

Walt whitman poetry analysis

[Profession](#), [Poet](#)



The Stages of Life

Poetry is the way to express one's feelings, viewpoints, and experiences in life through a certain style and rhythmic format. In the 19th century, a poet named Walt Whitman transformed American poetry in a challenging conventional absorbing way that captivated his readers into a different era of poetry. Whitman was born on May 31, 1819, in Long Island, New York in a Quakers household and he was one of eight children. He started his voyage in the world of publishing at the young age of eleven holding different occupations in every aspect of publication of a newspaper. Whitman was especially known as a poet of the working-class population where he presented his journalistic and encyclopedic listings that became a trademark of his style. His poems reflected his journey in life whether it was good or bad by turning poetry more towards realism than fictional pieces of literature that were written in his era. Unfortunately, Whitman passed away at the age of 73 in Camden, New Jersey; however, Whitman's poems have inspired other poets to embrace poetry as style literature to entice and educate the incoming youth of the world. Thus, Walt Whitman's viewpoints on the daily human struggles of life in the form of mental, spiritual, and physical health are consistent towards the present day and time of society.

In Whitman's poem " Song of Myself," he talks about his existence, his relationship with his environments, and the vast universe around him. In this poem, Whitman celebrates his life, his health, and everything he has accomplished through his experiences by describing his interactions with other individuals, nature, and the understanding of life through his beliefs. Whitman worries about the dark side of humanity have to offer like riots,

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war, causing fear, murder, and other ill-fated mindsets that the human mind can think of. Whitman stated in section 46, " Not I, not anyone else can travel that road for you, /You must travel it for yourself." In this excerpt, he discusses the quest of life where one has to travel his or her own journey alone and do the passage for themselves and not anyone else.

Also mentioned in section 46, " You are asking me questions, and I hear you, / I answer that I cannot answer, you must find out for yourself." He talks about questions, which one has to answer for himself and himself, alone. Whitman explains that every person has to fight their own battles and must overcome their own fears in order to seek the answers that we have been searching for. Before a human departs this earth, one tries to prove their importance of his or her existence to society by proving their value that meets their requirements. Whitman further explains that if one doesn't value their own self, then how can others accept them, so that individual must first overcome their undesirable views of themselves and learn how to love and appreciate themselves in order to obtain the approval of others. One needs to come out as a shining armor through all the pros and cons of life to provide importance for his/her own sake to get complete satisfaction. This poem conveys to how the mindset of the early 19th century hasn't changed in modern times, how a person must still overcome their struggles, seek approval of others, and find the answers that they are searching for to make them feel that they accomplished something in their lives.

The poem, " Crossing the Brooklyn Ferry" was originally called " Sun-down Poem" in 1856 but changed its name in 1860. In the start of the poem in

section 1, Whitman stated: “ And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more to me, and more in my meditations, that you might suppose.” The poem is based on a ferry, which takes individuals back and forth every day, and it signifies time in motion, which goes in the same direction from one generation to another. In section 4, “ These and all else were to me the same as they are to you.” People come and go, generations’ change, but the land, water, and the ferry appear to be the constant presence in the poem. The ferry represents the cycle of life which flows in the same directions for every generation but with a different time phase. Whitman sees and visualizes for himself and for future generations the elements like landmarks and alike which will be constant and would not change significantly due to his time.

Whitman also states that there is a continuous battle between good and evil inside every human, which is a widespread psychological obstacle that every human has to face at least once in his or her life and will go on till now and for future generations to the end of time. Uncertainty, anger, and envy will always conflict over love and happiness. Whitman informs the future generation to incorporate a go with the flow of life mentality by keeping in mind the teachings and preaching of life while addressing the importance of physical objects or mementos, which play a significant role in the continuation of mankind. He wants the succeeding generation to comprehend the importance of spirituality, unification, fairness, and peace instead of hatred. In section 9, “ We use you, and do not cast you aside-we plant you permanently within us,” Whitman explains about the teachings that were explained to us by our preachers and how he wants everyone

needs to expand their perspective regarding their views on mankind and establish their newfound goals towards devoutness and perpetuity towards accomplishing peace in one's life and this world. Whitman sees America as an ever-flowing land meaning that as time resumes and as technology continues to change, the mentality and the circumstances around the individual will not seem to change. He sees America as a land where life continues to flow like the water under the ferry which holds people of different ethnic backgrounds and religions aboard onto a ship who have the same goals and views of life as the next person. He wants everybody to live in agreement and harmony just like the two shorelines that may look separate but are portions of the same land.

In the poem, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," the poet mourns the death of President Abraham Lincoln. In section 1, "I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring." This poem is an effort on his behalf to display his personal heartache and loss over an important political figure that he admired the most. He also imagines the demise of the soldiers who are resting in peace by losing their life for their country, but the misery and sorrow of their families who have lost their loved ones continues. The suffering and loss of a beloved one are not for the dead to experience, but it is for those who continue to live. The conflict of the personal loss, grief, and ultimate appeasement with the cycle of life and death is the main theme of this poem. A life taken away for meager feelings like hatred or notoriety may give the individual temporary happiness; however, in the conclusion, it usually ends in losing something of equal or greater value for the very same aggressor. In section 2, "O powerful western fallen star! O shades of night- O

moody, tearful night!” The poet pays a tribute to a fallen star that he believes to represent Abraham Lincoln, which the star is lost in the dark night and is now departed from the world. The violence behind Lincoln’s death has been compared to the Crucifixion and Whitman believes it will result in reawakening and revival. Whitman in this poem also wants the reader to remember the symbolic life of President Lincoln than his heartbreaking passing, which left the public in the center of confusion and grief. He strains on the true significance of life and death as a sequence in which death follows the life and every life will have to end in death. Whitman compares life to a beautiful morning, which ends in the night, and lastly enters the last stage of death. He goes on and states that life goes on even in the midst of sudden death or heartbreak of death. As dusk lands life starts to bloom, and as dawn comes everything goes to slumber, these are the façades of life in the arrangement of love, grief, and death.

In the present day, many have witnessed major tragedies like 9/11 where a massive amount of life was lost in a short period of time and has struck the entire nation into deep disbelief; eventually, as time passes by, life went on and a new beginning starts. The monument of 9/11 came into existence, the monument allowed the families to visit and acquire the assurance that their loved ones are in the resting in peace and will be remembered for their loss of life. In the poem, the poet leaves the sprig of lilacs on the grave, as a symbol of heartache and so is the monument of 9/11 a symbol of heartache for the tragedy and its victims. To honor the tragic losses of life in one a poet uses instance a lilac and in the other, the monument is used for giving peace to the grieving families.

To sum up, one can say Walt Whitman was a poet who narrated reality as he saw in his poems. His poems reflect not only the 19th century but as well the present times in which we live now. In his poem “ Song of Myself,” Whitman talks about his expeditions from one place to another in the way he viewed them, which is similar to the present-day world. Proving one’s reason for survival, seeking appreciation, and fighting for one’s rights have not changed and will never change for years to come. These are the things, which will always remain unchanged, and will continue to dominate in every society and generation, thus the poem, “ Song of Myself,” can also be called a modern-day epic as well. Whitman’s other poem, “ Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” is about the series of life through the eyes of a spectator who sits at bay and watches it go by. In the poem “ Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” the poet explains how the repetitive routine of the ferry doesn’t change from day to day or from month to month or even year-to-year, this course also will not be any different for generations to come. He talks about land and water to be the factors that will never change and the only changing elements are the individuals who will be traveling this ferry from time to time. Whitman talks about the strengths and weaknesses of mankind and informs the reader to keep our way of life in a compassionate way. Lastly, but not the least is the third poem, “ When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d,” the poet mourns and is sadden over the premature death of our beloved President Abraham Lincoln. He talks about how the season spring, the blooming of lilacs, fallen star will always make him remind of the time (spring), way (assassinated), and magnitude (grief) was experienced by him and the entire nation. The ways of grieving are still the same but have taken a new route towards the

internet specifically social media in present-day and time to express our sorrow. Whitman in his time voiced his grief in the way of his poems, but currently, grief is conveyed and shown in different facets. We may build monuments, mark landmarks, or post on our social networks to make people notice of our misfortunes and losses, but still, the process of grieving is still the same. Whitman always resembled elements and linked them with his own experiences and created his poems to carry a certain kind of meaning for the average man or women to communicate and teach the future generations, whereas, in the present-day world, we still express our messages, but here the literature has been taken over by progression of technology in terms of social networking. Whitman described life in a truthful way and as he experienced it, his writings were created and focused on the circumstances he observed as he went by in his travels.

Works Cited

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