

**WALT WHITMAN'S "SONG OF MYSELF":
AN ADMIXTURE OF MYSTICISM AND THEMES OF LOVE, SEX & DEATH**

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Abstract:

Walt Whitman was one of the greatest poets in modern American literature and American democracy. He is considered as a great mystic poet. Whitman had no coherent philosophy of life but he certainly shows a strong note of mysticism and transcendentalism in his poetry. He is transcendentalist but he celebrates sex and senses at the same time. Body and mind both played a vital role in his mysticism. Many of his poems displayed this strange spiritualism and sensualism. His acceptance of the body makes him different from other mystics. Whitman advocates universal democracy. He personifies the spirit of universal brotherhood. His concept of democracy is based on the inherent dignity and nobility of the common man. His democracy is ideal, pantheistic, universal but at the same time practical. He is a unique prophet of democracy indeed. All human beings are connected by a bond of universal unity is the main idea of this poem "Song of Myself". The another theme of his poetry is love and sex as many critics have suggested. Whitman's goal is not to glorify sex and sexuality, he merely wants to remove the stigma of guilt attached to both. He is the romantic "lover" of the world. He describes sex that's not really sex. Whitman's poetry has sometimes been called 'autoerotic', because he is fascinated by his own sexuality. This passage is clearly erotic and expresses sexual desire, but it does not discuss specific acts of sex. Sexuality is a means of joining to the world. The world is charged with sexuality. Whitman's use of death is unlike any other poets. He draws upon his own experiences with death and this makes his poetry real. Whitman is describing the death -as he saw while he was taking care of the fallen soldiers. Whitman looks at death as a good thing.

Keywords: Mysticism, Love, Sex, Death, Prophet of democracy, Autoerotic, Universal brotherhood, Romantic lover.

Introduction:

Walt Whitman was an American poet, essayist and journalist. He was born in 1819 and spent his early childhood on a little farm on Long Island which he always called by its (American) Indian name Paumanok. Whitman's major work; Leaves of Grass was first published in 1855 with his own money. The work was an attempt at reaching out to the

common person with an American epic. A noteworthy aspect of Whitman's life was in his hospital service, a tender, helpful service, without pay and above reward. His soldier brother was wounded in 1862 and Whitman hurried to the front to take care of him. Whitman secured a small position in a government office, he gave all his spare time to the hospitals making himself useful in every possible way to the suffering soldiers. He composed many books of which Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" is a masterpiece in the history of American literature where the concept of Mysticism and themes of Love, Sex & Death are remarkably analyzed.

Limitation of the Research:

My research topic is "Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself": An admixture of Mysticism and themes of Love, Sex & Death". I think very limited number of research works have been done on Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself". In this regards it was a kind of challenge for me to undertake good research on Walt Whitman. As part of my research I had to evaluate and collect the information on Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself and in parallel I had to study some critical books on concerned topic. I think further research is very essential at different settings and with more elaborate instruments. In this way a more reliable and generalize result may emerge.

Objective of the Research:

Walt Whitman and his writings especially poetry have occupied a large area in American literature. Walt Whitman's poetry -are very important and interesting genres of American literature. It becomes more interesting and insightful when it mixed with spirituality and mystical views. The main objective of my thesis is to find out the different aspects in Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself. The research will be helpful for me to gather much knowledge about Walt Whitman and his writings especially poetry. It will also be instructive and very informative for students who want to study American literature especially Walt Whitman. My research will also inspire the students and teachers of English literature to go with further research on different aspects in Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself. However my aim is to represent Walt Whitman to the readers as much as I can.

Research Methodology:

Research methodology means the way of solving the research problem. It is an integral part of research. There are many kinds of methods and techniques to undertake research work. Of them, I have chosen descriptive cum analytical methods to finish my research work. Most of this research paper is based on descriptive methods. The main method in this research is close reading of the poem, paying close attention to individual words and lines. In order to get right idea, I took help from some previous interpretations. I also look into internet to get more ideas. My main aim is to get the spiritual, mystic and romantic aspects of the poems.

Review of literature and Discussion from the poem" Song of Myself":

Walt Whitman was a modern poet who broke away from existing literary conventions to create a new poetry to suit the new world. His philosophy is deals with some major phraseology. These are mentioned in below to understand his poetry.

The constant "I": An egotist is person who perpetually talks about himself. The perpetual use of "I" in Whitman's poetry certainly indicates the egotist. Song of Myself is the most prominent, evidence of this, but other poems, too, indicates it.

"Self" not always personal: Whitman's poetry is not dominated by a narrow view of "I" or a restricted kind of egotism. The "I" in his poetry is not only the individual, but collective ego of humanity, for Whitman attempts.

Self Not passive or Static: The "self" in Whitman's poem not passive or static. It enjoys free movement; it is a voyager and "to know the universe itself as a road.

Unity, equality and human dignity: These are basic themes in Whitman's poetry and are of course related to his concept of self. Leaves of Grass, he said, were in its intentions the song of a great democratic individual, male or female. For Whitman, each individual personality should be developed so that all these personalities may produce a harmonious picture.

Glorification of the common Man: Glorification of the common Man, an inevitable aspect of the cult of individualism, finds ample place in Whitman's-poetry. Whitman declared that "everything comes out of the people as you find them.

Nationalism and democratic ideal: Nationalism and Democratic ideal find expression in Whitman's poetry. Whitman identified America with the concept of freedom.

"Spiritual" democracy: Whitman enlarges the scope of democracy in his poems. Democracy is to cultivate individualism. He conceives of a "Spiritual democracy" or a democratic community in which equal and infinite souls interpenetrate without arrogating to themselves the power and authority over others.

Humanitarianism and fellow-being and sympathy: Humanitarianism of fellow-being and sympathy characterize several of Whitman's poems, showing his democratic ideal. He had sympathy for the entire creation of God. His use of the word "en-masse" is significant, for he fully identifies himself with humanity at large.

Definition of Mysticism:

Mysticism is an experience that can be achieved by spiritual journey from the immortal human soul to that divine spirit. It has a spirituous meaning, which is not apparent to the senses nor to the intellect. A mystic believes in the unity of God and man, a man and nature, God and universe. To a mystic, time and space are unreal; since both can be overcome. Man's spiritual

conquest Evil, too, is unreal since god is present everywhere, Man communicates with his soul in a mystical experience. Mysticism is not really a coherent philosophy of life but more a temper of mind. A mystical experience, according to Bertrand Russell, involves insight, a sense of unity and the unreality of time and space and a belief that evil is mere appearance. A mystic vision is intuitive, he feels the presence of a divine reality behind and within the ordinary world of sense perception, He feels that god and the supreme soul animating all things are identical. He sees an essential identity of being between man, nature and god.

Origin of Mysticism:

The term “mysticism” comes from the Greek word meaning “to Conceal”. Mysticism referred to the biblical liturgical, spiritual and contemplative dimensions of early and medieval Christianity. **Mysticism** is the experience of mystical union or direct communion with ultimate reality reported by mystics. The belief that direct knowledge of god, spiritual truth or ultimate reality can be attained through subjective experience.

Mysticism in “Song of Myself”:

According to Whitman, the universe as well as everything in the world is mystic things. Whitman’s ecstatic revelation of union of his body with his soul has been depicted with mystic expression. The poet has a feeling of fraternity and oneness with God and his fellowman, **“All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses, and to die is different from what any one supposed and luckier.”**[Line no.129-130]

We know from Whitman’s view that the grass is a symbol of the divinity latent in the ordinary, common life of man. It is also a symbol of continual inherent in the life-death cycle. Like a true mystic, Whitman believes that no one really dies. It might be to him that death means rebirth, it is the way by which man can establish a certain relation being one with God. Whitman says that even. “The smallest sprout shows there is really no death. As a mystic, Whitman believed that there was no difference between the creator and the creation. His ‘self’ is a universal self. Self just moves onward to outward. He sees people of all sexes, all ages, many different walks of life; even animals are included. The poet along with the divine spirit not only loves them all, he is also a part of them.

Man comes and goes in and from this world by the name of birth and death. To the poet, it is the same to be born and to die as the soul is unchanged and it is a part of Divine self. The poet says that the experiences all the objects among which no two are similar and all are good. Actually it is a mystical realization of the poet that everything is good a everything’s shares its part with the universal spirit. Even earth, stars and their junction are good to the poet since their junction makes the world static and beautiful. The poet says,

“I am the poet of body and I am the poet of the soul, The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me.”

[Line no.422-423]

By these lines, the poet's desire to be united with the transcendental self. The body and the soul, to Whitman are not two different things. Both are of equal significance, each one is complement to other, to say it truly, there is no existence of soul without the body and there must something more than the body which is soul. Whitman is a poet of pleasures and pains, as the body and the soul are inseparable, the pains and pleasures are also separable, absolute pleasures and pains are not seen in the world. By these lines, the poet calls himself 'a KOSMOS' in giving the idea that he is a universal self who loves all. He feels he is part of all that he has met and seen. He is essential a poet of balance, since he accepts both good and evil in this cosmos. His awareness of the universe or cosmic consciousness is significantly expressed when he calls himself 'a KOSMOS'. This call invokes a picture of the harmony in the universe. He accepts all life-naked and bare, refined and crude, beautiful and ugly. The physical and the spiritual are aspects of his vision. By these lines, the Poet's liberal attitude towards objects of the world has been revealed. Whitman is a poet of body and soul of both good and bad. He is the poet of prisoners, slaves, thieves and dwarfs. He identifies himself with every being and object. He feels his is a poet of balance. His awareness of the universe, or cosmic consciousness, is expressed when he calls himself ` Kosmos; He accepts all life, naked and bear noble and ignoble, pleasant and painful.

By these lines, the poet's senses convince him that there is significance in everything's, no matter how great or small. Whitman's idea and identification of self and its relation with other selves make the individual self the transcendental self. As the individual self-possesses all living objects, it can easily turn to any other selves. Whitman says that says he has the capability to turn to an animal because he has the universal self that loves all ignoring caste, creed, shape and color. To the poet, all men are equal before the law and have equal rights. Whitman was deeply shocked observing and getting known of the bloodshed by the various warring religious groups. As a liberal democrat, Whitman summons people all over the world to who respect towards all.

Whitman's mysticism is somewhat different from the oriental mysticism. A mystic, it is believed, has the capacity to establish an intercourse or communication between his spirit and the Divine spirit. Whitman is truly a mystic in truly a mystic in this sense. But oriental mystic believes that communication between his soul and God is possible only through the mortification or conquest of the senses and the physical appetites. On the other hand, Whitman believes that spiritual experience is possible without sacrificing the physical appetites. He is a mystic being accelerant of sex and the senses.

"Song of Myself" is a poem of long speech to the peoples all over the world and it was written by Walt Whitman. In section 5 of "Song of Myself", Whitman's ecstatic revelation of union of his body with his soul has been depicted with mystic expression. The poet has a feeling of fraternity and oneness with God and his fellowman. He says: "**And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own, and I know that the spirit of God is the brother of**

my own, And that all the men ever born are also my brothers and the women my sisters and lovers, and that a KELSON of the creation is love.” [Line no.92-95]

The above lines present and introduce the central symbol of “Song of myself. We see that a child appears with leaves full in both hands and asks the poet “What is the grass?” hesitating first, the poet muses that “The grass is itself a child. Or many be “It the handkerchief of the Lord”. Here the grass is a symbol of the divinity latent in the ordinary, common life of man. It is also a symbol of continual inherent in the life-death cycle. Like a true mystic, Whitman believes that no one really dies. It might be to him that death means rebirth, it is the way by which man can establish a certain relation being one with God. Whitman says that even. “The smallest sprout shows there is really no death. **“All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses, and to die is different from what any one supposed and luckier.”**

As a mystic, Whitman believed that there was no difference between the creator and the creation. His ‘self’ is a universal self. He sees people of both sexes, all ages, many different walks of life; even animals are included. The poet along with the divine spirit not only loves them all, he is also a part of them Whitman says; **“And these tend inward to me and I tend outward to them, And such as it is to be of these more or less I am, And of these one and all I weave the son of myself.** [Line no.140-142]

Grass, a central symbol in “song of myself” suggests the divinity of common things, the nature and significance of grass unfold the themes of death and immortality. Grass is the key to the secrets of man’s relationship with the Divine. It indicates the God is everything and everything is God. The dealing with the themes of God. Life, death and nature in section 1 to 16 reveal the awakening of the poet’s self through mystical experience. “Song of Myself” arises out of a belief that it is possible to achieve communion with God through contemplation and love this relationship would be established without the medium of human reason. It is a way of attaining knowledge of spiritual truths through intuition. Whitman realizes that the physicals as well as the spiritual are the aspects of the divine.

Section 7 of “Song of Myself”, the poet announces his realization of goodness of every object, inside the world and out. As a poet with mystic outlook, Whitman believes in the immortality of the soul. Man comes and goes in and from this world by the name of birth and death. To the poet, it is the same to be born and to die as the soul is unchanged and it is a part of Divine self. The poet says that the experiences all the objects among which no two are similar and all are good. Actually it is a mystical realization of the poet that everything is good a everything’s shares its part with the universal spirit. Even earth, stars and their junction are good to the poet since their junction makes the world static and beautiful. The poet says **“And pursue manifold objects, No two alike and everyone good, the earth good and the stars**

good and their adjuncts all good.”
[Line no.134-135]

In section 21 of the poem, the poet's desire to be united with the transcendental self. The body and the soul, to Whitman are not two different things. Both are of equal significance, each one is complement to other, to say it truly, there is no existence of soul without the body and there must something more than the body which is soul. Whitman is a poet of pleasures and pains, as the body and the soul are inseparable, the pains and pleasures are also separable, absolute pleasures and pains are not seen in the world. Men get pleasures and suffer pains by turn or sometimes with the changing course of time. The poet says, **“I am the poet of body and I am the poet of the soul, the pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me.”** **Line no.**

[Lines No.422-423]

In section 24 of the poem, the poet expresses his universal entity with his worldly individual identity. The poet call himself 'a KOSMOS' in giving the idea that he is a universal self who loves all. He feels he is part of all that he has met and seen. He is essential a poet of balance, since he accepts both good and evil in this cosmos. His awareness of the universe or cosmic consciousness is significantly expressed when he calls himself 'a KOSMOS'. This call invokes a picture of the harmony in the universe. He accepts all life-naked and bare, refined and crude, beautiful and ugly. The physical and the spiritual are aspects of his vision. Whitman realizes that the physical and spiritual are also the aspects of the Divine. The poet wants to achieve mystical experience through physical reality. The poet says, **“Walt Whitman, a KOSMOS, of MANHATTAN THE son, Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking and breeding.”** [Line no.497-498]

In Section 31, of the poem, the Poet's liberal attitude towards objects of the world has been revealed. Whitman is a poet of body and soul of both good and bad. He is the poet of prisoners, slaves, thieves and dwarfs. He identifies himself with every being and object. He feels his is a poet of balance. His awareness of the universe, or cosmic consciousness, is expressed when he calls himself Kosmos; He accepts all life, naked and bare noble and ignoble, pleasant and painful. The poet's senses convince him that there is significance in everything no matter how small. He feels infinite wonders in small things. Even a small leaf enchants him. This respects for the small shows Whitman's love for individualism and for all beings. The poet says **“I believe a leaf of grass is no less than, the journey work of the stars.”** [Line no.663-664]

In section 32 of the poem, the poet says of the universalization of his individual self. Whitman is the representative of all immunity and all living creatures. He says the voices of diverse creations speak through him- voices of men, animals and even insects. The poet's senses convince him that there is significance in everything's, no matter how great or small.

Whitman's idea and identification of self and its relation with other selves make the individual self the transcendental self. As the individual self-possesses all living objects, it can easily turn to any other selves. Whitman says that says he has the capability to turn to an animal because he has the universal self that loves all ignoring caste, creed, shape and color. The poet says, **"I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained, I stand and look at them long and long.** [Lines no.684-685]

In section 43 of the poem, the poet speaks of the firm democratic mentality. Whitman is a true American as well as citizen of the world. He knows there are many different kind of faiths and believers in the world. To the poet, all men are equal before the law and have equal rights. Whitman was deeply shocked observing and getting known of the bloodshed by the various warring religious groups. As a liberal democrat, Whitman summons people all over the world to who respect towards all. He says he does not disregard Christianity's but he asserts that the greatest and the least of faiths- all should be regarded. The poet says, **"I do not despise you priests, all time, the world over, my faith is the greatest of faiths and the least of faith.** [Lines no. 1096-1097]

A mystic never becomes afraid of death. Whitman also does not fear death. Whitman's physical experience of his self comes through various stages. The first stage may be termed the "Awakening of self" The second the "purification of self" purification involves an acceptance of the body and all its functions. The acceptance reflects the poet's goal to achieve mystical experience paves the way for the merging of physical reality with a Universal reality.

What is Love and Sex?

Love encompasses a variety of different emotional and mental states, typically strongly and positively experienced, ranging from the most sublime virtue or good habit, the deepest interpersonal affection and to the simplest pleasure. An example of this range of meaning is that the love of a mother differs from the love of a spouse, differs from the love of food. Most commonly love refers to a feeling of strong attraction and emotional attachment. Love can also be a virtue representing human kindness. Compassion and affection as "The Unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another. It may also describe compassionate and affectionate actions towards others humans, One's self or animals; Ancient Greek Philosophers identified four forms of love: i) Familial love ii) Friendly love iii) Romantic love iv) Divine love.

Love in its various forms acts as a major facilitator of interpersonal relationships and owing to its central psychological importance, is one of the most common themes in the creative arts. Sex is one of those words that everyone uses and surprisingly few understand. Sex is much more than physical and concerning procreation. It is important to recognize and identify the breath of sexuality. Sex serves several of life's basic purposes, form pleasure, stress reduction and formation of our identity to our intimate connection and procreation. The goal of sex can be defined in one word. Fulfillment, true sexual fulfillment is when physical pleasure

occurs within the content of an intimate and loving relationship. In this way. Fulfilling sex transforms what could be a pleasurable and merely mechanical event into an expression of intimacy and love. Therefore, Sex engages us in different ways emotionally, relationally, socially, spiritually and also physically.

Sigmund Freud's concepts about love and sex:

i) Sexuality in everyone's weakness and strength: Sex is a prime motivator and common denominator for all of us. Even the most prudent, puritanical appearing individuals may struggle greatly against their sexual appetites and expression. Freud observe this prurient struggle in men and women early in Victorian Vienna. But our sexuality defines us in healthy and altogether essential ways too.

ii) Every part of the body is Erotic: Freud knew that human beings were sexual beings right from the start. He took his inspiration from the body nursing at the mother's breast to illustrate that example of a more mature sexuality, saying "No one who has seen a body sinking back satiated from the breast and falling asleep with flushed cheeks and a blissful smile can escape the reflection that this picture persists as a prototype of the expression of sexual satisfaction later in life.

iii) Homosexuality is not a mental illness: He noted that gay people are often distinguished by especially high intellectual development and ethical culture. Freud wrote, "Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no degradation; it cannot be classified as an illness"

iv) All love relationship contains ambivalent feelings: Among Freud's various discoveries was the ambivalence involved in all close and intimate relationships. While we may consciously feel genuine and realistic loving towards a spouse, partner, parent or child things are never exactly what they seem. Freud recognized that this mixture of love and hate in close relationships is part of human nature and not necessarily pathologic.

v) We learn to love from our early relationships with parents and caregivers: Our early relationship with parents and caregivers help us to form a "Love map" that persists throughout our lives. Freud pointed out that when we find a love object we are actually "re-finding" it.

vi) Our loved one becomes a part of ourselves: Freud noted that the characteristics, beliefs, feelings and attitudes of those we love become incorporated into ourselves part of the psyche. His concept concerning the depth of connection between people is contained in such expressions as referring to our loved one as "My better half"

vii) Fantasy is an important factor in sexual excitement: Freud observed the sexual excitement comes from three directions. The external world, the organic interior and mental life.

In our sexual fantasies we often conjure up all kinds of strange and hopeful lead to climatic pleasure.

Love and Sex are interwoven: Love and Sex are not the same thing. Love is an emotion or a feeling. There is no one definition of love because the word “love” can mean many different things to many different people. Sex, on the other hand, is a biological event, Even though there are different kinds of sex, most sexual acts have certain things in common. Sex may or may not include penetration. The link between sex and love is primarily social or psychological not biological. The love sex link could be seen as natural because it contributes to better chances of survival. One of these concerns that appears central to debates about sex is love. However, this concern is fairly recent in the past, sex was not consistently linked with love. In the middle ages, women of nobility married for political and financial reasons, but were not expected to love their husbands. Offspring were crucial to ensure the continuance of bloodlines, but love was rare in marriages. Marital partners sought love but not sex, outside the marriage. This was considered acceptable, although extramarital sex was strongly condemned. This dissociation of sex and love suggests that the link between them is more a time and context bound ideology, influenced by general ways of thinking. On the other hand, a couple who love each other and have sex may be more likely to provide a protective environment for their children.

The 1960s and 1970 brought about another social change in western thinking. Sex was no longer linked solely to marriage and even love was not necessary. Some groups entirely severed the link between sex and love, other sections of society held on to the older way of seeing the matter. The pluralism itself was in the spirit of individualism. People could live according to personal preferences. From the 1980s with the awareness of love and sex were joined again more because stable relationships reduce risk. The ideal of sex and love linked, then is perhaps more a situational factor one that may change if no longer fulfils society's needs. The relationship between the various love styles and sexual styles varied by number of partners and also by gender. For example that Eros or passionate love was relative to role enactment in women, but not for men. And also found that there was a negative relationship between partner engagement number of sexual partners or men, but for women.

The Concept of Love and Sex by Whitman:

Walt Whitman has been called the prophet of sexual love. He was a fearless pioneer in treating sexual love with a healthy frankness in his poems. Love is necessary to the poet's understanding of the universe as it must be for anyone who tries to see into the heart of creation. Sexual love is vital to the human personality. Life is incomplete without it. Whitman explores the terrors and inversions of sex as well as its sunny aspects. Sex is an equalizer. Sexual love is a relation between two willing souls based on perfect understanding and mutual agreement. Sex is necessary for procreation, it is linked with the life force of Nature; it is an aspect of love which permeates all things. Whitman conceived of the universe as a whole rein which everything, created by a diving spirit, had its place and purpose. Love and sexual love, is

necessary to his understanding of the universe. In Whitman's poetry, there is plenty of love and sex in theme, meaning and imagery.

In Whitman's poetry, we come across a revolutionary frankness in dealing with love, especially sexual love. Whitman emphasized that he was the poet both of the 'body and the soul'. He sang the body electric. He was pioneer in inaugurating a better respect for the body and speaking for sexual delight as one of the blessing of human life. Whitman had no inhibitions about sexual love. He called leaves of grass the song of sex. He makes a powerful appeal to overcome the puritan hypocrisy and guilt connected with sex. Whitman's celebrates the body and each of its organs in "I sing the body electric". Whitman's treatment of love of man for man must have caused several readers to feel ill at-ease. Whitman's "sensibility instead of remaining exclusively carnal, opens out and is sublimated. Sexual climax can lead to mystical revelation. In Whitman, as body merges with body, the body also merges with the soul and the soul divine. Whitman's vision of sex as an energy at work in all nature is connected with his mystic awareness of "the oneness of all". The themes of sexual energy and identification in "Leaves of Grass" extend far beyond the conventional themes of romantic love literature; they lie at the very heart of Whitman's profoundest cosmic meaning.

Being the poet of body and soul, Whitman knows very much of the physical urge of whole of the creation. The urge, to Whitman, is the basic essence of life. The poet is the believer of using the now. Though the soul is immortal, the outward solid presentation of the soul is the body. Whitman says everyone to fulfill his physical urge which is the want of the world.

Whitman's conception of democracy are all equal irrespective of caste, cooler, sex, religion. Whitman believes that even "a leaf of grass is on less than the journey work of the stars" for all things are part of the eternal wonder of life. All factors, all creations of god in this universe, petty or great, animate or inanimate are equally sacred to Whitman. As a mystic, he wants to create communion with the divine soul. And do so, he needs to devote himself to worship the divine. If was a common belief in puritanical view that purification is only possible through mortification of flesh .But Whitman does not believe in that ideology .In his view, achievement is possible through physical reality. He believes that the body has some demands to be fulfilled. He likes to enjoy all the five senses to touch, to smell, to see, to hear and to taste. He regarded love to be 'the keelson of the universe' and love and sex in his poetry cannot be viewed in isolation from the themes of democracy, science and religion. In section 24 the poet is uses sexual images and words describing whatever he sees. He becomes the worshipper of his own body and soul and considers it superior to the churches and bibles. This has made many critics accuse Whitman of pride and arrogance. But his glorification of the divine. He recognizes that greatness of god as witnessed in all the creations in all the creations in the universe.

Song of myself abounds in images and lines of sexual connotation, many of the sections express the delight of sexual love. In section 3 of the poem "song of myself, Whitman's love and the procreant urge of the humanity, which basically mean physical demand of the races. Being the poet of body and soul, Whitman knows very much of the physical urge of whole of the creation. The urge, to Whitman, is the basic essence of life. The poet is the believer of using the now. Though the soul is immortal, the outward solid presentation of the soul is the body. Whitman says everyone to fulfill his physical urge which is the want of the world. The world is full of different kinds of animals, plants and human being is the greatest of creation. Whitman says that by procreation, the races might go, or the world will be stopped. So this is the urge of the world that people with other creations should have urge to help go on the race. The poet says "**Urge and urge and urge, Always the procreant urge of the world**" [Line on: 44-45]

In section 5 of the poem song of myself, the poet, says of his belief of respecting everybody's opinion. Whitman's conception of democracy are all equal irrespective of caste, cooler, sex, religion. Whitman believes that even "a leaf of grass is on less than the journey work of the stars" for all things are part of the eternal wonder of life. All factors, all creations of god in this universe, petty or great, animate or inanimate are equally sacred to Whitman. He believes perfect harmony of the body and the soul is needed in understanding the universal self to be mingled with the divine self. The poet says, "**I believe in you my soul; the other I am must not abase itself to you, and you must not be abased to the other**" [Line no. 82-83]

In section 21 of the poem song of myself, the poet considers all men and women as equal. He has a higher respect for women as she is 'the mother of men'. He does not consider anyone as superior. He says that the president also is as great as any other human being. The poet's self thus expands, embraces all humanity and attains the cosmic level. He takes delight in seeing the horizon where, he feels, the earth and the sea are in a close embrace. The 'Unspeakable passionate love' exists between him and nature. The symbolic physical love transcends into the love of the divine creation. This results in the union of the soul; of the self with the cosmos. The poet says, "**I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night, Press close bare-bosom'd night, Mad naked summer night, Smile voluptuous cool-breath'd earth**" [Line no. 434-437]

In section 24, of the poem song of myself the posts speaks of his pleasure of being able to taste all the physical senses. Whitman's own speech that he is a post of the body and soul. To him, body and soul are inseparable. As a mystic, he wants to create communion with the divine soul. And do so, he needs to devote himself to worship the divine. If was a common belief in puritanical view that purification is only possible through mortification of flesh. But Whitman does not believe in that ideology. In his view, achievement is possible through physical reality. He believes that the body has some demands to be fulfilled. He likes to enjoy all the five senses to touch, to smell, to see, to hear and to taste. When he calls body 'miracle' and says "the scent

of these arm-pits aroma finer than prayer”, we get him as a singer of the body. The poet says, **“I believe in the flesh and appetites, seeing, hearing, feeling and miracles, each part and tag of me as a miracle.”** [Lines. 522-523]

Whitman was a revolutionary in his frank treatment of sexual love in his poetry. He insisted on acceptance and coloration of man's sexual nature in all its manifestations and complexity. But his poetry is not confined to sexual love alone. He regarded love to be ‘the keelson of the universe’ and love and sex in his poetry cannot be viewed in isolation from the themes of democracy, science and religion. In section 24 the poet uses sexual images and words describing whatever he sees. He becomes the worshipper of his own body and soul and considers it superior to the churches and bibles. This has made many critics accuse Whitman of pride and arrogance. But his glorification of the divine. He recognizes that greatness of god as witnessed in all the creations in all the creations in the universe. In glorifying himself, he glorifies everyone, and automatically he sings of the greatness of the creator god. The poet says, **“ Divine am I inside and out and I make holy, Whatever I touch or am touch'd from,- The scent of these arm-pits is aroma fine than prayer, This head more than churches, bibles and all creeds.** [Line no. 524-526]

The Theme of Death: Death is the cessation of all biological functions that sustain a living organism. Phenomena which commonly bring about death include aging, predation, malnutrition, disease, or trauma resulting in terminal injury. In most cases, bodies of living organisms begin to decompose shortly after death. Death particularly the death of humans has commonly been considered a sad or unpleasant occasion, due to the affection for the being that has died and the termination of social and with the deceased. Many cultures and religions have the idea of an afterlife and also hold the idea of reward of judgment and punishment for post sin. Different mythologies and theologies have explained the nature of death in countless ways, ranging from total annihilation to immediate life after death in the presence of god or in torment. Some groups allow their badness and eventually reach paradise. Others envision life after death filled with a never ending abundance of the pleasures of earthly life. Death is the end of life or at best life as we know it death, dying and the afterlife are all shrouded in deep mystery, cloaked in darkness.

The oxford English dictionary defines that to “the permanent ending of vital processes in a cell or tissue. According to , Marion Leary, the director of innovation research for the center for resuscitation science at the university of Pennsylvania, “If a person wasn't visibly breathing ,if they were cold and bluish in color, for example they would be considered dead”.

Before the mid-1700 s, for example, people were declared dead when their hearts stopped beating a conclusion drawn from watching traumatic deaths such as decapitations, where the heart as our understanding of the human body grew, other organs, like the lungs and brain were considered metrics of life or death. Today, that remains true to some degree, you

can still be declared dead when your heart and lungs cease activity. And yet you can also be declared dead if both organs are still working, but your brain is not. In most countries, being brain dead meaning the whole brain has stopped working and cannot return to functionality is the standard for calling death, says neuroscientist James Bernat, of the Geisel school of Medicine at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.

Jeff Mason's Concept of Death: Philosophers and non-philosophers stand on a level of equality with respect to death. There are experts on death, for there is nothing to know about it. Death and its concept are absolutely empty. No picture comes to mind. The concept of death had a use for the living while death itself has no use for anything. All we can say about death is that it is either real or it is not real. If it is real, then the end of one's life is a simple termination. If it is not real, then the end of one's embodied life is not true death but a portal to another life. Let us explore the metaphor that death is a wall about further fun house mirror, the wall of death images of us. All we see when we look at death is a reflection of our own lives.

Whitman's View about the Theme of Death:

Whitman faced the reality of the wounded, the dying and death in the civil war. He wrote the famous elegies on Lincoln's death "O captain! My captain! , "when lilacs last in the Dooryard Bloom's Hush's be the camps Today" Death is the subject" of Out of the Cradle Indolently Raking" , "Come up from the fields father" "vigil strange I kept on the field on Night" and " Dirge for two Veterans" No fear of death but calm acceptance. The recurrent theme of death, however, does not make Whitman's poetry morbid or gloomy. Whitman does not fear death, but accepts it with calmness death is delicious' as expressed in "Out of the cradle endlessly rocking" the sea whispers the word, but he sea is associated with motherhood and hence there is the implication of death being a natural transition to rebirth. This poem ends on a note of acceptance, as does the elegy, "When lilacs last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" the hermit thrush in the poem welcomes "lovely and soothing death" which comes to all sooner or later. The idea of the immortal soul reduces the tradition fear of death.

Mystical Interpretation of Death as a Liberator:

Death for Whitman is a part of the cyclical, cosmic dance of life. This cosmic rhythm is manifest everywhere even in a dung heap which while being refuse is also teeming with life. We have to be prepared to lose ourselves in the sea of death, in that flux, in that rhythm, but only ultimately to "find ourselves" in it, that is, gain spiritual awareness. Whitman is a poet of continuity. Death is not the end of life, as a part of the progressive evolutionary movement of creation, it is a renewal, a beginning, a deliveries" death delivers one into a greater reality. It is a sort of passage, a mystically foreshadowed and necessary way of re-union with cosmic energy or the divine energy. Whitman considered life and death as part of the ceaseless eternal journey. Death is not at end of life, for Whitman is a poet of continuity, of eternal progress. Death merely brings renewal, freedom and evolution. Death is not an end, for it is part of an

endless cycle. Death merely leads to a greater reality; it merely causes change. He believes in the immortality of the individual soul.

The theme of death is every-recurrent in Whitman's poetry. This is to some extent inevitable is the light of the mystical element in his poetry. Whitman understood the nature and significance of death and tried to communicate his understanding to the reader. In section 6 of the poem song of myself the poet expresses the immortality of the soul devaluing the power of death. Death is inevitable for very living creatures of the world. Nothing can stand again at it. To most of people death is dreadful. But Whitman ensures that death has actually no power, death means rebirth. He says after death men remain "alive and will somewhere." To prove his ideology, he asserts even "The smallest sprout shows there is really no. death" Whitman frankly reveals that death can't make an end to any self. Self just moves onward and outward. Song of myself is full of references to death, but in all cases, death is linked with the notion of immortality. The old and young woman and children die but they are alive and will somewhere.

In section 24, the poet re-cognizes the inherent dignity of every individual. While describing the individual, he considers the body and the soul equally important. He asserts that every part of the human body is equally important and sacred. The sexual aspect also gets a sacred touch at the hands of the poet. He glorifies copulation as it is the ingredient of procreation. Copulation is as important as death. One is not superior to the other. Death is not final ending to life but it is a lease for the next birth the rebirth.

In Section 27 of the poem, the poet speaks of the immortality of the individual soul which is part of the divine soul having power to wander anywhere in any form. Whitman as a believer of mysticism, realizes that he is part of the divine power. Every object of the world has its share with the universal soul for we know the creator exists in creation. God is everywhere and everything is God. "To be in any form" suggests the Divine is the One of many ones. The soul is immortal since it becomes submerged with the divine soul by its mystical journey.

In section 46, the poet describes through space and time until at the end he arrives at his destination outside both and death is a period of transition before one reaches the all absorbing ocean of God. Death is not the final soy in life. Death is not an end is itself, but it is the beginning of another life.

In section 49, the poet describes the glorification of death. The poet is unafraid of death. He accepts it as a part of life. People shun it as a litter hug of morality" but he welcomes it as he says death is the gateway to another life. Life after all, he says, is "the leavings of many deaths." Death is treated in a matter of fact way by the poet. He does not present it as a feature to be dreaded. The poet hence delineates his approach to death, asks mankind not to shudder at the word "Death" and also shows "the oneness of all" that is the souls merge with the divine offer release from death.

In section 50, the poet expresses his realization that death does not bring end to like, rather it brings eternal happiness to the immortal soul. His journey and quest for selfhood have now come in full circle. He feels there is something that outweighs death. Whitman talks about the self as part of the eternal life process. There is no death. For man is reincarnated time and time again. The poet speaks about man's relation with the moment and with eternity. Eternity is time endless, as is the self. The poet does not prescribe any fixed pathway to the knowledge, of the self. The poet says that through death, one may reach to God. Life and death are not two different Phenomenon's to the poet. Life is neither chaotic nor finite; it is harmonious, reflecting the union of the poet's individual soul with the divine soul.

In section 52, the poet expresses, he is not afraid of death or the problems posed by life. He wants to do his best for his fellow human beings He is equally humble. The sections thenceforward overflowed with thought provoking ideas about that mystic experience. The vastness of the significance of the mystic experience makes the poet a very humble person. Whitman's conception of death is not limited to death as a biological fact. He understands death to be a sort of passage necessary for re-union with cosmic or divine energy. In Whitman's poetry. Life and death are fused into a universal synthesis that is conceived sometimes as personal immortality and sometimes as re-absorption into an affirmative cosmic process that is occasionally identified with God. Through death one can see into the heart of creation where, too, life is. Whitman is a poet of death but death in a philosophical sense, transcending the limitations of time and not death as annihilator and an end to life. Whitman understood the nature and significance of death and tried to communicate his understanding to the reader. In section 6 of the poem song of myself the poet expresses the immortality of the soul devaluing the power of death. Death is inevitable for very living creatures of the world. Nothing can stand again at it. To most of people death is dreadful. But Whitman ensures that death has actually no power, death means rebirth.

Death is linked with the notion of immortality. The old and young woman and children die but they are alive and will somewhere. All optimistic view of death and belief in immortal. While describing the individual, he considers the body and the soul equally important. He asserts that every part of the human body is equally important and scared. The sexual aspect also gets a sacred touch at the hands of the poet. He glorifies copulation as it is the ingredient of procreation. Copulation is as important as death. One is not superior to the other.

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Conclusion:

Whitman is a mystic as much as he is a poet of democracy and science, but a mystic without a creed. He sees the body as the manifestation of the spirit which is delivered by death into a higher life. A spear of grass is not an inert substance for him but God's handkerchief, the flag of my disposition. The real is transmuted and he has cosmic visions. Whitman was a revolutionary in his frank treatment of sexual love in his poetry. He insisted on acceptance and celebration of man's sexual nature in all its manifestations and complexity. He regarded love to be "the Kelson of the universe" and love and sex in his poetry cannot be viewed in isolation from the themes of democracy, science and religion. Whitman's conception of death is not limited to death as a biological fact. He understands death to be a sort of passage necessary for re-union with cosmic or divine energy. In Whitman's poetry life and death are fused into a universal synthesis that is conceived sometimes as personal immortality. Whitman is a poet of death but death in a philosophical sense and not death as annihilator and end to life.

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