

edition. Also, in a second edition, it would be good to see Lorca's "Oda a Walt Whitman" and perhaps Pablo Neruda's comments on Whitman in his *Memorias* (1974). They are interesting for his juxtaposing of Whitman with Lautréamont. We notice that the absorption of an author often depends upon an amalgam of authors, and that to study the effect of an author we need to examine with what and whom he combines. Like so many of the writers in this collection, Neruda credits Whitman with helping him to be himself—this is a strange process whereby the other puts you in touch with yourself. As the introductory essay to the French section makes clear, there are a multitude of other interesting French texts that might have been included.

All of these are small things, however. Any criticism of *Walt Whitman and the World* is like being at a banquet and asking for more. What we are offered is a wealth of erudition and a wide variety of texts showing us, for the first time, Whitman's reception in South America and Asia as well as in Europe. One of the best things about the book is the number of poems dedicated to Whitman that it includes. Among others, there is Pessoa's wonderful "Salutation to Walt Whitman," Neruda's "Oda a Walt Whitman," a nice series of German poems from Morgenstern (1910) to Schwendter (1990), and a recent poem (1981) from the Chinese poet, Li Yeguang. (Both the original and the translation are given for Neruda and the Germans.) The majority of the texts included in this volume will be new to most readers, and we would have never found them by ourselves. Where else would we learn that Whitman allowed his admirers in Bolton, Lancashire, to stuff the body of his dead pet canary and take it home with them and that "Whitman Day" was celebrated in Bolton into the 1950s, that Brazilian interest in Whitman came originally from the French translations and criticism, that Japanese interest in Whitman begins in 1892 with an essay by one of Japan's best writers, Sôseki Natsume, then a twenty-four-year-old university student, or that there is a Khirghiz translation of *Leaves of Grass*? Whitman would have been pleased.

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LUKE MANCUSO, *The Strange Sad War Revolving: Walt Whitman, Reconstruction, and the Emergence of Black Citizenship, 1865-76*. Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1997.

"Reconstructing Whitman's Reconstruction" might be the theme or title of this book, for in it Luke Mancuso seeks to reconstruct our understanding of the post-war Whitman. While critics have generally lamented the decline of Whitman's writing following the war (but for the poignant heteroglossia of *Drum-Taps* or the passionate *Democratic Vistas*), Mancuso makes the striking claim that Whitman had a specific rhetorical program that he carried out with remarkable consistency throughout the Reconstruction (1865-77). He argues that Whitman sought to be the "federalizing poet" who through his poetry and prose would bind together the polarized sections and races of the Union into one "democratic nationality." Far from ignoring blacks (as a cursory review of his Reconstruction writing might indicate), Whitman saw black emancipation

and Union as the twin fruits of the war, indissolubly linked, and he attempted to create in his writing what Radical Republicans were seeking to create through legislation in Congress: a hegemonizing force to bind the states into a unified nation that would break free from its past of racism and slave economics and create a new future based on social solidarity, on the sympathy of every citizen for "strangers."

Mancuso tracks Whitman's various editions of *Leaves of Grass* against the discourse surrounding Civil Rights legislation in Congress during these years, including the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, the 1870-71 Enforcement Acts, and the retrenchment of civil rights in the mid-1870s. Mancuso makes a persuasive case when he demonstrates how the language of the poems and the arrangement of the clusters connects to the larger national debate. Yet at times Mancuso's single-minded focus also strains the credibility of certain readings—for example, the notion that "Death" in "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" and elsewhere refers not only to mortality but also to the "death" of America's historical continuity to its slave past. Nonetheless, Mancuso demonstrates that Whitman had a consistent vision during the Reconstruction, and that poems and clusters usually dismissed by critics are worthy of reappraisal in light of the larger national discourse about emancipation and Union.

Mancuso begins his study by addressing head-on the notable absence of representations of blacks and of emancipation in *Drum-Taps* (1865) and the *Sequel to Drum-Taps* (1865-66) at the very moment the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery, was being debated and voted on. "Indeed," Mancuso writes, "the absence of race relations in *Drum-Taps* remains the most intriguing fact about these representations of the Civil War" (3). Yet Mancuso argues that Whitman's Reconstruction texts from 1865 to 1876 "registered more emancipationist density than critics have noted" (2). The "indirectness" of Whitman's rhetoric points to his larger "cultural work" of "weaving ex-slaves into the national household" (3) and envisioning "a coherent democratic future out of the failed racial past" (2). To do this, Whitman represented emancipation through images of disrupted blood ties, death, and comradeship among strangers" (6). These images of disrupted family ties and of corpses of soldiers suggest not only "the dissolving of the personal self in death" but also the "dissolving of the constitutional compact with slavery." *Drum-Taps*, he argues, articulates a central rhetorical strategy of Whitman in his Reconstruction texts, namely, deploying separation and death as representations of a "breakage with the Revolutionary past so that a more racially diverse republic might be constructed" in the aftermath of the Civil War (6).

Whitman's comment to his mother in 1867 upon seeing blacks in Washington that "I am not sure but the North is like the man that won the elephant in a raffle" registers both his and the nation's "ongoing white cultural anxiety about the fate of ex-slaves," Mancuso says (16). Yet he argues that the 1867 *Leaves* in all its "disheveled raggedness" is a vital site for representing the emerging nationalist ideology of Radical Republicans. With the debates in Congress over the Fourteenth Amendment in the mid-1860s turning fractious, the familiar rhetoric of "national household" was strained beyond recognition. Federal hegemony in securing citizenship rights and privileges for blacks became the cornerstone of the Radical Republican agenda. Whitman now begins in the

1867 *Leaves* to “reinforce this insurgent national self-understanding” through revisions of older poems while maintaining the radical cultural heterogeneity of his earlier work (18). For example, Mancuso locates an important transition in Whitman’s poetics regarding the definition of “I” or “the self.” In Whitman’s “Inscription,” Mancuso notes that Whitman makes “the individual self interchangeable with the collective self”—that is, the speaker does not “Cease at the theme of One’s-Self” but speaks the “word En-Masse” (quoted, 22). This transition parallels the emerging sense in Congress that the individual states’ identities were to be contained within the larger federal coalition, especially with respect to “national superintendence over civil liberties for blacks” (22). Mancuso’s strongest claims in this chapter (and throughout) clearly support his thesis through exegesis of Whitman’s new or revised poems. Thus, for example, in the “Calamus” cluster Whitman’s deletion of three private, confessional poems from the 1860 edition represents “a movement away from localized and ethnic factional identities in favor of comradeship among strangers from diverse backgrounds” (30).

Mancuso’s further readings of Whitman’s Reconstruction publications in light of the ongoing national debate about black citizenship yield fresh insights as to how Whitman maintained his singular, “federalizing” focus yet adapted it to changing political conditions. Mancuso reads *Democratic Vistas* as an “antidote to the racial, sectional, governmental, and gender tensions” during the highly charged debates over the Fifteenth Amendment, which granted suffrage to black males (51). In the context of a fragile reconstructed union threatened by the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, poll tests for blacks, and the Black Codes, Mancuso describes Whitman’s push for “radical Democracy” simply and eloquently as “the voluntary embrace of strangers beyond the boundaries of family and neighborhood” (53). Mancuso notes that Whitman’s actual endorsement of black suffrage is “relegated to the endnotes” (62), but he argues that in the ongoing struggle between federal authority and state sovereignty, Whitman took on the role of poet as mediator, carving out a “middle ground in which federalism and state sovereignty would enter into a dialectical relation” in the future of democracy (67). “In short,” Mancuso says, Whitman envisioned “an ‘imperial Union’ built on strong centralized governments so that states, interest groups, and individuals could voluntarily pledge their allegiance to their common freedoms” (69).

In the “radically altered” fifth edition of *Leaves* (1871-72), Whitman seeks to interdict a “de facto racial war” in the South, Mancuso says, by “recollecting the Civil War in anxiety,” partly through the innovation of dispersing the *Drum-Taps* cluster throughout the body of the *Leaves*, and by “constructing a network of nationalistic images” in order to justify the even greater reach of federal authority into arenas historically reserved to states through such legislation as the Enforcement Acts of 1870-71, designed to provide clear access to voting for blacks in the South through federal surveillance (78). Several years later as radical Reconstruction was becoming unraveled, Whitman issued the 1876 Centennial Edition of *Leaves of Grass* and *Two Rivulets*, texts which Mancuso calls Whitman’s “summa of reconstructive poetics,” dominated by images of radical, inclusionary democracy and of a “federalized identity of cooperative citizens” (105). The Civil Rights Bill of 1875 was virtually unenforceable, and in 1876 the Supreme Court struck down key provisions of the 1870-71 En-

forcement Acts. In this context, Whitman's publication of *Memoranda During the War* in particular projects the United States into a future of comradely cohesiveness by "representing 'comradeship' with strangers beyond the boundaries of localized blood ties" (106). Whitman writes in *Memoranda*: "I have myself, in my thought, deliberately come to unite the whole conflict, both sides, the South and the North, really into One, and to view it as a struggle going on within One Identity" (quoted, 114-115).

As a "coda," Mancuso reads "Lilacs" as doing the "cultural work" of disconnecting America historically from its past as a constitutional democracy built on slavery "in favor of the promise of a reconstructed future" (134). Whitman's Lincoln is "the Reconstruction Lincoln," who only slowly converted to the role of the great emancipator and who responded to the crisis of Union by "federal coercion that centralized national authority" (131). By 1862 Lincoln had linked Union with emancipation, and it is this new foundation which gave "nationalization of American identity an energetic (if contested) boost" (133). Thus, for Whitman, Lincoln's murder "consolidated this new interracial social contract as nothing else" (133).

While Mancuso's readings are often striking, at other times his attempt to read poems into his "federalizing" thesis stretch the interpretive imagination. In "Lilacs," for example, the "coffin" holds not just Lincoln but "ante-bellum Constitutional democracy" (134), and the "Death" which the "hermit thrush" sings in Section 14 refers not only to the war dead but also to "the Union's disabling legal attachment to slavery" (135). Elsewhere, Mancuso interprets the subject of Whitman's four-line poem "The Runner" as representing "the athletic determination" required to bring coherence to the Union (35), and the "spider" in "A Noiseless, Patient Spider" as "a compelling emblem for the Reconstruction poet (and Congress) standing 'isolated,' casting forth filaments into the uncertain future" (96).

Mancuso's repeated assertions that Whitman is doing "cultural work" also raise the literary version of the "If a tree fell in the forest" problem. Whitman may have been *hoping* or *trying* to do cultural work, but his Reconstruction texts are a far cry from, say, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in their popular reception. In fact, one is struck by how *un-read* these texts are. While Mancuso claims *Democratic Vistas* as a "site of enormous emancipatory significance" (54), in an endnote Gay Wilson Allen is quoted as saying that the text was met with "a conspiracy of silence" and received only two reviews (72). Likewise, while Mancuso asserts that the poems in the 1871-72 edition "intervened in a time of national emergency" (100), earlier in the chapter we learn that "Whitman was virtually ignored by the critics" (79).

Popular or not, Whitman's texts during the Reconstruction form a more coherent statement about Union and Emancipation than critics have noted, and Mancuso shows how they echo and reinforce the Radical Republican agenda. The ultimate significance of Whitman's project Mancuso sees in its direct connection to the "Second Reconstruction" of Civil Rights legislation in this century (the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965). "Many of [Whitman's] reconstructive texts have not been recovered with the same rhetorical vigor by literary scholars as that with which the Reconstruction legislative workshop has been recovered by the federal government in the Second Reconstruction of civil liberties," Mancuso writes. "However, both repre-

sentational workshops have furnished their federative parts toward a more interracial Union" (126).

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WALT WHITMAN ON THE WEB

The Internet holds extraordinary promise as a tool for research and teaching. Yet there is a difference between print and electronic cultures: academics typically encounter books and articles that have passed through a process of peer review, and, in contrast, they typically encounter web sites that have gone through no such vetting process. While it is true that electronic resources, unlike printed matter, can be quickly altered and improved (and therefore criticism can literally be constructive in that it can lead to the removal of misleading or erroneous information and the substitution of reliable information), the ephemeral nature of web sites, since they may disappear overnight or change beyond recognition between visits, makes their use a tricky business. Thus, overarching analyses of web sites—like this one focusing on materials related to Walt Whitman—can serve as guides to help people locate useful resources and to understand the problems that the use of these sites may present.

As project manager of *The Walt Whitman Hypertext Archive*, an online resource dedicated to making Whitman materials more readily accessible to the public, I try to stay abreast of developments on the web and new electronic applications that may present possibilities for technological innovation in the humanities. I pay particular attention to sites dealing with Whitman materials. As a person contributing to the construction of a particular Whitman site, I have a vested interest in this subject matter. Still, my closeness to the field may offer offsetting advantages in the analysis of such sites. In attempting to sort through the sheer magnitude and complexity of Whitman-related documentary forms that are available to us, I've learned to recognize certain problematic issues that must be addressed in any presentation of these artifacts. With this in mind, I present the following review of sites currently available on the Internet which offer Whitman materials to the public.

The democratizing power inherent in popular reading and the vital role that technological innovation played in expanding access to knowledge stirred Whitman's soul. In an 1856 letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson, he openly expressed his enthusiasm about the democratic possibilities inherent in new technological advancements:

All current nourishments to literature serve. . . . Of the twenty-four modern mammoth two-double, three-double, and four-double cylinder presses now in the world, printing by steam, twenty-one of them are in These States. The twelve thousand large and small shops for dispensing books and newspapers—the same number of public libraries, any one of which has all the reading wanted to equip a man or woman for American reading—the three thousand different newspapers, the nutriment of the imperfect ones coming in just as usefully as any—. . . all are prophetic. . . . What a progress popular reading and writing has made in fifty years! What a progress fifty years hence!