

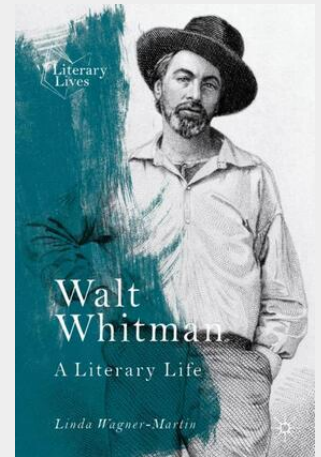
Wagner-Martin

Walt Whitman

A Literary Life

Walt Whitman: A Literary Life highlights two major influences on Whitman's poetry and life: the American Civil War and his economic condition. Linda Wagner-Martin performs a close reading of many of Whitman's poems, particularly his Civil War work (in Drum-Taps) and those poems written during the last twenty years of his life. Wagner-Martin's study also emphasizes the near-poverty that Whitman experienced. Starting with his early career as a printer and journalist, the book moves to the publication of Leaves of Grass, and his cultivation of the persona of the "working-class" writer. In addition to establishing Whitman's attention to the Civil War through journalism and memoirs, the book takes the approach of following Whitman's life through his poems. Utilizing contemporary perspectives on class, Wagner-Martin provides a new reading of Whitman's economic situation. This is an accessibly written synthesis of Whitman's publication history bringing attention to under-studied aspects of his writing.

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21,39 €

19,99 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9783030776640

Medium: Buch

ISBN: 978-3-030-77664-0

Verlag: Springer International Publishing

Erscheinungstermin: 07.09.2021

Sprache(n): Englisch

Auflage: 1. Auflage 2021

Serie: Literary Lives

Produktform: Kartoniert

Gewicht: 359 g

Seiten: 218

Format (B x H): 155 x 235 mm

