praise of personal strife and hardship for the betterment of the country in his speech "The Strenuous Life."

It is my contention that Whitman had his very own ideas about the right qualities Americans should possess, and these were closely associated to the metaphor of the body politic. I would like to begin by mentioning in his articles about *Manly Health and Training* a significant use of words related to physical or bodily structure, appearance, and physical development. He uses the words when talking of individuals and also about the country itself which, in 1858, as he notes in his guide, was going "through several important *physiological* processes and combinations" (Whitman, 2016, p. 262, emphasis added). In the same vein he predicts that the Western expansion towards the Pacific coast following the Mexican-American War was "destined to have a huge influence on the future *physique* of America" (Whitman, 2016, p. 262, emphasis added). The association is not accidental. As the nation was growing and shaping its geographical figure, so to speak, Whitman believed its inhabitants should likewise develop their own bodies to recommend themselves as Americans. He is therefore concerned with coaching Americans to make them and the nation equal and whole, complete.

To be sure, energy and strength are required by the American geography itself, a vast, varied expanse of forests and open-air arenas demanding fit and robust men and women, a people in physical harmony with the American continent. This notion that the people is to be equal with its land recalls Whitman's preface to *Leaves of Grass* where he declares that the American bard is "commensurate with a people" and that "his spirit responds to his country's spirit, he incarnates its geography and natural life and rivers and lakes" (Whitman, 2004, p. 9). In his manual Whitman worried that his fellow countrymen did not match the country's spirit and topography. At one point he makes it clear that "America has mentality enough, but needs a far nobler physique" (Whitman, 2016, p. 210). Despite the inviting natural features of the land, the nation suffered from too much indoor living and not enough outdoors activity. The most troubled segments of the population were all those in sedentary employments, and in his essays he singles out students, clerks, lawyers, desk workers, and all who live in overcrowded cities. The nation's plight was intensified by the excessive intellectual activities demanded by such occupations, which he claimed strained the nerves producing anxiety. In his manual he laments that the country is taken over by "too much brain action" and that his countrymen "think too much, and too morbidly... We are too intellectual a race" (Whitman, 2016, pp. 296–297). Not that these were unworthy livelihoods, but Whitman argued that they should be combined with strenuous physical action to ensure the development of a sound mind in a sound body, the first pillar in the structuring of his democratic citizenry.

For the poet, failure to achieve a healthy condition could have dire consequences for the nation's political body. Physical exercise, for Whitman, was essential to prepare individuals to fulfil the responsibilities of democracy, as he links bodily development with character-building and the improvement of personal moral qualities. He readily confesses that he is "of those who believe, therefore, that a certain natural moral goodness is developed in proportion with a sound physical development" (Whitman, 2016, p. 204). These include self-reliance, endurance, and courage, along with civic virtue and responsibility for self and others, qualities needed for the success of any self-governing society. The observance of certain moral standards that will command and direct individual actions within the community is the second end of his programme to educate the population for democracy.

Whitman tells his readers that a system of training that is whole and true will look to exercise both the physical and the moral parts, the bodily development and the encouragement of habits of discipline and commitment to teach personal self-control. His model of complete training is that of classical Greece. Whitman makes several allusions to ancient Greek athleticism and how it fostered individual virtues, a concern consistent with his preoccupation with training citizens that will equal the American experiment. He says that it was thanks to the harshness of the exercises that "the Greeks not only prepared themselves for the hardships and contests of war, but for the enjoyment of life, and to acquire a happy and vigorous national temper" (Whitman, 2016, p. 192). Whitman tops his argument telling his readers that the ancient Greeks were "one of the healthiest, handsomest, hardiest, and happiest nations that ever lived" (Whitman, 2016, p. 93), the alliteration highlighting the perfect match between physical beauty and poetic and moral standards. He holds the examples of classical Greece as the ones to be imitated because they praise camaraderie, healthy and energetic competition, and a striving for perfection: these were key elements that he believed would energise the country and preserve its democratic qualities despite all the changes it was going through.

Behind these considerations is a distinct belief in the possibility of improvement and perfectibility, both individual as well as communal. Change being constant and unavoidable, Whitman is sure that individual fitness and social well-being were the key to ensure the survival of the body politic. The word is not used lightly. Charles Darwin published his landmark study *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 (one year after Whitman's *Manly Health*), but Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, a French naturalist, had some decades prior advanced a theory of transformation of living organisms. All living creatures change and adapt to better ensure their survival, but whereas Darwin saw it as a haphazard development, Lamarck believed that the changes reflected progress toward an ultimate purpose. As Zachary Turpin points out, Whitman was aware of these novel ideas and even adapted them to his own purposes, most notably in *Manly Health* (Turpin, 2016, pp. 169–170). It is Lamarck's teleological view of change that seems to have influenced Whitman, especially regarding American democracy and its underlying principles as the final stage of a process of political evolution.

### 3. The presidential office: locus of manly virtue

It is a fair assumption to say that Whitman's family viewed the presidential office as the focal point of the country's politics; three of his brothers were named after US Presidents, namely George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson. The first seems an obvious choice given his status as the 'father of the country,' instrumental in liberating America from British rule. Thomas Jefferson was the man who defeated the Federalists in the 1800 election prompting what was then regarded as a second American revolution; he also concluded the Louisiana Purchase which opened up the continent's interior lands to pioneers and farmers. Jackson was twice elected on the back of a campaign as the man of the people against the financial and political elite of his time, and who many historians credit as having extended male suffrage while President. All three were critical actors committed to the project of American democracy, as well as men of decisive action.

For Whitman, his family's champions drew a sharp contrast with the men that held the office during the 1850s. The reputation of the successive Presidents during the decade that preceded the Civil War was tarnished for their handling of the increasingly fierce tensions prompted by the question of slavery: they sought to avoid, or at least delay, a violent confrontation by collaborating with the slave-states, when not actively upholding their interests. Whitman gave free flow to his bitterness in an essay written for the 1856 election campaign, but which was never published. Entitled "The Eighteenth Presidency!", it is a political manifesto exhibiting his deepest feelings regarding slavery and politics, at times violent in its language, perhaps the reason why it was never published.

In taking a position regarding these questions, Whitman focuses on what he regards is the meaning of America. He begins by reminding us that the country broke free from a tradition of hierarchical societies and aristocratic government lasting for millennia and still the norm in much of the world at the time. The Republic's new form of government is laid out in the Federal Constitution which is, for him, "a perfect and entire thing, an edifice put together, not for the accommodation of a few persons, but for the whole human race... It is the grandest piece of moral building ever constructed" (Whitman, 1996, p. 1342). The Federal Constitution is the practical expression of the ultimate significance of America expressed in the Declaration of Independence which considers "all men to be born free and equal into the world, each one possessed of inalienable rights to his life and liberty" (Whitman, 1996, p. 1342). For Whitman the fulfilment of the proposition of human equality as an abstract truth, applicable to all men at all times is, as he says, "the covenant of the Republic from the beginning, now and forever" (Whitman, 1996, p. 1343). This for him is the American order of things which structures the country's system of government and binds its citizens because their actions ought to be referred to this covenant. This is the third and highest purpose of each American individual as it holds the whole edifice together and gives it meaning.

Whitman recognizes that although much had been done to accomplish the American theory of democratic government, there was still much left to be done, namely the elimination of slavery. And here Whitman makes known his feelings over the subject and his conviction regarding the purpose of America. The political intrigues and compromises

in Washington that prevented slavery's abolition enraged him. The object of his fiercest attack is the incumbent president, Franklin Pierce (1853–1857), who viewed the abolitionist movement as dangerous to the nation's unity. Pearce supported the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 which allowed the expansion of slavery to new territories earning from Whitman the following remark: "The President eats dirt and excrement for his daily meals, likes it, and tries to force it on The States" (Whitman, 1996, p. 1334). Franklin Pierce and his predecessor, Millard Fillmore (1850–1853), are labelled as villains and despots, weak and corrupt holders of an office which he says is "bought, sold, electioneered for, prostituted, and filled with prostitutes" (Whitman, 1996, p. 1333). The vitriol reflects Whitman's conviction that the sacred covenant of the Republic was willingly ignored by a political establishment which he describes as being composed of "swarms of dough-faces, office-vermin, kept-editors, clerks, attaches of the ten thousand officers and their parties" (Whitman, 1996, p. 1333). This violent rhetoric is directed at men who worked in political and administrative activities, indoors mostly, the same men, we may presume, whom Whitman judged two years later to be in need of his manual so as to develop their physique and, accordingly, their moral character.

If these men are unfit to discharge their democratic duties, then a new kind of man must emerge. Whitman longs for a Redeemer President as he called it (Whitman, 1996, p. 1345), who would fully realize the rights of all individuals as promised by the Declaration of Independence. Despairing of finding in the existing statesmen the one who will uphold the covenant of the Republic, he looks to the common working man, whom he asserts displays more dignity and bravery than all the official dignitaries and worthies. Here is how he describes his new President:

I would be much pleased to see some heroic, shrewd, fully-informed, healthy-bodied, middle-aged, beard-faced American blacksmith or boatman come down from the West across the Alleghanies [sic], and walk into the Presidency, dressed in a clean suit of working attire, and with the tan all over his face, breast, and arms. (Whitman, 1996, p. 1332).

For Whitman, a healthy body, simplicity, and hard-work are the makings of a solid character, of a principled individual commensurate with the country and its democratic experiment. It is hard not to see a populist strain to Whitman's preference for an accessible and unpretentious president, a man much like Andrew Jackson, who was not afraid to confront those he charged as the corrupt political and financial elite of his day, men, no doubt in Whitman's assessment, of poor physical condition.

This radicalism and rejection of mainstream politicians was mirrored by growing segments of the population, who also yearned for a new man, a 'redeemer.' The Whig Party had in Millard Fillmore its last President, and collapsed soon after torn by internal divisions on how to deal with the issue of slavery. Abolitionists increasingly gave up on the Democratic Party as the party of the status quo, and many rallied to the banner of the new Republican Party, which by 1858 was quickly becoming the principal focus of opposition to the dominant Democratic Party. In 1856, Whitman voted for John C.

Frémont, the nominee for the Republicans (Hirschhorn, 1998), signalling his break and putting him on a path to look elsewhere for his 'complete' American.

#### 4. Whitman's ideal Democratic Man

An argument can be made that in Whitman's estimation the best American specimen, like Gaul, would be divided into three parts, and that the complete American would have all three to their fullest degree: a physically fit individual with unimpeachable moral integrity, and devoted to the cause of America. An obvious choice for the title would in all likelihood be Abraham Lincoln, the 'hardy rail splitter' whose death would in later estimations elevate him to a figure of both intellectual and moral supreme virtues, and to whom Whitman dedicated several heartfelt elegiac poems.

As is well-known, Abraham Lincoln came from the West and was of humble origins, an industrious, self-educated man who became a lawyer and who made the most of the country's opportunities to enter politics. More significantly, he did become the Redeemer President that Whitman had been waiting for. For saving the Union during the Civil War and freeing the slaves Whitman would forever hold a special devotion towards Lincoln, a feeling intensified by the latter's premature death one week after the end of the war. Whitman wrote a series of poems lionising the dead president as the liberator and saviour of the nation, a martyr to the sacred meaning of America. Much has been written about this, much more than about the other western man that arose during the Civil War to prove himself worthy of Whitman's admiration, and which he would, I believe, place next to Lincoln.

Although he never wrote such high poetic praise about Ulysses Grant, Whitman looked to him as equal to Lincoln. Grant was also a Westerner. Born in Ohio to a working class family, he graduated from West Point Military Academy as an army officer and fought in the Mexican-American war where he distinguished himself for bravery. He would become the commanding General who defeated the Confederacy at the head of the Union armies and was later elected President of the United States for two terms, usually regarded by most historians as troubled by corruption scandals.

Grant and Lincoln are for Whitman examples of how people from the more modest ranks of society can attain greatness in America. The wider significance of political rulers emerging from the common people was not lost for Whitman, who reflected about the

rank-and-file workingmen, mechanics, Lincoln, Johnson, Grant, Garfield, brought forward from the masses and placed in the Presidency, and swaying its mighty powers with firm hand - can we not see that these facts have bearings far, far beyond their political or party ones? (Whitman, 1892, p. 335).

For Whitman they are the vindication of the merits of the American promise of democracy. But they are also the most salient examples of the worth of the working man. Whitman begins "The Eighteenth Presidency!" manifesto with the following observation regarding his country:

Before the American era, the programme of the classes of a nation read thus, first the king, second the noblemen and gentry, third the great mass of mechanics, farmers, men following the water, and all laboring persons. The first and second classes are unknown to the theory of the government of these States; the likes of the class rated third on the old programme were intended to be, and are in fact, and to all intents and purposes, the American nation, the people. (Whitman, 1996, p. 1331).

Social hierarchies such as then still existed in Europe were removed from American politics. The idea that the lower rungs of society were unfit to participate in the government of the country was denied credence with the examples of men of modest beginnings who rose to positions of power and influence. In the American republic there was no place for hierarchical orders. Whitman makes clear his belief that the common people, the self-determining ruler, are just as capable of deciding what is best for the whole as the most experienced politician, nay, even better because they are the nation; in them are united the three components that the poet considers essential for the survival of American democracy: a fit and healthy physical constitution owing to its outdoors work and life, a strong democratic ethics, and an unflinching commitment to the principles enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the 1787 Constitution. Consequently, the constitutional mandate of the people cannot be challenged, and the election of the common man to the highest positions is the fulfilment of the democratic promise and the surest guarantee of its success.

Ulysses Grant was for Whitman an illustration of the best qualities of the American people and of the union of all three conditions. After his two-term administration ended in 1877 immersed in scandal, Whitman nonetheless hailed Grant two years later with this description of him, possibly one of the most genuine American panegyrics:

What a man he is! What a history! What an illustration - his life - of the capacities of that American individuality common to us all. Cynical critics are wondering 'what the people can see in Grant' to make such a hubbub about. They aver (and it is no doubt true) that he has hardly the average of our day's literary and scholastic culture, and absolutely no pronounced genius or conventional eminence of any sort. Correct: but he proves how an average western farmer, mechanic, boatman, carried by tides of circumstances, perhaps caprices, into a position of incredible military or civic responsibilities, (history has presented none more trying, no born monarch's, no mark more shining for attack or envy,) may steer his way fitly and steadily through them all, carrying the country and himself with credit year after year - command over a million armed men - fight more than fifty pitched battles - rule for eight years a land larger than all the kingdoms of Europe combined - and then, retiring, quietly (with a cigar in his mouth) make the promenade of the whole world, through its courts and coteries, and kings and czars and mikados, and splendidest [sic] glitters and etiquettes, as phlegmatically as he ever walked the portico of a Missouri hotel after dinner. (Whitman, 1892, pp. 153–154).

After Grant's death in 1885, when the collective memory of his achievements and his failures was beginning to fade, Whitman paid his tribute to Grant concentrating on the man rather than the public figure, saying that he was



the typical Western man: the plainest, the most efficient: was the least imposed upon by appearances, was most impressive in the severe simplicity of his flannel shirt and his utter disregard for formal military etiquette. (Traubel, 1915, p. 139)

Whitman's appreciation of Grant's outward appearance reflects his conviction that simplicity is the surest sign of the inner virtue of the man who wears the flannel shirt.

Ulysses Grant is perhaps the most fascinating character of the Civil War era, apart from Abraham Lincoln. Unlike Lincoln, however, Grant was devoid of oratorical powers and was known for his silence and quiet determination. His unassuming demeanour did not stop contemporary independent observers from acknowledging his integrity and courage. Theodore Lyman, who was a member of the highest of the Boston high society, usually looked down on westerners as rough and uneducated, but he regarded Grant as an exceptional individual, noticing his bravery and his rough dignity during the war. In his notebooks dating from the Civil War Lyman documents the following episode involving Grant.

This morning we heard a heavy explosion towards City Point, and there came a telegraph in a few minutes that an ordnance barge had blown up with much loss of life. 'Rosie,' Worth, Cavada and Cadwalader were in a tent at Grant's Headquarters when suddenly there was a great noise, and a 12-pounder shot came smash into the mess-chest! They rushed out - it was raining shot, shell, timbers, and saddles (of which there had been a barge-load near)! Two dragoons were killed near them. They saw just then a man running towards the explosion - the only one - it was Grant! And this shows his character well. (Lowe, 2007, p. 248).

Lyman described how Grant's simplicity and modesty were natural and not affected, famously saying of him that "He is the concentration of all that is American" (Agassiz, 1922, p. 156). Walt Whitman agreed fully with this valuation. In 1891 he summed up his view of Grant saying "We have had no one from the keel up so American as Grant." (Traubel, 1996, p. 10).

Where others saw lack of sophistication, Whitman recognised the common man's simple virtues, the workingman's practicality and common sense. Grant's love of outdoors activities, especially horse-riding, at which he excelled, brought him closer to the type that Whitman promotes in *Manly Health and Training*, combining a sound mind in a sound body. Many of the common democratic virtues that Walt Whitman praised were manifest in Grant. His love of equality was reinforced during the discharging of his military duties during the war, which echoed Whitman's much admired images of Greek camaraderie and 'bands of brothers' sacrificing together in pursuit of a noble collective goal. The poet was not indifferent to martial endeavour: he has left us a permanent record of familial pride in his brother, George Washington Whitman, who fought in the Civil War, listing the multiple battles where he was present, his consecutive re-enlistments and his move up the ranks to lieutenant colonel (Whitman, 1892, p. 77). Here again, a common man proving his worth in the great contest that defined the future of the American project.

Ulysses Grant was not without faults, and contemporaries were very aware of his failings. His first stint in the military was cut short amidst rumours of disorderly conduct prompted by immoderate alcohol consumption. Perhaps better established are the political scandals that tarnished his service as President. I would venture to say that Whitman overlooks Grant's failings and political scandals in his appraisal because he empathises with him, with his human frailty manifest in his alcohol problems, his personal financial difficulties, to which Whitman could relate, and because of his natural and down-to-earth attitude. In a letter to his mother, he is fond of telling her that "I saw Grant to-day [sic] on the avenue walking by himself - (I always salute him, & he does the same to me)" (Miller, 1961, p. 147). In singing the American citizen, Whitman is hailing a unpretentious, genuine individual, warts and all; Grant certainly fit the bill. Topping it all in Whitman's estimation, perhaps, was Grant's service during the Reconstruction period that followed the war. His forceful defence of former slaves' freedoms and rights in the old Confederacy despite the multiple attempts to thwart emancipation and the constant threats has been lauded as essential to secure the constitutional gains of the war. Grant was essential in upholding the law and breaking up violent groups such as the Ku Klux Klan who created a reign of terror against black Americans in the South. As we saw, the covenant of the Republic was for Whitman a sacred trust, and Grant lived up to this duty.

## 5. Conclusion

In Ulysses Grant were combined in good measure the three key elements that Whitman regarded as the most important for any American citizenry that would ensure America's democratic success. To be an American was of particular significance both for Whitman and for Grant, for it meant being a member of a Republic committed to the cause of democracy. To be a member of such a community was a source of pride. The standards and responsibilities were higher than in countries where the people, having no say in the government, had no immediate responsibility, and therefore nothing was asked of them. As he was dying of cancer, in a final act of self-discipline and fortitude, Grant wrote his personal memoirs in order to pay off his debts and provide some money for his family. He completed the task less than a week before his death. The first sentence he wrote reads: "My family is American, and has been for generations, in all its branches, direct and collateral" (Grant, 1990, p. 17).

There is another individual that could conceivably be hailed as the 'complete American' in Whitman's structure. That would be the poet himself. Keeping physically fit was a concern of his, not just articulated in his *Manly Health and Training* but actually carried out in long walks of several miles which he describes as "never to be forgotten" (Whitman, 1892, p. 77). Later in life he continued his workouts, struggling with oak saplings to exercise his arms and chest (Whitman, 1892, p. 98, 413). As we saw, he endorsed an ethics based on male comradeship much as he imagined it in ancient Greece. A defender of human nature in all its manifold shades, a lover of the individual as a whole, comprising good and evil as part of the divine plan, both playing their part in the cosmic drama that will culminate with the dominance of good. Here was Whitman whose love of Man was perhaps only matched by his love of America, the third part of his triad.

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