

Cosmic Philosophy in Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*

Filosofía cósmica en *Hojas de hierba* de Walt Whitman

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Abstract

One hundred and fifty years ago, in 1855, *Leaves of Grass* was first published in the United States having several editions by his author, this unique poetical work became Walt Whitman's inspiring gift to America and to the whole world. As a tribute to the high creativity and the influential thoughts of this poet, this article intends to explore Whitman's cosmic philosophy in his poetry based on his insight of "the Ideal Poet", who is able to experience a sense of sacredness, a sense of timelessness and a sense of unification with the whole cosmos. His cosmic vision also provides an ethical teaching to the human race and reveals man's capacity to reach the divine.

Key words:

Cosmic philosophy, cosmic awareness, transcendentalism, Confucianism, unification, sacredness, mysticism, the Ideal Poet, Unitarian church.

Resumen

Hace ciento cincuenta años, en 1855, se publicó *Hojas de hierba* por primera vez en Estados Unidos. Tras varias ediciones hechas por el mismo autor, esta obra poética única se convirtió en un regalo de inspiración de Walt Whitman para América y el mundo entero. Como un tributo a la fina creatividad y al ingenio influyente de este poeta, este artículo explora la filosofía cósmica presente en sus poemas orientándola hacia su propuesta del "poeta ideal" quien posee el don de llegar a experimentar un sentido de santidad, un sentido de eternidad y un sentido de unificación con todo el cosmos. Su visión cósmica también contribuye con un mensaje ético para la vida del ser humano al igual que revela la capacidad del hombre para alcanzar lo divino.

Palabras clave:

Filosofía cósmica, conciencia cósmica, trascendentalismo, confucianismo, unificación, santidad, misticismo, poeta ideal, iglesia unitaria.

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Ni un solo momento, viejo hermoso Walt Whitman,
he dejado de ver tu barba llena de mariposas...
ni tu voz como una columna de ceniza...
ni un solo momento, Adán de sangre, macho,
hombre sólo en el mar, viejo hermoso Walt Whitman.

Federico García Lorca en *Oda a Walt Whitman*

Puse la frente entre las olas profundas,
descendí como gota entre la paz sulfúrica,
y, como un ciego, regresé al jazmín
de la gastada primavera humana.

Pablo Neruda

Because of the serious impact of the bloody American Civil War in 1861, in which the north and the south had divided into opposite forces due to the slavery controversy; Walt Whitman, "the Good Gray poet," or "the Modern Christ," as he has been traditionally called, dedicated a lifetime to reaffirm the ethical and democratic ideals upon which the United States was founded. He witnessed, not only as a poet, but as a nurse in several military hospitals, the effects of a relentless political conflict in which thousands of men died and the greatness of his nation was breaking apart. It is from this point, the destruction of humanity to humanity, that Walt Whitman (1819-1892) developed a sense of sympathy to man and addressed a spiritual dimension toward a search of an alternative cosmic reality. Hence, his poetry, compiled in his powerful work *Leaves of Grass*, revised and edited by himself between 1855 and 1892, deals with cosmic philosophy, that which states that man is a being whose complete self is both physical and spiritual and whose cosmic substance is built up in such a harmonious identity that his complete human spirit is able to reach the divine.

Undoubtedly, Whitman's cosmic awareness was influenced by the American nationalism of the nineteenth century which adopted cosmic philosophy as one of its main principles. America believed that its economic, industrial and social prosperity was a result of God's will and that they had been blessed by the divine. Thus, the fast and promising development of the US was conceived as spiritual progress and mystical growth. God's designs had provided Americans the means to transcend economically, so

they, in return, as an act of thankfulness, immortalized the famous sentence "in God we trust" on their currency as the symbol of fortune and success allowed by God's consent. In fact, President Thomas Jefferson (1743-1823) in The Declaration of Independence (1776) had stated in the introduction,

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which *the laws of nature and of nature's God* entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the courses which impel them to the separation.

Here, Jefferson appealed to the "law of nature and nature's God" as the providence of America to become a democratically growing nation. Jefferson also stated that "all men are created equal: that they are endowed by their *creator* with certain alienable rights; that among these there are rights, government and happiness," ideas that are also present in Whitman's work in which God is conceived as the one who wants America to be free and happy.

In the same way, Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) had said that "rebellion to tyrants is *obedience to God*" with the conviction that America should be free from the British restraint because all kinds of actions against political abuse and arbitrary powers are a religious act, "the act that enables the human species to fulfill its *divinely*, ordained nature and thus to complete the scheme of creation" (Babusci, 1991:142). In this sense, Whitman's major cosmic concerns were not only to explore his own self and individuality, but to honor the democratic thought, the economic achievements and the industrial potential of his nation as these ideals were based on God's wise will. All these individual, nationalist and universal elements put together involve Whitman's conception of cosmic vision. As a poet, the cosmic philosophy offers him the guideline to assume an intellectual awareness with which he emerges as divine carrying divinity within himself as he equally recognizes the ones around him. Thus, if Whitman values the national ideals of his country, the people

worldwide and himself in a *whole* cosmos, he is able to raise “the collective undeveloped man out of the gross state of his vegetative existence” (Themanlys, 2000: 3) to take him to a collective spiritual state in which the *Divine* is manifested. Therefore, in view of exploring Whitman’s cosmic vision in *Leaves of Grass*, it is essential to come up with the three conditions that determine his proposal of “the Ideal Poet”, which are his ability to identify with himself, his awareness to identify with the world around him, including man and nature, and his power to identify with God. These three types of cosmic compatibility are meant to make “the Ideal Poet” experience a sense of sacredness, a sense of timelessness and a sense of unification, that is, a total cosmic experience with the divine. Whitman’s visualization of his own role as a poet of his nation was that one capable of interpreting both, his inner self and the outside around him. He called this poet “Ideal” in the sense that when the poet is empowered to identify with himself and the others, he will experience a sense of unification, and, equally, if he is also able to identify with God, he will experience a sense of sacredness and, in consequence, a sense of timelessness or cosmic eternity.

Dr. Richard M. Buck (1837-1902), a close friend of Whitman’s said that some influential individuals in the history of the world were able to acquire the cosmic consciousness; among them, Jesus, Mohammed, Dante, Francis Bacon, William Blake, Balzac and obviously Walt Whitman. To understand the meaningful elucidation of cosmic awareness, Dr. Buck also states that,

it comes suddenly without warning with a sensation of being immersed in
a flame of rose-colored cloud and is accompanied
by a feeling of ecstasy,
moral and intellectual illumination in which, like
a flash, a clear conception
in outline is presented to the mind of the meaning
and drift of the
universe” (Hefner, 2005: 1).

This awareness provides the individual with the ideal setting and time to undergo *a sense of sacredness*. In this sense, Whitman’s cosmology lies in the

fact that the universe is full of life and filled with the illuminated spirit of God. If the cosmos is God, and man, who is part of the cosmos, is God, then God is in the real nature of man, a mystical meaning which is not easy understood by the intellect. Rudolf Otto, in his book *The Idea of the Holy*, also explains that cosmic mysticism “grips or stirs the human mind. The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood or deepest *worship*” (1977: 12). Such sacred cosmic view has brought the idea that Whitman should be read “as a mystic in the oriental pattern”. (McCormick, 1979: 80) since he is thought of having read about the oriental cosmic philosophy before writing his poetry. For instance, in his celebrated collection of poems, *Leaves of Grass*, the cosmic consciousness can be appreciated as he says in *Song of Myself*, chant 21:

I am the poet of the body and I am the poet of the
soul, the pleasures
of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are
with me. The first
I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I trans-
late into a new tongue

In this particular case of introspection, the poet recognizes the idea of the self. His own individuality consists of both body and soul. Both parts are equally important because they form a cosmic balance that allows him to be a man and a poet. Since the soul is understood by the means of the body, all matter is equally divine to the spirit. That is, his physical presence and his inner entity become balanced components of the universe. As can be seen in the first line, the poet assumes a worshipful role to honor himself spiritually and physically, which is the first stage of the cosmos of being. But in addition to the recognition of the self, the poet establishes a higher *sense of sacredness* as he identifies with “the pleasures of heaven,” which seem to represent he is having a mystical experience with God. He experiences a spiritual ecstasy that intends to “increase upon himself”, that is to say, to develop his full spiritual potentialities, as he seems to reach the highest level of cosmic condition known as sacredness. The poet is also aware of his weak side, that

one related to “the pains of hell,” which may allude to the corruptive banalities and sins of the human being, but in his message, the poet clearly suggests that “those pains of hell” can be restrained because they can be transformed into spiritual power. In this way, the poet reaffirms in this fragment that man can be near God, and God and man together are the sacred cosmos itself.

To remark, as stated before, Whitman’s cosmic conscience not only turns toward God, but to the rest of human beings as well. In the next verses taken from the same poem, *Song of Myself*, he continues saying, “I am the poet of the woman the same as the man, / and I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man.” Once he has apprehended a sense of sacred communication with God, then he entirely identifies with other human beings. To Whitman, the self implies first, his individual recognition and then the collective recognition with the rest of the world and mankind. Thus, the cosmic consciousness in this poem consists of a mystically harmonious identification with the physical and the spiritual, a unity in which the poet, the other men and God become one. In consequence, according to the cosmic philosophy, the aim of the elements of the universe is unification, (Themanlys, 2000: 6) and Whitman is not far away from experiencing a *sense of union* with the cosmos. This universal unification, defines the characteristics of what Whitman called “the Ideal Poet.” From the fragments previously cited, we can observe how he regarded the poet empowered by the union of three important components: For him, “the Ideal Poet” is that enlightened person who sees himself as the poet of man, the poet of nature and the poet of God. Once “the Ideal Poet” establishes a congenial bond with all the elements of the universe, he undergoes a mystically cosmic wholeness. In consequence, this sense of union leads the poet to find himself as a prophetic interpreter of the present and the future to reach a *sense of timelessness*. He ventures to say, “The past and the present wilt- I have fill’d them, emptied them and proceed to fill my next fold of the future.” Here, Whitman’s thought about the capacity that the Ideal Poet has, embodies time as not disjointed or separated, but as a progressive, endless flow of

stages. The word “fill” for instance, implies the glorification and the contributions that he, as the Ideal Poet, has offered and will offer to the harmony of the universe and more specifically to the growth of his nation through time. This leads to one perspective of the cosmic philosophy that considers the process of evolution as a limitless expansion toward eternity and immortality. Whitman, as a visionary poet, sees beyond his own world. Therefore, he conceives death as a normal fact of life; death is also a kind of life because man’s spiritual and human condition is so powerful and indestructible that he will never die. Man develops an eternal evolutionary process from the physical to the spiritual. This conception is stated in *Song of Myself*, chant 6, as he says,

What do you think has become of the young and the old men?

And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere,

The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,

And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at the end to arrest it.

His theory of the evolution of life does not include death, but transformation. Human beings of the past are still alive atoms living “somewhere” in the invisible or visible realms of the cosmos. For him, everything in the universe goes “onward” and “nothing collapses” (*Song of Myself*, chant 6) since the evolution of the world should be a gradual process in which man changes into a different and better form. As the cosmic philosophy suggests,

Every step on the path of evolution unites us more firmly with the Divine

Indwelling Presence and with the Universal Being, and our individual

perfection is limitless due to our ability to serve as a garment for the manifestation of heavenly light” (Themanlys, 2000: 7).

“The Ideal Poet” is, in consequence, an illuminated genius who expresses his vision of the world within an undivided spiritual union of all forms of life through the evolving and continuous flow of

time. He is not afraid of death because death was created by God and through it we can reach him through a sense of ethereal timelessness.

Walt Whitman's proposal of the qualities of "the Ideal Poet" was not only influenced by the American nationalism. It was also highly influenced by the transcendentalist movement of the US in the nineteenth century whose view of life held similarities to that of the cosmic philosophy. As the transcendentalists such as Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and even Edgar Allan Poe did, Whitman believed that reality was given by irrational, supernatural and mystical elements which would take man to an ideal level of perfection, previously called, in cosmic terms, as *the divine*. In fact, Emerson (1803-1882) in his masterpiece *Nature* (1836) presented his transcendentalist manifesto in which he implies that the true reality of the spirit is reached through an appropriateness of sensory perceptions and intuition:

The simple perception of natural forms is a delight... The rays that come from those heavenly worlds will separate between him (man) and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime (compiled by McMichael, 1985: 447-450).

As here stated, man possesses the faculty of perceiving the world through sensory stimulation in order to have the highest and the most supreme encounter with the divine, "heavenly worlds" and "the sublime", which is possible to happen by intuitive power only. In the same way, Thoreau (1817-1862), in his work *Walden*, exposed the most influential philosophical expression of transcendentalism. In this work, a collection of eighteen essays, he recounted the human potentialities to reach a spiritual level: "Direct your eyes right inward and you'll find thousands of religions in your life yet undiscovered. Travel them, and be expert in home-Cosmography." (Thoreau, 1854, edited by Wood Krutch, 1981: 341). The transcendentalists were also attracted to

the natural world since they believed that meeting God through supernatural, intuitive and imaginary experiences, the individual had to be totally delightful in isolation with nature, ideas that later become part of Whitman's cosmic thought.

Certain religious and historical considerations need to be accounted in order to understand the reasons why Whitman was influenced by the transcendentalist tradition of meeting God. First, the Unitarian church in the US had been unable to fulfill the spiritual needs of Americans because of its rational and strict approach to Christianity. It had removed authentic religious principles such as intuition, feelings and mysticism over reason to adopt a rational and rigorously religious practice. The communication with God had become a passive and repressive experience in which Americans learned about God through the scriptures, the sermons and the demanding commandments delivered by ministers. People were not only repressed to fear God and see him like a superior being, but to obey those impositions established by religious leaders who intended to limit the free right of every believer to worship God without any kind of restrictions.

In opposition to these religious limitations, the transcendentalists proclaimed that man should have the personal choice to encounter God by other possibilities different from the imposed ones. Man should be free to have sensory and supernatural experiences to develop his own intuitions and to discover mystical revelations; in other words, man should not be a passive receiver any longer recording in his mind prayers, laws, biblical passages and threats of punishment. Emerson (1802-1882) had said to Americans in his essay *Self-Reliance* (1841) that freedom was "to believe in your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, that is genius" (compiled by High, 1996: 44); because this leads the human being to establish a sacred close communication with God through intuition and liberation. "For the transcendentalists the point was that the real truths, the fundamental truths, lay outside the experience of the senses, residing instead in the "over soul" a universal and benign omnipotence... a God known

to men only in moments of mystic enthusiasm” (Babusci, 1991: 257), a vision that is later conceived in Whitman’s poetry.

That is why Whitman is believed to have been greatly influenced by the philosophical conceptions of the transcendentalist credo which, in turn, had been influenced by the orient cosmology. McCormick in his book *Walt Whitman: Orientalist or Nationalist?*, cites a considerable comment written by Alfred S. Wang who says that “the orient gave a fresh impetus to the progressive thought of American writers of the nineteenth century: Emerson in his gnomic wisdom and transcendental insight; Thoreau in his rural ideal and practical individualism; Whitman in his democratic chant and cosmic vision” (1979: 80). Due to the fact that Transcendentalists had read Confucius’ and Mencius’ philosophy, then, Whitman’s verse, “*Walt Whitman, a Cosmos*” (*Song of Myself*, chant 24) could be the echoes of his reading of Emerson and his interest in Taoism and Confucianism as well. Assuming his role of “the Ideal Poet”, “a Cosmos”, Whitman’s quest for transcendental realities is clearly seen in his cosmic identification with God through the development of the senses and intuition. In his poem, *Give me the Splendid Silent Sun*, from *Drum-Taps*, he reaches a mystical moment with the elements of the universe to fulfill a possibly divine approach through the senses:

Give me the Splendid Silent Sun with his beams
full-dazzling ...
Give me the trellish’d grape... give me fresh corn
and wheat...
Give me a field where the unmow’d grass
grows...
Give me the odorous at sunrise a garden of beau-
tiful flowers where
I can walk undisturb’d.
Give me away aside from the noise of the world a
rural domestic life,
Give me the warble spontaneous songs... for my
own ears only.

In this instant of self-fulfillment, the poet reaches a supersensory affinity with the elements of nature because his senses function harmoniously to dis-

cover the intensity of his spiritual life as he goes through a moment of sublime exaltation, in which he confesses some lines after in the poem: “My own soul trampling down what it ask’d for.” In this fragment we can see how “the Ideal Poet” feels his sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing perceive the world in a perfect sensation of pleasure as he is immersed to the point that his soul is “trampling” joyfully in a revealing moment of ecstasy. In the same way, as the transcendentalist viewed it, nature offers Whitman the ideal setting for mystical self-realization. In the poem above, the richness of natural elements is highly remarked; “silent sun” which emphasizes life, enlightenment and a peaceful and continuous movement of the universe, the “unmow’d grass,” green and fresh, which symbolizes the constant growth of life, the “beautiful flowers” which reinforce the amazing creations of the world represented by the “garden”, and man himself, as a creature who walks “undisturb’d”, that is, who goes through life in a peaceful way, portrait a sublime *moment* of close compatibility with nature as the ideal setting to achieve happiness. Here, once more, in this poem, Whitman reiterates one of the main potentialities of the Ideal Poet, the one that enables him to identify with the other elements of the universe, known as the sense of unification.

But in addition to his sensory exploration, Whitman, as the transcendentalists did, also engages in a tireless search for God. In another poem of *Leaves of Grass*, “A Passage to India”, section 8, his soul is sailing “On waves of ecstasy,” he addresses God as “O thou transcendent” and “a moral spiritual fountain” to show God as the giver of life; “fountain,” in fact, represents the water of life. For the poet God is a cosmic designer, a transcendent deity that makes him shiver “at the thought of God.” The poet’s soul is experiencing here once more a complete sense of sacredness in which there is a harmonious union with God in order to understand God, himself and the others. Interestingly, although in the poem *Give me the Splendid Silent Sun*, “the Ideal Poet” had firstly said “Give me away aside from the noise of the world a rural domestic life,” in an attempt to find himself with God in intimacy and in natural

surroundings, once he has achieved that religious identification, he immediately hastens to seek the congenial identity with the rest of human beings, an action that turns out to be opposite to transcendentalism. He writes,

“Give me faces and streets - give me these phantoms incessant and
endless along the trotters! Give me interminable eyes-give me
women- give me comrades and lovers by the thousands.

These lines clearly evoke a sense of cosmic unification based on friendship. The word “comrades” implies a group of people who share the same interests, and “lovers” suggest the mutual affection that may exist among the “thousands” of human beings who live together in the universe. Therefore, one more time, the cosmic consciousness of “the Ideal Poet” in his quest for being compatible with himself, the others and God is successfully accomplished. In *Leaves of Grass*, and in this concrete selection, he repetitively postulates his cosmic vision of God which differs from the traditional vision of the Unitarian church. In his poetry, God is seen not as a superior and fearful force, but as a friendly, benevolent and good being with man as can be seen in another significant moment of absolute contact he has with the Divine:

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that
pass all the arguments of the earth.
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 (*Song of Myself*, chant 5).

In this moment of mystical experience –we note it when he claims that the “peace” and “knowledge” he possesses right now have neither earthy nor logical “arguments” or explanations– “the Ideal Poet” is aware that the *sense of union* is based on brotherhood and comradeship. This fact suggests the Taoist principle of the *Ren* or relativity (McCormick, 1979:

81) in the sense that the complete existence or significance of one entity, in this case the poet, is solely dependent upon that of others, the human beings, nature and God, in an infinite experience that takes place in the *whole* cosmos. Figuratively, in this poem, God is giving his “hand” to the speaker and has become his “brother” and the other men and women are also his brothers and sisters. This is meant to be assumed that all creatures of the universe equally have the same position and importance, even God is equal to the others because, in this case, he is everyone’s brother. “God is the final comrade, the perfect embodiment...The relationship to God is the relationship to the ideal brotherhood, the perfectly fulfilled comradeship” (Miller, 1962: 64). In addition to the great discovery the poet makes in his mystical awareness of brotherhood and total interaction in which the *whole cosmos* is in “peace” and “Knowledge” is reached, he also reveals that the principal foundation of life is love; that is the element that allows “the Ideal Poet” to experience sacredness, unification and timelessness recurrently along his poetical work *Leaves of Grass*.

However, Whitman’s two different features contrast some ideals of the Transcendentalists: while they searched God in nature and in isolation far away from the interaction with the rest of the human beings, “to go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society” (Emerson, 1836, compiled by McMichael, 1985: 447), Whitman did need humanity around him, “men”, “women”, “children”, as an essential condition to reach a total cosmic awareness. Besides, Whitman was the first poet who changed the level of superiority of the soul and the spirit. As the celebrated author D. H. Lawrence outlooks, Whitman was the first man to “smash the old moral conception, that the soul of man is something superior and above the flesh” (compiled by Harvey, 1962: 11), an idea that differed from Emerson’s view of the over-soul. For Whitman, on the contrary, the soul is to stay in the flesh:

Stay in the limbs, and lips, and in the belly, Stay
in the breast and
womb. Stay there, O soul, where you belong. Stay
in the dark limb

of negroes, stay in the body of the prostitute, stay
in the sick flesh
of the syphilitic... Stay there, Soul, where you
belong.
("Song of the Open Road")

Whitman seems to suggest that one of the possibilities to reach cosmic truth is to accept that the soul is part of every person and that it is not something borrowed from a superior deity. The spiritual nature of man which is believed as immortal and immaterial directly belongs to man. It should be no longer regarded as a separable form of the body at the time of death susceptible to punishment or reward depending on earthly actions. The soul is in the sinners –"the prostitutes"–, the sick –"the syphilitic"–, and in all races, even in "the negroes", a controversial idea in the time Whitman lived. Such universal awareness of addressing everybody's soul is, in fact, an expression of the cosmic philosophy, a new and challenging attitude that contradicted those traditional views of the American Puritanism, the Unitarian church and even the transcendentalism in the nineteenth century because the soul, Whitman proclaims, must be "there," in man, where it really belongs.

Consequently, the cosmic revelation that Whitman attempts to reach with his poetry possesses an ethical and moral teaching. His poems overtone, in a broad sense, the Orientalist thought based on the harmonious accomplishment of life. Confucianism, for instance, teaches man to establish an individual, family and social communication with those around him. In this sense, Whitman's poetry usefulness to contemporary readers involves a set of principles and values to be taken into account in order to find happiness in our relationship with others. As stated before, through the path of life, or the *Dao*, the human being is supposed to adhere to the *Ren* or principle of reciprocity in his treatment to others. For this, Whitman proclaims in his poem "The Song of the Open Road," that:


All seem beautiful to me. I can repeat over to men
and women:
You have done such good to me I would do the
same to you,

I will recruit for myself and you as I go,
I will scatter myself among men and women as
I go,
I will toss a new gladness and roughness, among
them,
Whoever denies me it shall not trouble me,
Whoever accepts me he or she shall be blessed and
shall bless me....
Now I see the secret of the making of the best
persons,
It is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep
with the earth. (Section 5).

The open road, the *Dao*, represents life itself in which the poet shows a sense of togetherness by accepting each other, by doing good to those around us and by tolerating those who are different from us. The "secret" of life is to be a good person and to "grow" in affection, understanding, acceptance and comradeship with men and women to form a pleasing journey along the road of life. We, readers, are instructed to see that, although in life there are contradictions and antagonist forces, our self should be eager to establish a congenial bond with the elements that form the whole cosmos in order to succeed in getting, as Lao Zi said, a sense of liberation, that in Whitman's words are the growth in the "open air".

The human value of Whitman's poetry is to make us open our eyes to see that a *sense of unification* is our first priority. Cosmic awareness implies the practice of Confucianist elements such as the *Tao*, which focuses on transforming individuals into more harmonious creatures. Whitman, "the Ideal Poet", teaches us in *Leaves of Grass* the simplicity of life which paradoxically is determined by mystical, ethical and cosmic elements that for most of us seem difficult to reach. However, his model of life is not complicated, the main requirement to have a happily harmonious life is to be in peace: Kindness, respect, "calmness", "love", "sweetness", "loyalty", "self-esteem", "comradeship", "sympathy" and "tolerance" are part of a cosmic mind. Hence, Whitman's poems reflect the popular cosmic saying, "Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you."

Whitman also teaches us to reevaluate our concept of the Divine. In his poetry, contrary to the traditional western concern that man's life is to purge his sins, suffer on earth, in order to go to heaven after death and see God as a fearful and superior divinity, we can observe that his main concern is to place man around the concept of harmony with himself and the Divine in nature, "The efflux of the soul is happiness, here is happiness." The soul remains to man through his daily life and that is what makes him happy. Whitman's new doctrine postulates a morality of actual living in that the soul is man's.

The Divine, or the sense of sacredness, the sense of unification and the sense of timelessness are to happen here and now while we are alive, while we have both, body and soul. These revealing teachings in *Leaves of Grass*, which shocked many critics and thinkers in the nineteenth century, are indeed the expression of cosmic awareness which the human race is expected to reach in the evolution of life, as Whitman said, "Allons! The road is before us!", the "open road" is there to go ahead holding a harmoniously cosmic existence in the present and coming time. 

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