Images In Whitman And Dickinson

Both “Song of Myself” by Walt Whitman and “I taste a liquor never brewed” by Emily Dickinson impress the readers of all time by their imaginative poetical forces, although each is unique in its own way which reflects individual literary patterns of the authors. While Whitman's verses run smooth and cheerful, almost hippie-like, Dickinson uses rather ambiguous tropes that linger in reader's mind for a while in the interpretations. However, both are awakening and captivating due to the masterful use of symbolic representations.

For instance, Whitman employs extensive nature imagery throughout his works, being that of grass particularly known, as in section 6 of “Song of Myself”, where the blade of grass is metaphorically linked to a human life in all its aspects, irrespective of the geographical location, race, age... The inherent beauty and wonderfulness of form is launched into a great eulogy for celebration of life extended to all humans.

Dickinson also uses nature imagery in the poetry we analyse in this task. As one of the possible interpretations, it comes to a festivity, as well, but this time a celebration of the unalienable human right to become inebriated off of nature which in a way refers back to the divine miracle of the ancient Dionysus' mystery. In spite of this pagan connotation, there is a heavy use of religious symbols especially compared to Whitman, who mentions Lord only once and with overtly humanised implication (the handkerchief of the Lord). In turn, Dickinson's undertone is quite stronger in spiritual terms: for example, in the visual images of the last stanza, with Seraphs throwing their snowy Huts and Saints rushing to the windows, in order to admire the ecstasy of a human being. The eloquence of this lines is unparalleled, yet mutual interlocking of the series of symbols hinders, as per my perception, immediate response of the reader. But once this initial obstacle is overcome, the message becomes real to the reader through emotion which acts at the very deep internal level.

Whitman apparently reaches the audience more directly, his images flow without overlapping yet rather enhancing wavelike each other. His reliance on colourful adjectives continues to attach more brightness to the visual images making them intuitively comprehensible for the readers. He plays a lot with repetition, not in vain his free verse resembles “catalogues” (encyclopaedic listings of the journalistic background), arranged in the ease and sweeping manner which sets a confidential dialogue between the narrator and reader. Dickinson, on her side, rather surprises the audience with the unexpected treatment of the topic, as it happens in the very first line of her poetry; her overall fashion seems to be more rigid and ambiguous.

To conclude, while both poetical works are impregnated with intense imagery expressed through the similar literary devises of repetition, personification, metaphors, each author adds distinctive stylistic touches that modify the character of the final rhetorical influence without diminishing to any extent the inspirational impact of the readers.