

Contributions of Whitman

Lit. 214

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Richard Chase (in *Walt Whitman Reconsidered*, 1955) discusses the following contributions of the author and his book:

1. First poetic writing which combines lyric verse and prose fiction - modern poetry thrives on this combination.
2. Whitman made the city and urban living conditions suitable settings for poetry.
3. In his remarkable use of sex and sexual imagery, Whitman broke new ground in American writing.
4. The central metaphor, the unity of self with all other selves, is unique in American literature.

Other contributions include the following.

5. Set a standard that future poets followed including Langston Hughes, Ezra Pound, D.H. Lawrence, William Carlos Williams, Hart Crane, and Allen Ginsberg.
6. Theme of the uplifting of the common person to the heroic.
7. The connectedness of all humanity and humanity to nature.
8. "Invented" the idea of the poet as a seer.
9. Theme of the equality of the sexes.
10. Praised democracy and egalitarianism over elitist philosophy and government
11. *Leaves of Grass* as an American Epic
12. First realist war poetry since Homer.
13. Use of time & space foreshadows Quantum Mechanics