

Reading response of walt whitman's poem

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Reading response of Walt Whitman's poem "Myself and Mine" I chose this poem *Myself and Mine*, and the first idea that cropped up in my mind is the theme of Freedom. The universal freedom humankind is entitled to, and the aspiration to have personal identity. This is evident from the line, "to speak readily and clearly, to feel at home among common people" (Whitman, Stanza 1, Line 4). *Myself and Mine* gymnastic ever has metaphorically been used to mean he will live to be himself forever. In the first line of this poem, the poet comes out strongly with his need to identify himself freely, in all conditions. He believes that his identity is important above all other things surrounding him. He has unwavering quest to be free. He says, "And to hold our own in terrible positions on land and sea" (Whitman, Stanza 1, Line 1) He has used imagery in the line, "Not for an embroider" (Whitman, Stanza 2, Line 1), to distance himself from sycophancy. The poet seems to hate people who lack personal identity since he believes they just follow and heed the views of other people without a fight. He seeks to change their views "to chisel ornaments" (Whitman, Stanza 3, Line 1) from following their leaders, "Plenteous supreme gods" (Whitman, Stanza 3, Line 2) without question. Fight against the state and its laws crops up strongly in the third stanza. The poet is fighting against oppression of his rights, in his country, by the existing government. Ironically, he reveals to the audience that his fellow citizens have no problem with their freedom since they seem to consent to the prevailing laws. He writes, "Let others promulge the laws, I will make no account of the laws" (Whitman, Stanza 4, Line 2). Radicalism rears its' head when he says, "I praise no eminent man, I rebuke to his face the one that was thought most worth," (Whitman, Stanza 4, Line 4). In this statement, he is angry with the leader whom majority follows.

Struggle for self-identity has also been metaphorically used in several instances like “ who are you? And what are you secretly guilty of all of your life?” (Whitman, Stanza 5, Line 1). He is using identity as an excuse to fight the existing government in his country. Education alone cannot help one to stand for his rights and identity, either you are learned or not. He does not need to work to live. He is a free being, who is not answerable to anyone as he was born to live like a bird. This is evident when he says, “ What others give as duties I give as living impulses” (Whitman, Stanza 7, Line 2).

Politics and radicalism characteristics of the writer are also strongly brought out in the second last stanza. He agitates for human freedom and does not respect the existing laws. He even fears he will or might be arrested for his criticism as in this line “ I charge you forever reject those who would expound me, for I cannot expound myself” (Whitman, Stanza 9, Line 2).

Death is also symbolized in this stanza, although indirectly.

He completes this poem by stressing on freedom to everybody and everything. In my own analysis, freedom, personal identity, personal rights to choose, to live, expression, radicalism are the major issue that the poet has tried to put across in this poem, its’ an interesting political activism poem.

Works Cited

Whitman, Walt. " Myself and Mine." Classic Literature (2014). Internet Source.

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