

M.A. II Semester (PG-2015)
American Literature

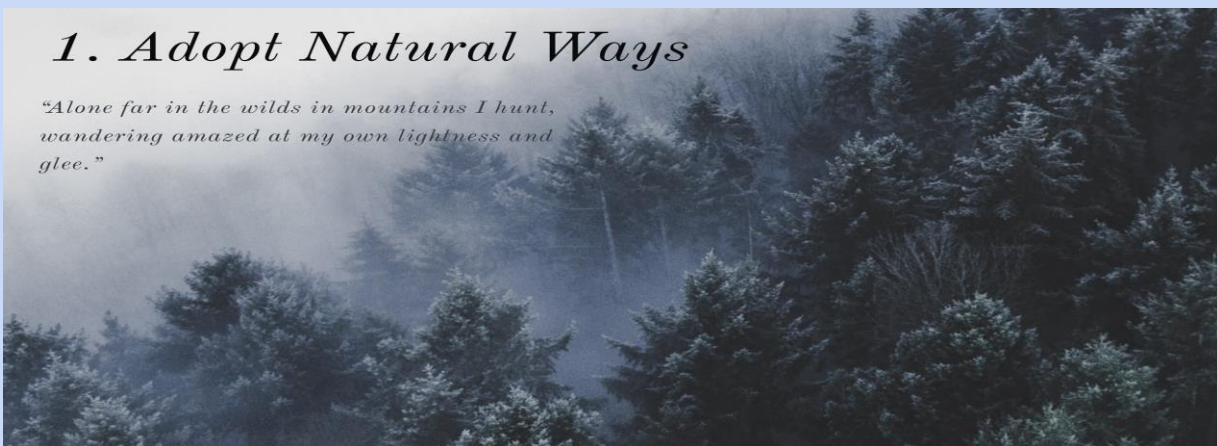
The Song and the Present Day Situation
-A Contextual Study
(The Song of Myself, Song-10)

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The “***Song of Myself***” is a beautiful poem composed by **Walt Whitman**, the great American poet. The poem is very significant as it has universal appeal. It was first published in 1855 in the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

To the poet the ***self is both individual and universal***. Man has an individual self, whereas the world has universal self. The poet longs to maintain his identity as well as to merge with the universal self.

The Song 10 of the poem is very relevant in contemporary scenario. We may analyse the poem under three sections.



1. **Adopt natural ways**: It is the time when there is an urgent need to adopt natural ways of living. Our life must be in harmony with nature. Today we are rejecting the natural ways of living and are facing the situation of severe climate change. In the month of April, it is getting cold. We all are familiar with other deadly consequences of not obeying and respecting nature. The poet is extremely happy in natural surroundings:

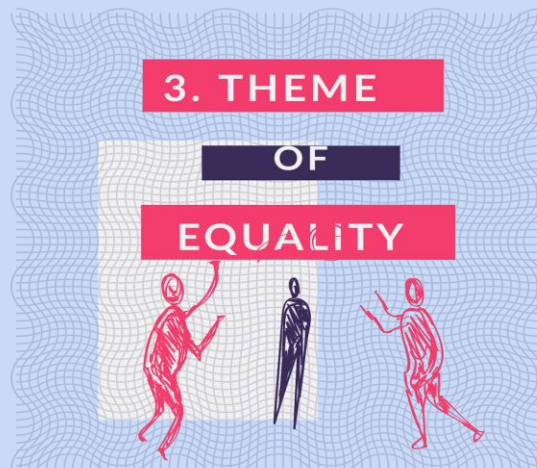
Alone far in the wilds in mountains I hunt, wandering amazed at my own lightness and glee.



2. **Simplicity as a way of Life**

2. **Simplicity as a way of Life**: It is the demand of time that we should develop a minimalist approach in our everyday life. We have to curtail our extravagance and demanding ways of life. Now people are forced to think to celebrate mega events like marriage in simple ways. It is really very surprising to see that the poet was in favour of simple marriage a long time back:

*I saw the marriage of the trapper in the open air, in the far west, the bride was a red girl,
Her father and his friends sat near.*



"The runaway slave came to my house and stooped outside.
I.. gave him a room.. and gave him some coarse clean clothes,
He staid with me a week...
...I had him sit next at table."

3. **Theme of Equality**: At present our society is very much fragmented and divided in sections based on religion, caste, and creed etc. The poet is a champion of equality. He entertained a slave in his own house and treated him with dignity:

*The runaway slave came to my house and stopt outside.
I.. gave him a room.. and gave him some coarse clean clothes,
He staid with me a week..
...I had him sit next at table.*

The poet provided him food, a clean room to live and even treated the wounds on his body.

Thus the above analysis of the song 10 confirms that we have to adopt simple and natural ways of life. Compassion should be the new fashion to survive.
