

Kundalini: The Biological Basis of Religion & Genius:

Walt Whitman

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Abstract

Research has been proposed to investigate the hypothesis that there is a specific psychosomatic power centre in man. This power centre has been referred to as Kundalini in the esoteric scriptures of India. The Kundalini hypothesis suggests that human evolution has proceeded by the action of this mechanism in the human body. Kundalini is held to be responsible for creativity, genius, mystical experience, psychic phenomena and, in its morbid form, certain classes of mental illness. The research proposed would involve the collection, analysis, and documentation of both psychological and biological data relative to the common characteristics which appear to be the result of an awakened Kundalini.

We believe these objectives can be accomplished via three avenues of investigation:

1. Literary research into the lives and writings of great mystics and geniuses and the written traditions from the ancient esoteric teachings.
2. The acquisition of statistical data from persons experiencing the symptoms of a Kundalini awakening.
3. The validation of the Kundalini hypothesis through the successful awakening in selected subjects within a directed experimental environment.

This paper is part of the first avenue of investigation as mentioned above i.e. the life and writings of mystics and/or geniuses. The history of genius is filled with striking examples of spontaneous outflow of whole compositions in poetry, music, art, literature and scientific discoveries from the hidden depths of the mind. Research has been done by Lombroso and Ellis which focused mainly on the issue of insanity in genius but did not provide adequate explanations for inspiration and creativity. R.M. Bucke treated the issue of mysticism and genius from the standpoint of psychology. He believed that the human mind is developing towards a new kind of consciousness but did not identify any somatic basis. Gopi Krishna attributes these experiences to the evolution of the brain and an actual biological mechanism within the body—Kundalini.

As mentioned, it has been suggested that mystics and geniuses display several similar characteristics which we believe are the signposts of an awakened Kundalini. Among these are:

- Sense of inner light or sound
- Unity or oneness with creation
- Detachment
- Cosmic expansion
- Religious impulse/Belief in God
- Highly developed moral nature
- Psychic ability i.e. healing powers, visionary ideas, gift of prophecy
- Mental disturbances
- Significant sexual expression
- Personal magnetism
- Loss of fear of death

The purpose of this work is to look at the life and writings of Walt Whitman within this framework. Whitman's poetry takes on a whole new meaning when viewed in the light of this hypothesis. We suggest that, among others, Whitman's experiences are consistent with this hypothesis.

General Remarks

The appearance of mystics and geniuses throughout history is, at present, still not fully explained.

The early Greeks had two views on genius^[1] - One view equated it with an act of creativity by God—the major source of an individual's genius had its source in a mystical power. Socrates described this power as a "murmuring in his ears like the sound of the flute in the ears of the mystic".

The other view related genius to insanity—Aristotle believed that there was "no great genius without madness".

More recent studies by Lombroso^[2], Ellis^[3], and others^[4] have concentrated on the observed connection between insanity and genius. In addition, Galton^[5] has studied the role played by heredity in the production of genius. None of these studies have provided adequate explanations for inspiration and creativity.

Near the beginning of this century Bucke^[6], treated the issue of Illumination in both mystics and geniuses from the standpoint of psychology. He suggested that the human mind was evolving toward a new kind of consciousness—which he called Cosmic Consciousness - far in advance of ordinary human self-consciousness. Using arguments based upon analogy, Bucke examines some forty-three "great cases" within the framework of eleven characteristics of the Cosmic Sense. He does not however directly address the issue of insanity in genius nor does he identify any somatic basis for his Cosmic Sense.

Lately Dean^[7] has attempted to standardize the nomenclature for all the regional and ritual terms for cosmic consciousness. He has proposed the term "ultraconsciousness" and has summarized ten of its distinguishing characteristics which are not unlike those of Bucke. Again he offers no somatic basis for this most significant of transformations. Nor does he offer any insight into why insanity has been a trait of the genius and the mystic as well.

More recently Gopi Krishna^[6] has drawn from his own personal experience and the ancient esoteric literature to suggest that the mystic and the genius are products of a more highly evolved brain. He further postulates that there is a specific psychosomatic power centre—known as Kundalini—in human beings and that human evolution has proceeded by the action of this mechanism in the human body and brain. Traditionally Kundalini is held to be responsible for creativity, genius, mystical experience, psychic phenomena and in its morbid form certain classes of mental illness. If this is indeed the case, then the mystic, the genius, the psychic and the insane should share a set of common characteristics and experiences which would have to be consistent with those attributed to the awakening of Kundalini in the ancient esoteric scriptures.

A complete scientific investigation into the Kundalini phenomenon has been suggested elsewhere^[9]. Here we simply state that such an investigation could proceed along three lines. First, literary research into the lives and writings of great mystics and geniuses. This would include a study of the written and oral traditions from ancient esoteric teachings. Second, statistical data could be acquired from persons experiencing the symptoms of a Kundalini awakening. Third, the activation of Kundalini in selected subjects in a directed experimental environment presided over by competent scientists and Yoga specialists. A detailed proposal is being prepared and will be presented separately.

Signposts of an Awakened Kundalini

For the purpose of our study, we will consider the following characteristics to be significant.

1. Sense of inner light and sound
2. Unity or oneness with creation
3. Detachment
4. Cosmic Expansion
5. Religious impulse/Belief in God
6. Personal magnetism
7. Highly developed moral nature/compassion
8. Development of psychic gifts - visionary ideas, gift of prophecy, healing powers
9. Loss of fear of death/sense of immortality
10. Mental Disturbances
11. Significant sexual expression
12. Capacity for work
13. Chronological experiences with special attention to activity in the mid - 30's

In addition to the above specific characteristics, the subject's heredity and lifestyle and their effect on mental condition and behavior patterns could be considered. These areas would require extensive background information—preferably first hand—and may be more accurate when researching living subjects. We consider them beyond the scope of this present work.

Also keeping in mind that in the present context Kundalini is considered to be the evolutionary energy that is remodeling the human brain, we may expect some of these signposts to be more or less present in a given mystic or genius but not always in the same way.

The Case of Walt Whitman

Numerous biographies of Whitman's life and interpretations of his poetry exist. The purpose of the present work is not simply to reinterpret his poetry or re-examine his life. Rather it is to show that his life and writings are examples of a living process—Kundalini. A process that is carrying the human mind and brain toward a more highly evolved state of consciousness—mystical experience. Whatever one's belief about Whitman's writings and life, it is clear that something unusual happened to transform this ordinary journalist into an extraordinary poet / genius circa 1850. Whitman wrote about this transformation in "Song of Myself"^[10]

If one can suspend the sexual or physical interpretation which first comes to mind, Whitman's description of this experience is not unlike the descriptions of mystical ecstasy of known saints and yogis.

*Loafe with me on the grass, loose the stop from your throat,
Not words, not music or rhyme I want, not custom or lecture, not even the best,
Only the lull I like, the hum of your valved voice.*

*I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning,
How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn'd over upon me,
And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to my bare-stript heart,
And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you held my feet.*

*Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all the argument 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,
And that a kelson of the creation is love: . . .*

And further on.

*Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new identity,
Flames and ether making a rush for my veins,
Traucherous tip of me reaching and crowding to help them,
My flesh and blood playing out lightning to strike what is hardly different from myself;
On all sides prurient provokers stiffening my limbs,
Straining the udder of my heart for its withheld drop,
Behaving licentious toward me, taking no denial,
Depriving me of my best, as for a purpose,
Unbuttoning my clothes, holding me by the bare waist,
Deluding my confusion with the calm of the sunlight and pasture-fields,
Immodestly sliding the fellow-senses away,
They bribed to swap off with touch, and go and graze at the edges of me;*

No consideration, no regard for my draining strength or my anger;

*Fetching the rest of the herd around to enjoy them a while,
Then all uniting to stand on a headland and worry me.*

*The sentries desert every other part of me;
They have left me helpless to a red marauder;
They all come to the headland, to witness and assist against me.*

*I am given up by traitors;
I talk wildly - I have lost my wits - I and nobody else am the greatest traitor;
I went myself first to the headland - my own hands carried me there.*

*You villain touch! what are you doing? My breath is tight in its throat;
Unclench your floodgates! you are too much for me.*

In these few sentences Whitman describes in essence the signposts of a Kundalini awakening. He takes care to warn any reader that this is no ordinary poetic reading. Consider the following from "Whoever you are, holding me now in hand."

*Whoever you are, holding me now in hand,
Without one thing, all will be useless,
I give you fair warning, before you attempt me further,
I am not what you supposed, but far different.*

*Who is he that would become my follower?
Who would sign himself a candidate for my affections?*

*The way is suspicious - the result uncertain, perhaps destructive;
You would have to give up all else - I alone would expect to be your God, sole and exclusive,
Your novitiate would even then be long and exhausting,
The whole past theory of your life, and all conformity to the
Lives around you, would have to be abandon'd;
Therefore release me now, before troubling yourself any further - let go your hand from my shoulders,
Put me down, and depart on your way.*

In the above passages Whitman warns the reader that the path to higher consciousness is not easy and is fraught with potential danger. Not only may you have to abandon your present lifestyle but you could sacrifice your sanity as well. These dangers are often mentioned in the esoteric teachings on Kundalini. Whitman suggests that unless you are totally committed, you may as well fore go this hazardous journey and go your own way. In this sense "Leaves" can be used as a handbook for achieving this most important of all transformations.

We'll now examine the characteristics that Whitman displayed which are indicative of a Kundalini experience. We'll take examples from his own observations and experiences as well as his biographers and contemporaries.

Sense of Inner Light and Sound

Light and sound been two of the most prominent inner experiences described by mystics and religious literature. There are many obvious references to this in Whitman's works. We have chosen two.

From Prayer of Columbus (1874):

*One effort more - my altar this bleak sand;
That Thou, O god, my life hast lighted,
With ray of light, steady, ineffable, vouchsafed of Thee,
(Light rare, untellable-lighting the very light!
Beyond all signs, descriptions, languages!)
For that, O God - be it my latest word - here on my knees
Old, poor, and paralyzed - I thank Thee.*

And from Song of Myself:

*Not words, not music or rhyme I want, not
custom or lecture, not even the best,
Only the lull I like, the hum of your valved voice.*

Unity or Oneness with Creation

Whitman's sense of unity or oneness may have been influenced by observing his parents. His mother was a strong, womanly re-assuring factor in his life. His father was a moody, non-demonstrative perfectionist given to high ideals and fantasies of glory.

Barbara Marinacci gives this account:^[1]

Within his childhood home, Walt daily experienced opposites in the very nature of his parents, yet these contradictions somehow balanced each other. Walt would easily realize that the whole universe pulsated with the same opposition or polarity of things joined in an intimate, eternal bondage: positive and negative, light and darkness, life and death, male and female. The human sphere also abounded in other dichotomies; love and hate, faith and doubt, real and ideal, good and evil, body and soul, self and society.

Whitman describes his own sense of oneness in many of his poems especially in "The Base of All Metaphysics", and "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry."

Consider these lines from "A Song of Myself":

*In all people I see myself - none more, and not one a barley corn less;
And the good or bad I say of myself,
I say of them.*

From "On the Beach at Night Alone":

*On the beach at night alone,
As the old mother sways her to and fro, singing her husky song,
As I watch the bright stars shining - I think a thought of the clef of the universes, and of the future.

A vast similitude interlocks all,
All spheres, grown, ungrown, small, large, suns, moons, planets, comets, asteroids,*

*All the substances of the same, and all that is spiritual upon the same,
 All distances of place, however wide,
 All distances of time - all inanimate forms,
 All Souls - all living bodies, though they be ever so different, or in different worlds,
 All gaseous, watery, vegetable, mineral processes - the fishes, the brutes,
 All men and women - me also;
 All nations, colors, barbarisms, civilizations, languages;
 All identities that have existed, or may exist, on this globe, or any globe;
 All lives and deaths - all of the past, present, future;
 This vast similitude spans them, and always has spann'd, and shall forever span them, and compactly hold them, and enclose them.*

Detachment

Whitman, even as a child, was curiously detached from the life around him. In 'Song of Myself' he describes himself "Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it." He had always lived frugally. After the Civil War, he reduced his possessions to an absolute minimum; his room was as bare as a monk's cell.^[12]

From "Song of the Open Road"^[13]

*Listen! I will be honest with you;
 I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes;
 These are the days that must happen to you:*

*You shall not heap up what is call'd riches,
 You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve,
 You but arrive at the city to which you were destin'd - you hardly settle yourself to satisfaction, before you are call'd by an irresistible call to depart,
 You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mockings of those who remain behind you;
 What beckoning of love you receive, you shall only answer with passionate kisses of parting,
 You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their reach'd hands toward you.*

Whitman's attitude towards worldly possessions may be best summarized in his own words.

The ignorant man is demented with the madness of owning things—of having by warranty deeds in court clerks records, the right to mortgage, sell, give away or raise money on certain possessions. But the wisest soul knows that no object can really be owned by one man or woman any more than another.

Cosmic Expansion

Henry Seidel Canby in "Walt Whitman, an American,"^[14] alludes to the "cosmic breadth of Whitman's sexualism which he makes to pervade men, women, children, animals, nature and is truly, as he (Whitman) says, as much soul as body."

Once again in "Song of Myself" this experience becomes clear:

*Swift wind! Space! Soul! Now I know it is true what I guess'd at;
 What I guess'd when I loaf'd on the grass,
 What I guess'd while I lay alone in my bed. . .and again
 As I walk'd the beach under the paling stars of the morning.
 My ties and ballasts leave me. . .I travel. . .I sail. . .my elbows rest in sea-gaps,*

*I skirt sierras. . .my palms cover continents,
I am afoot with my vision.*

The Poem "Salute au Monde!" also contains many examples of Whitman's sense of the Cosmos.

*O take my hand, Walt Whitman!
Such gliding wonders! such sights and sounds!
Such join'd unended links, each hooked to the next!
Each answering all - each sharing the earth with all.*

What widens within you, Walt Whitman!

Other good examples of this characteristic are contained in "To You" (1856), "Song of the Open Road", "As I Sat Alone By Blue Ontario's Shores".

Religious Impulse / Belief in God

Whitman believed in an orderly universe—a higher power he often referred to in his poetry as "Camerado"—his companion. He viewed the entire creation as divine, right down to a single blade of grass. To Whitman each individual human being was divine. He also believed in the soul which he referred to as—"my Mistress."

For example, from "Song of the Universal":

*Give me, O God, to sing that thought!
Give me - give him or her I love, this quenchless faith
In Thy ensemble. Whatever else withheld, withhold not from us,*

*Belief in plan of Thee enclosed in Time and Space;
Health, peace, salvation universal.*

*Is it a dream?
Nay, but the lack of it the dream,
And all the world a dream.
And feeling it lif's love and wealth a dream.*

From "Starting from Paumanok":

*I say the whole earth, and all the
stars in the sky, are for Religions sake.*

*I say no man has ever yet been half devout enough;
None has ever adored or worship'd half enough;
None has begun to think how divine
he himself is, and how certain the future is.*

In 1891 Whitman summarized his philosophy thus:^[10]

You want to know in a word the sum total of my life philosophy as I have tried to live it and as I have tried to put it in my book. It is only the closest student who will find it in my works. . .The sum total of my view of life has always been to humbly accept and thank God for whatever inspiration toward good may come in this rough world of ours and, as far as may be, to cut loose from and put the bad behind always and always.

Personal Magnetism / Charisma

Literature is filled with examples of this trait in Whitman's nature. He may not have had the ability to sway the masses but anyone who met him felt his personal power. In *Cosmic Consciousness*, R.M. Bucke, a biographer and close associate of Whitman describes his extraordinary personal magnetism in terms of his attractiveness to people who briefly met or saw him;

Everything about him was always scrupulously clean. His clothes might show signs of wear. . . .but they never looked soiled. Indeed, an exquisite aroma of cleanliness has always been one of the special features of the man; it has always belonged to his clothes, his breath, his whole body, his eating and drinking, his conversation. . . .and in fact the expression of a purity which was physical as much as moral. . . .

The naturalist and writer John Burroughs who met Whitman during the U.S. Civil War describes him^[11] in this way:

He is as vast as the earth and as loving and noble. . . .He walks very leisurely, rather saunters and looks straight forward, not down at his feet. He does not talk readily, but his conversation is rich and suggestive. . . .Walt has all types of men in him; there is not one left out.

Whitman himself attributed his physical presence alone as being responsible for the tremendous success he had ministering to the wounded and dying soldiers during the American Civil War. This selfless and compassionate service came about after he visited his brother, George, at an army encampment. What he saw changed his patriotic militancy dramatically and forever. He spent the following months dressing wounds, a labor of love for which he received no pay and which he considered a divine mission. Observers said his intuitive ability to recognize each person's particular need enabled him to instill a will to live in many of the soldiers and endowed him with above-average nursing skills. But Walt saw it this way: "I have found it was in the simple matter of personal presence and emanating ordinary good cheer and magnetism that I succeeded. . . ."

Highly Developed Moral Nature / Compassion

Evidence of his compassionate nature is amply provided by his work among the wounded during the Civil War. Whitman was often moved to tears by the suffering of the young soldiers he courageously nursed. His compassion for his brother based on his own personal experiences was beautifully expressed in "Faces":

*I saw the face of the most smear'd and slobbering idiot they had at the asylum
And I knew for my consolation what they knew not
I knew of the agents that emptied and broke my brother
The same wait to clear the rubbish from the fallen tenement
And I shall meet the real landlord perfect and unharmed, every inch as good as myself*

Whitman's compassion went beyond the human realm as he identifies with the almost unbearable grief of the mocking bird lamenting his dead mate in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking".

*O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea'
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.*

*O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate, no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.*

The poem "I Sit and Look Out" also describes the poet's feeling for all those who may be suffering.

I sit out and look upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all oppression and shame;

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Development of Psychic Gifts -- Visionary Ideas

It is the opinion of many Whitman biographers that he had the gift of prophecy, particularly in a religious vein and certainly in his belief that democracy must lead the way to a higher potential in all men and women. The poet himself believed prophecy was not limited to prediction. "That is not the main sense of the Hebrew word translated prophet", he said. "It means one whose mind bubbles and pours forth like a fountain from inner divine spontaneities revealing God. . . .The great matter is to reveal and outpour the God-like suggestions pressing for birth in the soul." Here he echoes the belief of many mystics that this sublime knowledge and enlightenment is accessible to all.

Whitman predicted that the traditional priest would disappear. Marinacci's biography quotes him directly:

A superior breed shall take their place', he said, 'the gangs of Kosmos and prophets en masse. . .' (A Kosmos in the Whitman vocabulary was a wise, divinely inspired human being whose words and actions served as examples and inspirations to his fellow men.)

Whitman, in "Democratic Vistas"^[10], saw democracy and religion as one:

The future of American man or woman must be constructed anew out of the fundamental spiritual and material elements of human nature. . . Religion, although casually arrested and, after a fashion, preserv'd in the churches and creeds, does not depend at all upon them, but is a part of the identified soul, which,

when greatest, knows not bibles in the old way, but in new ways—the identified soul which can really confront religion when it extricates itself entirely from churches and not before.

Verse 18 from "Starting from Paumanok"

*O expanding and swift! O henceforth,
Elements, breeds, adjustments, turbulent, quick, and audacious;
A world primal again, vistas of glory, incessant and branching;
A new race, dominating previous ones, and grander far - with new contests,
New politics, new literatures and religions, new inventions and arts.*

*These! my voice announcing - I will sleep no more, but arise;
You oceans that have been calm within me! how I feel you,
fathomless, stirring, preparing unprecedented waves and storms.*

Loss of Fear of Death/Sense of Immortality

Whitman viewed death as a continuance and a joyful transition as the following lines show;

In "Passage to India":

*Joy! shipmate-joy!
(Pleas'd to my Soul at death I cry)
Our life is closed - our life begins;
The long, long anchorage we leave,
The ship is clear at last - she leaps!
She swiftly courses from the shore;
Joy! shipmate - joy!*

in "Song of Myself":

*What do you think has become of the young and 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;

All goes onward and outward - nothing collapses;
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier.

I am not an earth, nor an adjunct of an earth;
I am the mate and companion of people, all just as immortal and fathomless as myself;
(They do not know how immortal but I do.)

I know that I am deathless
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by the carpenter's compass;*

Mental Disturbances

The thread of mental instability appears to run through the lives of the gifted and Whitman was no exception. His family background indicates his father was given to intense moodiness. Of the six brothers and two sisters,

four showed emotional imbalance - one mentally retarded, another confined in the end to an asylum. As for himself Whitman was considered to be extremely eccentric and to have shown signs of neurosis.

Regardless of his heredity, there can be little doubt that the poet did experience some form of mental instability. Recall the line from Song of Myself:

*I talk wildly - I have lost my wits -
I and nobody else am the greatest traitor;*

Also consider these lines from "One Hour to Madness and Joy"

*One hour to madness and joy!
O furious! O confine me not!
(What is this that frees me so in storms?
What do my shouts amid lightnings and raging winds mean?)
O to drink the mystic deliria deeper than any other man!
O savage and tender achings!*

Significant Sexual Expression

Whitman has been described as sexually repressed in his "outer life" but he gave full vent to his sexuality in Leaves of Grass depicting sex as healthy and wholesome and as necessary to our well being as prayer or religious observances or any good experience in life. Heady stuff for the Victorian 1800's. These ideas seem to lift him to a new kind of creativity.

His own sexual preferences and practices have been and still are an area of great debate. This controversy will probably never be settled—certainly not here as it is not our purpose. What should be kept in mind is that sexual imagery has been a part of mystical experience and that this connection is an indication of the somatic basis of the experience itself. The ancient lore of India held that the transformation to higher consciousness is due to an upward flow of the reproductive energy.^[15] Thus, mystical experience is attended by experiences of indescribable joy and love including the sensation of orgasm. One then should not be surprised to find the soul referred to as the bride of Christ or even as "my Mistress" as Whitman has done.

The work "A Woman Waits for Me" (1856) is worth examining:

*A woman waits for me - she contains all, nothing is lacking,
Yet all were lacking, if sex were lacking, or if the moisture of the right man were lacking.
Sex contains all,
Bodies, Souls, meanings, proofs, purities, delicacies, results, promulgations,
Songs, commands, health, pride, the maternal mystery, the seminal milk;
All hopes, benefactions, bestowals,
All the passions, loves, beauties, delights of the earth,
All the governments, judges, gods, follow'd persons of the earth,
These are contain'd in sex, as parts of itself, and justifications of itself.*

and further on. . .

*Through you I drain the pent-up rivers of myself,
In you I wrap a thousand onward years,
On you I graft the grafts of the best-beloved of me and America,
The drops I distil upon you shall grow fierce and athletic girls, new artists, musicians, and singers,*

*The babes I beget upon you are to beget babes in their turn,
I shall demand perfect men and women of my love--spendings,
I shall expect them to interpenetrate with others, as I and you interpenetrate now,
I shall count on the fruits of the gushing showers of them, as I count on the fruits of the gushing showers I give now,
I shall look for loving crops from the birth, life, death, immortality, I plant so lovingly now.*

Aside from the physical activity of the sexual act it seems that Whitman understood how genetic characteristics were passed on and what the seminal fluid contained. It is worth noting that this work was written in 1856, three years prior to Darwin publishing *On The Origin of the Species*.

Capacity for Work

Throughout his life, Whitman continued to be productive. He was reasonably lucid to the end of his life—just what might be expected from one having had a Kundalini awakening. Although he had a paralyzing stroke in his later years, at the time of his death in 1892 he was still writing and rearranging the ninth edition of "Leaves of Grass".

Chronological Experiences

Bucke^[6] traced the ages at which his cases reached Cosmic Consciousness and concluded that it occurs when an individual reaches full maturity—an age he took to be on average in the mid 30's. From his writings and the publication date of "Leaves" Bucke concluded that Whitman's experience took place at the age of 34 in 1853 in keeping with his general findings. This mid-30's phenomenon was also noted by Gopi Krishna whose own experience happened at the age of 34. We have also found that a significant surge in creative ability and productivity was evident in Brahms and Jefferson in their mid-30's.

Conclusion:

We have examined the life and writings of Whitman and find his beliefs, his character, his experiences to be consistent with those of someone who has experienced a "Kundalini awakening". An experience that Whitman himself proclaims in a *Song of Myself*; "Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son." Viewing his poetry as a description of an inner transformation taking place as an attainment of higher consciousness gives it a new meaning. Consider "Are you the new person drawn toward me":

*Are you the new person drawn toward me?
To begin with take warning, I am surely far different from what you suppose;
Do you suppose you will find in me your ideal?
Do you think it is so easy to have me become your lover?
Do you think the friendship of me would be unalloy'd satisfaction?
Do you think I am trusty and faithful?
Do you see no further than this facade, this smooth and tolerant manner of me?
Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground toward a real heroic man?
Have you no thought O dreamer that it may be all maya, illusion?*

Research into the Kundalini phenomenon is embryonic at this stage but its importance for our planet can't be overestimated. In the words of Gopi Krishna,

The possibilities inherent in Kundalini are unlimited. Its implications in respect of every sphere of human life are enormous. What the seekers often believe to be a power they can activate for their own spiritual or material

benefit, is the Power that rules the universe, the Infinite Intelligence of which we are but a tiny speck. Once the existence of an organic evolutionary mechanism in human beings is confirmed, Kundalini will assume an importance that is unimaginable at present. It will decisively influence every field of human activity and thought. The whole atmosphere of the earth will be saturated with the idea that man is a pilgrim on the way to the Shrine of God-Consciousness.

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