# WALT WHITMAN AND THE INTEGRAL EXPERIENCE

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by

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## PREFACE

In this study of Whitman, the emphasis has been on analysis instead of biography; text, rather than sources. For the single-theme—multiple-theme of Self, in its endless possibilities and unbounded diversity, "Song of Myself" has been examined very closely. In order to establish the pervasiveness of the theme or themes in Leaves of Grass, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry", "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking", and "Passage to India" have been analysed.

I have attempted to show the uniqueness and the complexity of Whitman's mystical experience, which I call Integral, through structure, imagery and symbolism. And, since aesthetic evaluation cannot be wholly divorced from philosophical criticism, theories of perception, both Eastern and Western, have been cited to fix Whitman in the right perspective, and to point out the non-dual concept of the Self in the poetry of Whitman.

While reading Whitman, I have been aware, as many other critical readers of the Leaves are, of the many parallels in Indian literature, especially the Vedantic, and I have used these, wherever necessary, for interpreting the poet in the light of Indian Thought. But, I have not been over-enthusiastic about the kinship, because Whitman evinces certain basic attitudes which are non-Vedantic.

Perhaps this study would not have taken its present form had it not been for Mr. Joseph Sigman's encouragement and sympathetic judgment of my interpretations. Mr. Sigman directed this thesis with as much sympathy as competence, and was of great help during the entire course of its development.

To him I am especially grateful. I am grateful also to Mr. George McKnight for his many hours of patient reading of my manuscript, and for offering me much helpful criticism.

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I cannot end this preface without expressing my deep sense of indebtedness to Dr. Gordon Stewart Vichert who has always been very helpful and gracious to me.

I should also acknowledge my general debt to students and scholars of Whitman for influencing me in the preparation of this thesis, while at the same time provoking me to differ with their approaches.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION: AN APPROACH TO WHITMAN

Literary scholarship is not a substitute for experience, though it is necessary to interpretation. Unless the reader is willing to intuit the world of a great genius, much that is essential remains elusive and impalpable. The problem of 'meaning' in a work of art and the enjoyment of that 'meaning' are profoundly related to the varying levels of sensibility and intuitive responses in different individuals. The subject under study is Walt Whitman and the true nature of his poetic experience, as examplified in the Leaves of Grass. How far we can succeed in interpreting Whitman's 'leaves' to ourselves and share the "perennial joyousness" which he attained, depends upon our own character and position on the ladder of spiritual progression. It is fortunate that Whitman establishes a level of complete reciprocity between himself and his reader, indirect expression being the means to this poetic end.[1] The 'indirection' of expression involves a reciprocal communication and a surrender of superficial ego; it confirms the mystical identity of the real I or Me or You; it is an attitude which manifests itself through "the general ardor and friendliness and enterprise - the perfect equality of the female with the male... the large amativeness - the fluid movement of the population—."[2] And Whitman writes in his Preface to 1855 Edition of Leaves of Grass:

> For such the expression of the American poet is to be transcendant and new. It is to be indirect and not direct or descriptive or epic. Its quality goes through these to much more.[3]

Without dwelling here any further on this happy relationship between the

poet and his reader that leads onward to a creative realization of the essence of being and action, I should mention some of the basic assumptions on which I wish to proceed in the present study.

Let it be stated at the outset that the poetry of Whitman is the poetry of 'Vision' which, in order to be apprehended, demands 'the willing suspension of' belief itself. One needs 'intuitive perception' rather than 'cold reason' to perceive the nature of his 'poetic experience'. He participates in the phantasmagoria of this world's reality as one does in a spiritual experience which is eventually timeless and spaceless. Ontologically speaking, his 'experience' is the experience of 'Cosmic Symbol' which encloses all forms of polarities and thereby illumines them. The Transcendental Principle by which one apprehends the everlasting relationship between the material and the spiritual, the mortal and the immortal, the body and the soul, illusion and reality, speech and silence, life and death, night and day, myth and symbol, history and epic, etc., is a part of his Consciousness or the mystic centre of experience which is the Self. To Whitman 'Life is vast beyond all limitations, of an ever-increasing, ever ennobling destiny'.[4] He sings of life in its Wholeness or Totality; believes passionately in men; believes in the "Divine event to which the whole creation moves".[5]

No student of Whitman can claim a complete originality of vision for the poet, but that he was unique in more than one sense will not be denied. Writing on the emergence of 'Soul Consciousness' or the Self Whitman says:

> Personalism fuses this, and favors it. I should say, indeed, that only in the perfect uncontamination and solitariness of individuality may the spirituality of religion positively come forth at all. Only here, and on such terms, the meditation,

> the devout ecstasy, the soaring flight. Only here, communion with the mysteries, the eternal problems, whence, whither? Alone, and identity, and the mood - and the soul emerges, and all statements, churches, sermons, melt away like vapors. Alone, and silent thought and awe, and aspiration - and then the interior consciousness, like a hitherto unseen inscription, in magic ink, beams out its wondrous lines to the sense. Bibles may convey, and priests expound, but it is exclusively for the noiseless operation of one's isolated Self, to enter the pure ether of veneration, reach the divine levels, and commune with the unutterable.[6]

The paradox of the "solitariness of individuality" and the interiority of the "isolated Self" will be explained in the body of this inquiry. It is sufficient to suggest at this stage that the above concepts converge upon the theme of detachment in attachment. That Whitman is opposed to organized religion in the matters of Self-realization becomes obvious from the above quotation. A poetic parallel may be found in the following verses:

> Hast never come to thee an hour,
> A sudden gleam divine, precipitating, bursting all these
> bubbles, fashions, wealth ?
> These eager business aims - books, politics, art, amours,
> To utter nothingness ?[7]

"A sudden gleam divine" is obviously the vision of a mystic which Whitman is eager to affirm from the life of his reader -"Hast never come to thee an hour". The coming of everything else " to utter nothingness" is again a paradox the validity of which can be established only by contrasting it to the Divine Presence. We will have ample scope to prove that the language of Whitman is the language of paradox, and it is through this mode of representation that his imagery explores the unfathomable realm of the Self. We will also have the opportunity of showing that Whitman's Self is the most pervasive and all-inclusive phenomenon which operates both within and beyond time. 'Self', in fact, is the single theme which dominates the

spirit of the Leaves of Grass, but this theme is so broad and involving that out of it spring the themes of Love, cosmic, mystical and physical, amatory and adhesive; War, freed from the ancient sense of racial glory and the modern feeling of despair and futility, sensed with a Christ-motif: suffering and pain being necessary to God-realization; Democracy, equalizing and spiritual; Time, a single continuous moment, beginningless and endless; Art, the perpetuator of beauty and truth; and Death, changing of the garments between birth and rebirth, a source of reincarnation, the mystic unity with Nature. The above contention can be fairly demonstrated by a close study of the "Song of Myself" which has been unanimously considered as Whitman's Leaves of Grass in miniature - but for certain references, the theme of War is not fully developed by the year 1855, when the first edition of Leaves of Grass was published. I am willing to agree with Malcolm Cowley that "Song of Myself" is Whitman's greatest single work,[8] and it represents the quintessence of Whitman, without at the same time underrating the beauty and the breadth of vision of the later lyrics. "Song of Myself" is, indeed, a gateway and a mansion of Whitman's poetic experience, but, it is also symptomatic of the profoundness of the poems collected and printed under such headings as "CHILDREN OF ADAM", "CALAMUS", "SEA-DRIFT", "DRUM-TAPS", "AUTUMN RIVULETS", "WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH", "SONGS OF PARTING", "GOOD-BYE MY FANCY", etc. While the major burden of the present undertaking is to closely examine the Integral Experience of the "Song of Myself", it is obligatory to include a summary treatment of some of the most significant poems, given under various sections or independently titled, so that the continuity of the theme or themes may be proved.

As a conclusion to the assumptions enumerated in the foregoing pages, I wish to add here that my approach to Whitman differs in its essentials from that of the thinkers and scholars like George Santayana and Richard Chase, and the poets and critics like T.S.Eliot and D.H. Lawrence. George Santayana, while he believes in the singularity of Whitman's genius, rare grandeur of diction and the universality of what he describes, regards Whitman's poetry as the poetry of barbarism. He finds in Whitman's "barbaric" art a 'lack of distinction, absence of beauty, confusion of ideas, and an incapacity to please permanently'.[9] He writes:

> ...With Whitman the surface is absolutely all and the underlying structure is without interest and almost without existence....So also in his poems; a multiplicity of images pass before him and he yields himself to each in turn with absolute passivity. The world has no inside; it is a phantasmagoria of continuous visions, vivid, impressive, but monotonous and hard to distinguish in memory, like the waves of the sea or the decorations of some barbarous temple, sublime only by the infinite aggregation of parts.[10]

Richard Chase honours Whitman as 'the supreme poet of American optimism and pragmatism'. He has the greatest admiration for him, both as poet and prophet, and considers the "Song of Myself" as Whitman's greatest and richest work. But in the pages of his critical inquiry, he concentrates 'on Whitman the comic poet, the radical realist, and the profound elegist.'[11] He observes:

> Whitman's comic poetry deflates pretensions and chides moral rigidity by opposing to them a diverse, vital, indeterminate reality..."Song of Myself" is on the whole comic in tone and although the poem's comic effects are of universal significance, they often take the specific form of American humour....It is a fantastic world in which it is presumed that the Self can become identical with all other selves in the universe, regardless of time and space.[12]

Eliot, in one of his few scattered statements about Whitman says that he

"had to conquer an aversion to his form, as well as to much of his matter" in order to be able to read him.[13] He complains that 'Whitman was too satisfied with things as they are; he was not conscious of the agony of a culture'. Another statement of Eliot regarding the place of Whitman in World Literature, concludes that "Whitman is certainly not an influence; there is not a trace of him anywhere".[14] D.H.Lawrence recognises Whitman's greatness, and writes in no uncertain words:

> Whitman, the great poet, has meant so much to me. Whitman, the one man breaking a way ahead. Whitman, the one pioneer. And only Whitman...Ahead of Whitman, nothing. Ahead of all poets, pioneering into the wilderness of unopened life, Whitman. Beyond him, none.[15]

Lawrence also defends Whitman for his challenge to American prudery and belief in old morality on the subject of sex. He compares him with Hawthorne, Emerson and Melville:

> It is the moral issue which engages them. They all feel uneasy about the old morality. Sensuously, passionally, they all attack the old morality. But they know nothing better, mentally....Whitman was the first to break the mental allegiance. He was the first to smash the old moral conception, that the soul of man is something "superior" and "above" the flesh. Even Emerson still maintained this tiresome "superiority" of the soul. Even Melville could not get over it..."There!" he said to the soul. "Stay there ! " Stay there. 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.[16]

But in his over enthusiasm for the phallic love between man and woman, Lawrence misses the significance of Whitman's all too comprehensive motive of <u>love</u> as a "cohering principle". Lawrence does not understand why Whitman aches with amorous love for all and how he arrives at the mystic union of love and death:

> Your mainspring is broken, Walt Whitman. The mainspring of your own individuality. And so you run down with a great whir, merging with every thing. You have killed your isolate

> Moby Dick. You have mentalized your deep sensual body, and that's the death of it. I am everything and everything is me and so we're all One in One Identity, like the Mundane Egg, which has been addled quite a while.[17]

The partial, biased and sophisticated nature of the above-noted opinions, I feel, stems from a certain fundamental misunderstanding and somewhat distorted readings. For instance, none of the above-mentioned literary figures has realized the mystical character of Whitman's poetry. Mysticism runs like blood in the veins of Whitman's poetry; to separate it from any interpretation of its meanings would be disastrous to our enjoyment of Whitman. The perceptive scholars of Whitman, both American and foreign, have recognised and emphasized mysticism as a key to the understanding of his poetry. Richard Maurice Bucke, a Canadian born psychiatrist, one of the earliest biographers and scholars of Whitman treats him as a case of Cosmic Consciousness, and compares him, to the advantage of Whitman, with world illuminants such as Buddha, Jesus, Paul, Plotinus, Mohammed, William Blake, etc.[18] James E.Miller,[19] Gay Wilson Allen and Charles T.Davis[20] rightly emphasize the mystical quality of Whitman's mind, and approach the structure and symbolism of his poems in the light of this perception. Malcolm Cowley shows a more inspired and surer insight in the world of Whitman by appreciating the concept of the mystic Self which forms the central theme of Whitman's poetry.[21] Speaking of the "Song of Myself" particularly, Cowley suggests, though he is not the first to do so,[22] that it can be better understood if considered in relation to such great mystical writings as Blake's "Marriage of Heaven and Hell", Nietzsche's "Thus Spake Zarathustra", or The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna; even more usefully, in relation to the mystical philosophies of India as expounded

in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita, because he thinks that the 'doctrine suggested by the poem is more Eastern than Western'.[23] V.K. Chari, a noted Indian scholar of Whitman, believes that 'mysticism is the informing spirit of Whitman's poetry, and it (mysticism) not only constitutes the fundamental meaning of his poems, but also determines their poetic form, imagery and symbolism'.[24] The number of such fair-minded interpretations, as also that of rather lop-sided opinions is considerably large.[25]

As it is evident from the foregoing pages, my own approach to Whitman, especially to the "Song of Myself" has been and will be through the all-inclusive and the most comprehensive theme of Self which, in order to be understood, must be commented upon on various levels of mystical interpretation. In my attempt to unveil the mystery of Whitman's mind, I will borrow the vocabulary of mysticism employed by scholars like Bucke, Miller and Chari, and I expect to arrive at almost the same conclusions as their's. But then, my method will be basically different. At any rate, I do not hope to indulge in over enthusiastic comparisons and contrasts drawn by Bucke: "He (Whitman) saw, what neither Gautama nor Paul saw, what Jesus saw, though not so clearly as he..."[26] Nor do I plan to force Whitman's poem, the "Song of Myself" into any arbitrary structural mould as Strauch, Miller and Cowley do.[27] I also do not propose to load my essay with dialogues from the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita, in order that a similarity or identity of vision might be established - a somewhat over-sustained effort in this direction has been made by Chari and Mercer.[28] Miss Mercer adopts the erroneous procedure of sometimes literally equating Whitman's ideas with Hindu concepts as set forth in the Bhagavad-Gita. Chari feels, and

rightly so, that " when read in the light of the mystical doctrines of the Upanishads, Whitman's verse seems to gain in depth and clarity".[29] Without actually forcing Whitman's meanings, one might profitably use Vedanta philosophy, or for that matter any system of idealistic thought, as an instrument of critical investigation. But one should use such an instrument with a certain amount of discretion, so that it may not look like propaganda for or against one or the other cultural tradition, or a body of this or that literature. We must have equal respect for all the cultural and religious traditions of the world. For, after all, there is no essential difference between the doctrines of Buddha and Christ, Plotinus and Śaṁkara.

At this stage, it might be proper to say that the present study will not involve itself into any biographical treatment of Whitman - physical biography may not be confused with spiritual biography. It also does not aim to include any detailed examination of Whitman's sources. Regarding Whitman's literary as well as spiritual heritage, a great deal of scholarly research, both useful and useless, has been done by various scholars.[30] But such studies have always partial significance; they are at best academic and theoretic. I do not mean to deny the importance of contributory streams of thought, but I wonder if a literary or spiritual genius can be explained solely in terms of the books he might have read. Whitman had, no doubt, read widely, but he never seemed to have made any systematic attempt to arrive at a body of knowledge outside his own experience. He found everything within the recesses of his own Consciousness, his deep, mystic Self. Whatever similarities or parallels one might draw between Whitman's ideas and the ideas of a Krishna, a Buddha, a Jesus, a

Shakespeare, a Rousseau, a Emerson, a Carlyle, a Hegel, to quote a few, the kinship seems to be largely coincidental or accidental. Therefore, one must be careful with his materials; one should try to discern the complex magnetism functioning between his psyche and the sieve of his intellect, without undermining or exaggerating the import of ideas from outside himself. Even though a case can always be made to trace the development of a literary genius through this or that culture, this or that happening, such an approach is likely to hide rather than reveal the real man and his art. Yet, at the same time, it will be futile to assert that Whitman existed without any cultural background, or that he was altogether impervious to the ideas of others. Rather, on the other hand, his mind was open to diverse influences and currents of thought. On the subject of sources for Leaves of Grass, Professor Allen has summed up: " it was not based on one or a dozen sources; but it was Whitman's great achievement to fuse "hints" from hundreds of books with the authentic product of his own fantasy".[31] Instead of pin-pointing specific sources for Whitman's mystical ideas, it will be far more rewarding to remember the intellectual milieu of his day. For the intellectual climate of a period can always be used, implicitly or explicitly, as an instrument to enhance the interpretation of the mind of its creative writers. A brief account of the intellectual atmosphere of nineteenth-century America will be in order here.

Generally speaking, this age, as any other age in the history of American thought, could not escape the impress of opposite forces and currents of ideas as manifested in the clash between "idealism and opportunity", spiritualism and materialism, romanticism and matter-of-factness, transcendentalism and the purely pragmatic way. Where in its

literary aspect, this period - 1830 to Civil War - is known as the Age of Transcendentalism, at a mundane level the same period embodied a tremendous industrial expansion, one of whose manifestation was the railroad.[32] The 'literature' of the period from the 1830's until near the end of the century acquired and absorbed in its tradition such influences from home and abroad as proved consequential in flowering the so called 'New England Renaissance'.[33] The major European influence was Romanticism,which emphasized emotional, intuitional, and instinctive elements in the human personality. Spiritual intuition superseded the laws of intellectual deduction.[34] Individualism was ascendant, and the individualists were called Transcendentalists. The German philosophers like Kant and Schelling had affirmed man's ability to apprehend reality by direct spiritual insight. Coleridge and Carlyle were also voicing the same theme in England.[35] Joseph L.Blau has written:

> Against the Lockean empirical tradition Coleridge's view makes it possible to reinstate the distinction between the natural and the spiritual. Each man must ascertain these laws for himself, "by reflection upon the process and laws of his own inward being", else they can not be truly learned. Transcendentalist method is declared valid on the ground that universal truth is present in the inmost heart of each human being.[36]

The affirmation of the prevailing thought currents was readily sought in the Oriental writings. The Vedanta philosophy of India reached New England in the early decades of the 19th-Century and contributed much to the thinking of men like Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman.[37] In spite of the very many ideological similarities among Oriental literature, the neo-Platonic doctrines, Christian mysticism and the philosophy of the German Idealists, the transcendentalists, interested in the concept of "selfhood" found in the Upanishads a well-elaborated doctrine of Self, because Hindu scripture tells us that the central core of one's self (antaratman) is identifiable

with the cosmic whole (Brahman).[38] Besides, the New England intellectuals abandoned Locke for Plato and took to transcendentalism more as a faith than a philosophy.[39] And they were so earnest about this new wave of idealism that notwithstanding the ultimate sourcesof some of the Transcendental ideas, a distinctly American pattern was evolved to enclose it.[40] Coleridge's 'Aids to Reflection', edited by James Marsh of the University of Vermont, became the American gospel of "spiritual reflection".[41] Marsh presented in Coleridge a new leader with an invigorating platform. What attracted the American thinkers in Coleridge and the German philosophers was " a common enmity to the methods and results of eighteenth-century British empiricism and to the tradition of skepticism and materialism in general".[42] In the light of the new thinking, Christianity, which so far was considered merely historical, led by a priest, dictated by a dogma, and organized by a church, like Vedanta, was interpreted not as a theory, or a speculation, but as a life, -'not a philosophy of life, but a life and a living process.'[43] In religious practice, some of the reformed Unitarian principles: (1) God is all-loving and all pervading;(2) the presence of God in all men makes them divine;(3) the true worship of God is goodwill to all men - laid the spiritual basis of transcendentalism. Man was regarded as a progressively spiritual creature who may continue to develop even after death.[44] Such ideas permeated the literary scene, and it almost seemed as if 'all the mountain tops were glowing with the Eternal Spirit, and all the elevated minds felt the coming of a Truth'.[45] In the background of this transcendental awareness which 'sprang out of the native American experience as well as out of idealistic and mystical thought in Europe and Asia began the movement which emphasized its faith in intuition

and in the capacity of the individual to discover the truth'.[46] Eisinger writes that of all the Oriental scriptures, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita were perhaps the most influential in shaping the American mind of the period.[47] Writing on the nature of transcendentalism he says:

> The mood of Transcendentalism is romantic. Its metaphysics is idealistic and mystical. Its epistemology is intuitive. Its ultimate conception of the world is monistic, in so far as mind creates matter and in so far as spirit and matter fuse to become finally a divine essence. The concept of being meant constant growth toward the idea or archetype from which he came - God.[48]

In its literary aspect, Eisinger maintains that ' transcendental theory often finds the vitality of literature in the expression of emotion rather than thought. In inspiring the full, fresh flow of man's emotions, literature helps man to be reborn and to see the world with a new and pure vision'.[49] To this, it might be added that in the transcendental expression of the highest kind, feeling becomes thought and thought becomes feeling, and their meeting gives birth to a symbol.

The above summary, however, does not aim to suggest that Whitman can be understood entirely in the light of the ideas contained therein. Whitman is a complex and unique poet who, quite unconsciously, absorbs in his experience strands from almost every school of thought, and yet eludes them. One might be cautious when emphasizing the external sources of Whitman. Henry A. Pochmann's remark on Thoreau that his " reading of Goethe did no more to make him a German than his reading of the Bhagavad-Gita made him a Hindu"[50] can be fairly applied to Whitman's position. But the above background will help us a great deal in apprehending the "principle of Organic metaphor" in the poems of Whitman; especially his "Song of Myself". The principle of organic metaphor involves a certain

change in the patterns of feeling, thought, imagery, symbolism and myth. The creative unity of the Leaves of Grass which manifests the Integral Experience of Whitman cannot be understood without the knowledge of some basic notions implied in our discussion of Transcendentalistic thought, both German and Indian, or one might even say American.

As already stated, within the scope of the present inquiry, I will deal primarily with the "Song of Myself" as the single greatest expression of Whitman's Integral Experience, though in order to demonstrate the continuity or pervasiveness of theme or themes, some other major poems too will be summarily analysed. But before we begin with our analyses of the poems under reference, it is necessary to our purpose to define, and to state what constitutes Integral Experience. In this connection, I propose to examine, in the next chapter, as best as I can, various theories of Perception which aim to clarify our ideas of Consciousness or Self. Our course will run from an ordinary sense perception to the highest, mystical, intuitive perception through the imaginative. Since Whitman is constantly preoccupied with the Reality of the Self, this aspect of our study will be of a very great relevance to our interpretation of his poetic experience or Integral Experience. This will not only illumine Whitman's meanings but also enrich our own sense of values. Whitman's universe is an ennobling landscape of 'wide expanses and far-stretching vistas'. In order to grasp " the Mount of Vision that Whitman climbed before he sang the "Song of Myself" "[51] we must first grasp the Divine reality of our own souls. Unless the human vision becomes the divine vision, it cannot have'the power to grasp the Whole, in which opposites stand

reconciled',[52] or in which perhaps there are no opposites - in which polarities cease to exist. Otherwise, for instance, how can one enter the spirit of the following:

> I swear I think now that every thing without exception
> has an eternal soul !
> The trees have, rooted in the ground ! the weeds of the
> sea have ! the animals !
> I swear I think there is nothing but immortality !
> That the exquisite scheme is for it, and the nebulous float
> is for it, and the cohering is for it !
> And all preparation is for it - and identity is for it - and
> life and materials are altogether for it ![53]

"Eternal soul" and "immortality" are concepts which can be perceived only through intuitive cognition, rather than mere intellection. What one tries to know by intellectual effort becomes immediate knowledge through intuition. One needs to apprehend unity in multeity of Whitman's art - on this feature and the sense of beyond Noyes has observed:

> Whitman's poetry is like the sea. It has the same amplitude and power, the same unbriddled swing, the same variety and unity-in-variety; it is spacious and composite; it has the sea's movement and stir, its immediacy and its suggestions of infinity beyond.[54]

At this point in our study, we should now be defining the 'integral' experience and examining various idealistic theories of perception, British, German, Greek, Oriental, especially, Indian, and American. We should also be trying to fix Whitman in the right perspective in the light of these theories and his own experience. A method of comparison and contrast will be employed. However, I will keep my major aim in mind: an exploration of Whitman's meanings and their aesthetic value.

## CHAPTER II

## THE NATURE OF INTEGRAL EXPERIENCE

The integral experience is essentially kaleidoscopic in its variety of levels, sensuous and metaphysical, phenomenal and noumenal, illusive and real. It illuminates polarities of subjective-objective relationships, and thereby transcends them. It fuses the individual self with the universal self by creating love and identity with all forms of life. It operates both within and beyond Time. It helps one in rising above separateness and dualities. It pervades mysticism, inspires awe and permeates a sense of mystery which involves one's whole nature in its relationship to others and what passes beyond the world of connections. It has the highest aesthetic value; it conveys itself through the language of symbols, heightened imagery, paradox or 'negative contraries'. It has the most organic form; it has a kind of Unity which communicates itself in terms of approximations; for there is nothing Absolute in conscious existence. It is spiritual and religious in the sense that it cannot come to any one, or be passed on to any one through intellectual dialogue. It occurs on a deeper level of personality and overwhelms us as the presence of the divine. The protagonist of the experience is the inner self of each one of us. Whitman's experience is most profoundly integral; it is integral in more than one sense: in the sense of the definition given above, and in the sense that it encloses all the various labels and nomenclatures that the students and scholars of Whitman might like to associate with him. The individual reader can always find his own examples from Whitman to illustrate pantheism, materialism, transcendentalism, Vedantism, or any other ism, or all of these in his poetry. For our purpose, however, I

shall cite from his early poems, "The Sleepers", "Song of the Open Road", and "There Was a Child Went Forth" to reveal the totality of life which is included in Whitman's poetic experience or integral perception. These will help us later in examining Whitman's comparative position in the realm of human perception. To begin with, let us read:

> I wander all night in my vision,
> Stepping with light feet, swiftly and noiselessly
> stepping and stopping,
> Bending with open eyes over the shut eyes of sleepers,
> Wandering and confused, lost to myself, ill-assorted,
> contradictory,
> Pausing, gazing, bending, and stopping.
>
> .....
>
> The married couple sleep calmly in their bed, he with
> his palm on the hip of the wife, and she with
> her palm on the hip of the husband,
> The sisters sleep lovingly side by side in their bed,
> The men sleep lovingly side by side in theirs,
> And the mother sleeps with her little child carefully wrapt.
>
> The blind sleep, and the deaf and dumb sleep,
> The prisoner sleeps well in the prison, the runaway son sleeps,
> The murderer that is to be hung next day, how does he sleep?
> And the murder'd person, how does he sleep?
>
> The female that loves unrequited sleeps,
> And the male that loves unrequited sleeps,
> The head of the money-maker that plotted all day sleeps,
> And the enraged and treacherous dispositions, all, all sleep.
>
> .....
>
> I go from bedside to bedside, I sleep close with the
> other sleepers each in turn,
> I dream in my dream all the dreams of the other dreamers,
> And I become the other dreamers.[1]

All that the poet is trying to convey is the complex capacity to enter the life of others by an act of intuition. He achieves the denial or harmonization of dualities through the language of paradox. Since Whitman's "I" or self becomes the self of all: " I dream in my dream

all the dreams of the other dreamers,/ And I become the other dreamers", his "open eyes" become One with the " shut eyes of sleepers". He acquires a mystical union with whatever he sees:

> It is I too, the sleepless widow looking out on
> the winter midnight,
> I see the sparkles of sunshine on the icy and
> pallid earth.
> A shroud I see and I am the shroud, I wrap a body
> and lie in the coffin.[2]

In "Song of the Open Road", road becomes the symbol of Whitmanesque self which is in rapport with the universe around it. To Whitman everything that he saw bubbled and pulsated with life. He accepted all and rejected nothing (except stupidity). It is by such leaps of intuitive perception that he performs the dramatic act of identification. When I say he rejected nothing, I use the expression in a very broad sense. Of course, he could "travel the open road" only when he had " done with indoor complaints, libraries", and "querulous criticisms".[3] On the open road he observes:

> You air that serves me with breath to speak !
> You objects that call from diffusion my meanings
> and give them shape !
> You light that wraps me and all things in delicate
> equable showers !
> You paths worn in the irregular hollows by the
> roadside !
> I believe you are latent with unseen existences,
> you are so dear to me.[4]

With this metaphysical awareness of the "unseen existences", Whitman continues animating objects of sense-perception by projecting the Self into them. In a little while he assumes a much bigger pose of realization and says:

> From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits
> and imaginary lines,
>
> .....

I inhale great draughts of space,
The east and the west are mine, and the north
and the south are mine.

I am larger, better than I thought,
I did not know I held so much goodness.[5]

The sense of being beyond limits and boundaries introduces a spacial concept of the Self or Soul. The soul achieves its effluxion in a blissful hour of self-realization, a surer mark of wisdom which is beyond the range of pedagogic logic and discursive reasoning. In the mood of being 'larger than he thought' Whitman asserts:

Here is the test of wisdom,
Wisdom is not finally tested in schools,
Wisdom cannot be pass'd from one having it to
another not having it,
Wisdom is of the soul, is not susceptible of proof,
is its own proof,
Applies to all stages and objects and qualities
and is content,
Is the certainty of the reality and immortality
of things, and the excellence of things;

.....

Now I re-examine philosophies and religions,
They may prove well in lecture-rooms, yet not prove
at all under the spacious clouds and along the
landscape and flowing currents.[6]

The poem " There Was a Child Went Forth" offers a still broader canvas on which one can clearly see the functioning of Whitman's intuitive mind which annihilates all seeming barriers and dichotomies between the subject (self) and the object (phenomenal world). The objective reality (appearance) flows and merges with the subjective reality (truth), and all obstacles in the way of perception evaporate:

There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he look'd upon, that object
he became,

And that object became part of him for the day
or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass and white and red morning-glories, and
white and red clover, and the song of
the phoebe-bird,

.....

And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her way to the
school,
And the friendly boys that pass'd, and the quarrelsome
boys,
And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls, and the barefoot
negro boy and girl,
And all the changes of city and country wherever he went.

His own parents, he that had father'd him and she that
had conceiv'd him in her womb and birth'd him,
They gave this child more of themselves than that,
They gave him afterward every day, they became part of him.

.....

The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time,
the curious whether and how,
Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all
flashes and specks?
Men and women crowding fast in the streets, if they are not
flashes and specks what are they?

.....

The hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken crests, slapping,
The strata of colour'd clouds, the long bar of maroon-tint
away solitary by itself, the spread of purity it lies
motionless in,
The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance of
salt marsh and shore mud,
These became part of that child who went forth every day,
and who now goes, and will always go forth
every day.[7]

With one brilliant stroke of poetic mind, Whitman attains cosmic expansion through the child who, in other words, is symbolic of his own Self or Consciousness, as also the eternal unity between the "Child who

went forth every day" and the child "who now goes"; and they are merged with the child who "will always go forth every day". The child's Consciousness envelopes all: nature, society, heredity, and time. His perception is at once particular and mystical. His sense of society is not learned and erudite. The locus of his vision is the cosmic universe which cannot be filtered through the narrow opening of an intellectual, analytic consciousness.[8] This is a unique mode of apprehension by which one can simultaneously encompass the reality of sensuous experience and its transparency, its Otherness. It brings forth the nobility of man in transcending his entire sensuousness into the region of a spiritual self-affirmation.[9] It is the intuitive method by which all polarities are illumined and resolved. It is what characterizes the Integral Experience of Whitman.

That Whitman provokes comparisons and contrasts with other theorists and practitioners of the metaphysical concept of subject-object relationship has already been suggested. We shall now examine various theories of perception, aesthetic and philosophic, which, I feel, are most relevant to our study of Whitman. But, within the limitations of this inquiry, the examination under reference cannot hope, in any sense, to be exhaustive. Moreover, we will select only such examples as might have, directly or indirectly, influenced the mind of Whitman. For the sake of convenience ( to suit the present context, I have almost reversed the order of chronology ), let us begin with the British Romantic theory of perception or consciousness. The British Romantic doctrine was, in more than one sense, a revolution against the empirical

philosophy of Locke and Hartley. Locke considered experience as the fountain of all ideas; ideas which are ultimately derived from sensation or from reflection. 'Sensation', in Lockean terminology, is what the external objects convey to the mind; and 'reflection' constitutes the perception of the workings of our minds,' such as perceiving, thinking, doubting, believing and willing.' He rejected the Cartesian hypothesis of innate ideas.[10] He regarded mind as a mere passive recipient of sense data, a tabula rasa acted upon by external stimuli. The sensationalistic premise of Locke was extended further by Hartley. Hartley thought that the mind is devoid of content, but he did not treat 'reflection' as a distinct source of ideas: sensation was thought to be the only source. The complex structure of man's mental life was explained in terms of associationist psychology.[11] He also maintained that that which is prior in the order of nature is less perfect than that which is posterior.[12] On the contrary, the Romantic theory of perception, with its idealistic and metaphysical basis granted to the human mind an active creative role in experience. The emphasis shifted from the objective to the subjective reality. Coleridge was one of the great Romantics who repudiated the mechanistic presuppositions of the theories of Locke and Hartley. He formulated an elaborate theory of Imagination which was at once a theory of knowledge and a theory of poetic creation. The conception of 'intuition' was an integer in Coleridge's thinking. The aesthetic imagination, he regarded as an "esemplastic" faculty, fusing or reconciling opposites into a unity:

> The Imagination then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary Imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a

> repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, coexisting with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create: or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital even as all objects ( as objects ) are essentially fixed and dead.[13]

Coleridge's theory of Imagination was rooted in his epistemology and metaphysics, and his ideas suggested the influence of Plotinus and the German Idealists.[14] It was Plotinus who suggested the root image of the projector, which became the favourite Romantic metaphor of mind. In discussing the human perception he rejected the concept of sensations as 'imprints' or 'seal-impressions' made on a passive mind, and substituted the view of the conceiving mind as an act and a power which radiates the objects of sense.[15] This was how the 'mirror turned lamp': " O Lady ! we receive but what we give,/ And in our life alone does Nature live:"[16] Thus the human mind ( or soul ) acquired a deeper significance in its relation to subject-object polarity. Consciousness or Self became the centre of creative activity, though it functioned on the plane of a bipolar reality. Contradictions of life ( subject-object relationship ) were sought to be resolved into a unity, although the tension between the inner and the outer was treated as the central mystery of life and being. But all this was ultimately based on a dialectical framework, because much of the British Romantic theory of perception was imported from Germany. A reference to dialectic brings us to the German Idealists with whom we shall deal presently. The Germans like Kant, Fichte,

Schelling and Hegel had evolved a systematic logic of dialecticism.

In regard to the theory of perception Kant distinguished between understanding and reason. Understanding, he thought, as a reflective faculty dependent on the material of the senses, and reason as the source and substance of truths above sense:[17]

> Our knowledge, maintains Kant, does not all come through our senses. For our senses are but imperfect measures of reality. They can conceive neither a finite world nor an infinite world. They can envision neither a beginning and end of time on the one hand nor a beginningless and endless time on the other. The real world, accordingly, is beyond our sensory comprehension. But it is not beyond our intellectual comprehension. We can "see" the world with our "inner" eye. We can understand it without the help of experience.... We must try to understand the real world, then, "not through our perceptions but through our conceptions", not through our impressions but through our intellect.[18]

The above quotation sums up the position of Kant to a great extent. It may be pointed out here that though Coleridge was influenced by Kant in his basic concept of Imagination, the metaphysical notion of the 'primary imagination' as " a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM" was exclusive to his own way of thinking. Coleridge also rejected Kant's skeptical conclusion that absolute knowledge was not possible to the human mind. Fichte, on the other hand, affirmed the capacity of human reason to know reality. Reality, he thought, was not transcendent but identical with experience; otherwise knowledge would be impossible. There is a fundamental difference between the premises of Kant and Fichte. Fichte establishes a doctrine of "idealism" according to which the objective world takes its existence from the perceiving mind. Fichte's "reality" is of the nature of self-consciousness, and the reality of object-in-itself is thus

abolished. Whereas Kant asserted the existence of things-in-themselves. Carl J. Friedrich writes:

> Kant's concept denotes an "objective" condition of all knowledge, as he sees it, as patterned by the subject of knowing: man's mind as the source of all objectively valid judgments about a reality not knowable as it is, in and by itself. Kant's insistence upon the objective core of the subject's knowing: man's intellectual concepts or necessary patterns of all experiencing might be called "relationism", rather than "subjectivism", since it stresses the relation between subject and object in all knowing. Finally, the term "transcendental" is perhaps the most unfortunate of all, since it suggests an other-worldly emphasis in a philosophy whose primary characteristic is its humanistic emphasis upon man's earthly, finite existence. What Kant has in mind, primarily, is that he is expounding a method which transcends the customary dichotomies by stressing the mode of knowing rather than what is known; it is the core of his much disputed "formalism". [19]

However, Fichte highlights the subject-object polarity. Within the framework of dialectic logic, the subject is juxtaposed upon the object, becomes conscious of itself in the process, and transcends the opposition. The opposites are reconciled in the synthetic act of Consciousness. 'Thus, the knowing process involves the perpetual transcendence of a self-created opposition. An absolute, pure subject (Self) was an unthinkable abstraction to Fichte'.[20] Schelling's position is almost identical to that of Fichte, in so far as his "transcendental idealism" is based on the structure of self-consciousness, and in so far as his methodology is dialectic: the consciousness of self gives rise to the consciousness of the not-self, and the simultaneous meeting of both gives birth to the concept of a triadic self. The triadic process is neither purely objective nor unduly subjective; it seeks to establish the identity of the both. Schelling's philosophy of identity discloses to us the

true nature of reason as it is in itself. By reason he understands absolute reason which is understood as the total indifference of the subjective and the objective.[21] There is no real opposition between mind and matter, personality and nature, both are identified in a single intelligent scheme.[22] To quote Bolman, Jr:

> Schelling, seeking greater objectivity, led the way to Hegelian absolute idealism. Attempting to unite a purely rational and therefore intelligible universe with the process of thought, he sketched a monistic system which conceived the perfect identity of being and thought, real and ideal, in one great dialectical evolution. Although in many important respects he differed widely from Hegel, Schelling's most substantial early accomplishment was nevertheless in essential agreement with the foundation of the later Hegelian dialectical monism and in no small way contributed to its genesis.[23]

Hegel, in spite of the early influence of Schelling, could not accept Schelling's view of Reality or the Absolute. Mr. Ras Vihary Das writes:

> The Absolute, in which no distinction could be made and to which even the distinction of subject and object was entirely extraneous, could afford no satisfaction to the rational mind of Hegel. He maintained that the Real as rational realized itself through the opposition of subject and object, so that the distinction between subject and object was not extraneous but essential to it. Again, he could not suppose that the subject and the object were parallel developments of equal importance, as Schelling thought. For him, although the object was necessary, the subject always predominated over it. He had, however, learnt the lessons of Schelling's philosophy of nature and so his Absolute, although spiritual, was not subjective like Fichte's, but combined in itself both subjective and objective aspects.[24]

Existence being all-inclusive, it necessarily comprises within it the states of not-being and being, finity and infinity, time and timelessness. Hegel makes a startling pronouncement that ' not only has everything an

opposite but every thing is its own opposite. The truth lies on both sides of every question. Life is a struggle of opposing forces attempting to combine with one another into a higher unity. Within the 'dialectic' method, Hegel identified thought and reality; he found greater reality in "becoming" than in "being". "Being" to him was an empty concept. Opposition or dualism seems to be most essential to Hegelian dialectic. The dialectical organ unifies opposites without annulling them. So much for the Hegelian dialectic and the theory of material, non-material consciousness.

Of the Greeks, the names of Socrates and Plato come immediately to mind. Their influence on the British and German idealistic theories of perception was considerable. Neo-Platonism was almost the basis of all aesthetic, philosophic and religious thinking in the West. Of the greatest neo-Platonist, Plotinus, whose metaphysics put an end to the dualism of subjectivity and objectivity, and whose thought bridged " the ancient world of the Greeks and the Christianity of the West",[25] a mention has already been made in the foregoing pages. Socrates, the greatest Greek, wrote nothing, but he was incomparable in his conversational zest. Hence, we know him only through the Dialogues of Plato and Memorabilia of Xenophon. Socrates emphasized man's duty to know himself. Self was the basis of his whole quest. He sought to go behind the changing world of phenomena and see the unchanging behind the changing, truth behind the manifestation.[26] Whether his Perception of Reality was through the Ideas existing by themselves in a supersensible world or the Ideas existing in things is a controversial problem for the professional philosopher to deal with. However, with Plato it seems to be a

certainty: the Concept or the Idea is a sort of an ideal in a super-sensible world.[27] Plato was not content with beliefs and opinions of the ordinary world of imperfections and imprecisions, of half lights and shadows. He thought that true perception unveils the mystery of wisdom, truth and soul of the world. To participate in the eternal mode of being, one must live in detachment from the fleeting shows of the earth, and yet absorb their reality. Radhakrishnan writes:

> For Plato, the Good which is the True and the Real shines everlastingly like the sun in the high heaven. Man, dwelling in the cave of his ignorance, bound in the chains of his stupidity and selfishness, takes the shadows thrown upon the farthest walls by the light of his own passions as realities, knows not that the Good is there, the eternal source of all light and life. If his eyes are cleared up, he will see the Real. There is nothing to fight against except the doubts in his mind and the shadows of his errors. What ought to be already is.[28]

Since Platonic thought has very many ideological similarities with the Upanishadic thought of India, it would be proper now to state here the latter's position. To begin with, it must be emphasized that 'the Upanishads are not systematic treatises on philosophy; the teachers whose intuitions are recorded in them are more mystic seers than metaphysical investigators.'[29] Their content is mystical and their method is poetic. Their language is the language of paradox and they contain the teachings about the ultimate Reality. They are monistic in attitude; they propound that Self is the one non-dual reality which appears as the manifold world. To grasp the esoteric meanings of the Upanishads, one needs intuitive perception, rather than intellect. Their theory of Perception means a direct intuitive insight which brings

mystical knowledge of changeless Reality or Self. One example from the Chandogya Upanishad, chapter VI, in which Uddalaka teaches his son Shvetaketu concerning the Oneness of the Self, would clarify the whole point. Shvetaketu was sent to a school for the study of Vedas -

> He then, having become a pupil at the age of twelve, returned when he was twenty-four years of age, having studied all the Vedas, greatly conceited, thinking himself well read, arrogant. His father then said to him, 'Shvetaketu, since you are now so greatly conceited, think yourself well read and arrogant, did you ask for that instruction by which the unhearable becomes heard, the unperceivable becomes perceived, the unknowable becomes known ?'[30]

Shvetaketu did not realize the possibility of such knowledge: ' How, Venerable Sir, can there be such teaching ?' Uddalaka proceeded to instruct him by means of analogies. He told him, for example, to take a piece of salt, and spoke:

> Place this salt in the water and come to me in the morning. Then he did so. Then he said to him, 'That salt you placed in the water last evening, please bring it hither.' Having looked for it he found it not, as it was completely dissolved. 'Please take a sip of it from this end.' He said, 'How is it ?' 'Salt'. 'Take a sip from the middle. How is it?' 'Salt'. 'Take a sip from the other end. How is it?' 'Salt!! 'Throw it away and come to me.' He did so. It is always the same. Then he said to him, 'Verily, indeed it is here. That which is the subtle essence this whole world has for its self. That is the true. That is the self. That art thou, Shvetaketu.[31]

As it has been shown above, the realm of mystical consciousness in which the Self is illumined and known, becomes possible only through an intuitive perception and is One with that. True knowledge is always non-dual; it is devoid of distinctions. Intuition means pure subjectivity; it is knowing by being and it is integral knowing. This mode of thought

has been dominant in Indian mystical philosophy and it is known as Advaita. Shankara, the Indian mystic and philosopher who lived probably from 788 to 820 A.D., gave Advaita its classical expression. His position regarding Perception of Reality can be summed up in the following words:

> The world, according to Śaṁkara, 'is and is not'. Its fundamental unreality can be understood only in relation to the ultimate mystical experience, the experience of an illumined soul. When the illumined soul passes into transcendental consciousness, he realizes the Self ( the Atman) as pure bliss and pure intelligence, the one without a second. In this state of consciousness, all perception of multiplicity ceases, there is no longer any sense of 'mine' and 'thine', the world as we ordinarily know it has vanished. Then the Self shines forth as the One, the Truth, the Brahman, the basis of the apparent world. The apparent world, as it is experienced in the waking state, may be likened, says Śaṁkara, to an imagined snake which proves on closer inspection, to be nothing but a coil of rope. When the truth is known, we are no longer deluded by the appearance - the snake-appearance vanishes into the reality of the rope, the world vanishes into Brahman.[32]

Of the American transcendentalistic theory of Perception, a reference has already been made in the pages of the first chapter of this study ( see pp. 10-13 ). It has also been shown that the American Transcendentalists laid a great deal of emphasis on Intuition in the conception of Reality, because intuition pierces through the subject-object relationship. The American indebtedness to the British, German, Greek and Indian idealistic thought has also been demonstrated. In America, the doctrine of Self received its grand expression in the writings of Emerson. The major burden of his thought is embodied in his Essays. One may refer to "Self-Reliance", "Spiritual Laws", "Intellect",

"The Over-Soul", "The Poet", and "Plato: Or, The Philosopher", to name a few. In his essay "Self-Reliance", Emerson calls " primary wisdom as Intuition" and "all later teachings" as "tuitions".[33] In "Intellect" Emerson establishes the "superiority of the spontaneous or intuitive principle over the arithmetical or logical".[34] He affirms time and again that subject and object are identical, that both spring from the same source - a substratum of spirit. All duality is rooted in our ignorance. The spiritual identity of being is expressed in "Plato" wherein Emerson quotes from the Hindu scriptures:

> The Same, the Same: friend and foe are of one stuff; the ploughman, the plough and the furrow are of one stuff; and the stuff is such and so much that the variations of form are unimportant. "You are fit" (says the supreme Krishna to a sage) " to apprehend that you are not distinct from me. That which I am, thou art, and that also is this world, with its gods and heroes and mankind. Men contemplate distinctions, because they are stupified with ignorance."..... "The knowledge that this spirit, which is essentially one, is in one's own and in all other bodies, is the wisdom of one who knows the unity of things." [35]

To say anything more than what we have stated concerning the theories of <u>perception</u> - British, German, Greek, Indian and American - is not within the scope of the present essay. Their relevance, however, has to be emphasized, so that we may be able to clarify the position of Whitman in the light of these. We have earlier stated(see pp.13-14) that Whitman absorbs in his experience strands from almost every school of thought, and yet, in a certain sense, eludes them. He may reflect any system of thought, but he was not consciously trying to evolve one. I think, it is by pointing out the essential resemblances and differences between Whitman's mystical premise and the various theories we have

considered that we can arrive at a comparatively ( I don't say final) authentic appreciation and apprehension of his meanings.

With the British Romantics, Whitman shared a sense of the 'beyond', their individualism or 'subjectivity', their preference for the noumenal over the phenomenal world, and their concept of intuition as an integer of knowledge. But the differences are so sharp that the comparison seems to be superficial. Unlike the Romantics, he did not escape into the world of the spirit and transcendence from every-day reality. He accepted everything around him and rejected nothing. He created such a world out of his mystical vision as he could share with every one, whereas the Romantics tended to exclude themselves into 'private worlds of symbol, vision and mythology':

> A Wordsworth seeks refuge in nature to sharpen his communion with Self. A Byron asserts his alienation by kinship with the stars and companionship with the storms. A Shelley, frustrated with the world, either pours his heart out in ecstatic sorrow or embraces the ideal world of Hellenic thought.....In short, the Romantic self for all its intensity and power is essentially in flight from the life of <u>things</u>, and although it seeks to offset the downward mundane drag with the spirit and soar of the ideals, the skimpy and cramped reality of existence with the sweep and grandeur of the symbolic and the imaginative, it cannot help betray the marks of divorce and alienation; however, the self in Whitman is in complete harmony with the near and distant, with its immediate environments and far-flung territories of thought and vision. In a word, it includes, and does not eliminate. [36]

Whitman writes:

> My spirit has pass'd in compassion and determination
> around the whole earth,
> I have look'd for equals and lovers and found them
> ready for me in all lands,
> I think some divine rapport has equalized me with them.[37]

Moreover, Whitman did not resolve and reconcile the "opposites into a unity" like Coleridge. Whitman perceived unity in diversity. In this connection, Whitman's concept of the "ensemble" is very significant as a unitive principle. It is the same principle which illumines all polarities as duly resolved: " All must have reference to the ensemble of the world, and the compact truth of the world".[38] Whitman writes:

> I will not make poems with reference to parts,
> But I will make poems, songs, thoughts, with reference
> to ensemble,
> And I will not sing with reference to a day, but with
> reference to all days,
> And I will not make a poem nor the least part of a
> poem but has reference to the soul,
> Because having look'd at the objects of the
> universe, I find there is no one nor any
> particle of one but has reference to
> the soul.[39]

That Whitman had read the German Idealists through translations cannot be denied, but the extent of his direct reading remains undetermined.[40] He shared with the Germans - Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel - their concern about the reconciliation of subject-object polarity, in order to arrive at the knowledge of Absolute Reality. But while the Germans arrived at their conclusions by a system of logic, Whitman depended mystically upon immediate intuitional perception.[41] German Idealistic thought is fundamentally dialectical, whereas Whitman's thought ( if thought it can be called ) is basically mystical and intuitive. In the light of our discussion of the poems like "The Sleepers", "Song of the Open Road", and "There Was a Child Went Forth", the projection of Dialectic upon Whitman's method seems to be erroneous. Mody C.

Boatright[42] and Alfred Marks[43] insist upon the "triadic" character of Whitman's poems and imagery. To my mind, they seem to have exaggerated the seeming parallelism of approaches, and they have misinterpreted Whitman's interest in the ideas of the Germans as his interest in their methodology. Olive W. Parsons has observed that the likenesses cited between Hegelian and Whitmanian methods are misleading,"if not fallacious, or are too general to be of significance".[44] She further writes:

> Whitman's mystical intuitional realm, in which logical analysis would be a destructive force, could have had no lasting appeal to Hegel; just so, the philosophy of Hegel- as well as those of other metaphysicians was weighed in the balance and found wanting by Whitman. Nor does the Hegelian system strictly speaking explain the universe, either in the aggregate or in detail. The Eternal mystery is still a mystery. It is true, no philosophy possible can, in deepest analysis, explain the universe.[45]

There is no room here to dwell any further on the Hegelian, non-Hegelian controversy around Whitman. However, we will come to this point in our discussion of the "Song of Myself" in which we hope to demonstrate the true position of Whitman.

With the Greeks, Whitman was in agreement in so far as he considered Self as the basis of the whole quest of life. Like the Greeks he endeavoured to perceive the unchanging world behind the changing world of phenomena, truth behind the manifestation. But in the process, he did not reject the manifest with associations of dualism between the divine and the material, with its consciousness of sin and dogma. Rather, in his mystic vision he annulled the opposition between the two. In this, he was more in consonance with the Indian mystical philosophy in which "the Self shines forth as the One, the Truth, the Brahman, the basis of the

apparent world":

> In a process of dynamic self expansion Whitman's soul, like the Viswarupa (Cosmic form) of the Gita, enters into all and becomes all. "The universe is in myself; it shall pass through me as a procession". He contains multitudes and contradicts himself, for he has known the underlying identity of things. Whitman showed a complete accord with existence and gave an unqualified approval to every thing.[46]

Whitman apprehended the intuitive identity of the universe and realized the 'conception of an absolute Being or Substance, which is at once the support and essence of the world'.[47]

But, at the same time, Whitman showed marked differences with the extreme position in the mainstream of Indian philosophy. Beneath all his mysticism is a strong core of realism:

> Unlike most of the Indian sages, for example, he was not a thoroughgoing idealist. He did not believe that the whole world of the senses, of desires, of birth and death, was only maya, illusion, nor did he hold that it was a sort of purgatory; instead he praised the world as real and joyful. He did not despise the body, but proclaimed that it was as miraculous as the soul. He was too good a citizen of the nineteenth century to surrender his faith in material progress as the necessary counterpart of spiritual progress. Although he yearned for ecstatic union with the soul or Oversoul, he did not try to achieve it by subjugating the senses, as advised by Yogis and Buddhists alike; on the contrary, he thought the 'merge' could be achieved by a total surrender to the senses.[48]

As far as the American Transcendentalists are concerned, Whitman was in agreement with them in affirming the intuitive mode of apprehension. But he did not share with them, particularly Emerson and Thoreau, their general distrust of body. In this context, he was rather a mystic of body and sex; he sought the identity of flesh and spirit. He " affirmed the simultaneous and harmonious development of the

individual personality and the cosmic relationship".[49] He felt that 'the inner mysteries of religion and of sex are hardly to be separated'.[50] He perceived the world of poetic imagination and that of actuality as One. For him the phenomenal embodied the world of spirit or soul.[51]

The one aim of the above discussion is to suggest that Whitman's experience integrates in itself strains from every type of idealistic thought, and emerges as something unique and singular. The pattern it evolves is no less than original, though the sensibility it generates, be it Romantic or Idealistic, Transcendentalistic or Vedantic, has been common to the experience of all mankind. Even his mysticism acquires a deeper significance than the traditional one, because unlike the world mystics, he dives deep and simultaneously into the reality of God and His Creation. He transcends the world of flesh and senses not by rejecting it, but by clinging to it. 'Whitman's temperament seems to be unsuited to the selflessness of the Christian mystic'[52] and to the asceticism of the Oriental.

In the light of the above background and with the nature of Whitman's "Integral" experience in mind, we will now proceed to analyse and interpret the "Song of Myself". We will explore the Self of the "Song" as a single theme-multiple theme to show its all-inclusive character. Bearing in mind Whitman's consciousness of the validity of his mystical vision, we will also examine briefly limitations as well as possibilities of the communicability of his experience in terms of aesthetic vocabulary and form. The metaphysical notions of 'unity in multiplicity', 'immortality in transitoriness', and 'eternity in a moment' will serve

us as guideposts to lighten the burden of our interpretation. Only then we can observe with Louis Untermeyer that

> Like Blake, Whitman saw the world in a grain of sand- "a leaf of grass is no less than the journey work of the stars". He beheld eternity not only in an hour but, through the eyes of his ideal poet, in all men and women. His was the mystic's self-reliance, the sense of revealed truth which admitted of no argument and needed no proof.[53]

And only then we can appreciate the profundity of his Integral Experience and Cosmic Consciousness in which the material, the spiritual and the eternal become one.[54]

## CHAPTER III

## SONG OF MYSELF: A THEMATIC STUDY

As it has been suggested in the previous chapters of the present study, our aim here is to explore the mystical centre of "I" or "Self" of the "Song of Myself" as a single theme-multiple theme to point out its all-inclusiveness. Our treatment will include commentary upon Whitman's unique position in regard to his mysticism which gives rise to the concept of Identity with all forms of Life, and integrates every experience into a single Whole. It will be established that the themes of Love, War, Democracy, Time, Art, Death, etc., all emanate from and merge into the theme of Self. Self being the stabilizing principle of the "Song of Myself", as it is of all Whitman's poems, lends unity and organization to the action of the poem. However, the underlying unity should not be confused with any deliberate structural plan. The poem has but loose form which forbids any logical growth or dramatic development. It has, of course, a dramatic situation which manifests a movement of sensibility. It has a unity of feeling which weaves all the scattered threads of expression into a consistent pattern. "The entire poem is a "performance" of the dynamic self; and it may be seen to be of the structure of a paradox- the paradox of identity".[1] Any attempt to force the poem into an arbitrary structural mould would be falsifying, because the ideas and themes continue to overlap and thus provide a necessary rhythm to the poem. Those critics who have examined the poem from a predetermined view point of its having a rational structure are Carl F.Strauch, James E.Miller and Malcolm Cowley. Howsoever unconvincing their approaches might be, it is necessary to

mention and examine their opinions briefly before we can state our own mode of analysis.

Carl F.Strauch divides the poem, for the sake of convenience, into five parts or logical steps:

1. Paragraphs 1-18, the Self; mystical interpenetration of the Self with all life and experience
2. Paragraphs 19-25, definition of the Self; identification with the degraded, and transfiguration of it; final merit of Self withheld; silence; end of first half
3. Paragraphs 26-38, life flowing in upon the Self; their evolutionary interpenetration of life
4. Paragraphs 39-41, the Superman
5. Paragraphs 42-52, larger questions of life- religion, faith, God, death; immortality and happiness mystically affirmed.[2]

The above-mentioned divisions do not really trace any advancement of thought in a logical pattern; the paragraphs are overlapping. James E. Miller also forces the poem into a preconceived mould of seven mystical phases. By calling the poem an "inverted mystical experience" he does not follow the "Mystic Way" strictly as described by Evelyn Underhill.[3] Instead of <u>five</u> he divides the poem into seven stages of mystical experience:

1. Sections 1-5: Entry into the Mystical State
2. Sections 6-16: Awakening of Self
3. Sections 17-32: Purification of Self
4. Sections 33-37: Illumination and the Dark Night of the Soul
5. Sections 38-43: Union: Faith and Love
6. Sections 44-49: Union (Perception)
7. Sections 50-52: Emergence from the Mystical state.[4]

On the very face of it, Miller's division of the poem is arbitrary and ambiguous. For the opening lines of the poem, "I celebrate myself, and sing myself,/ And what I assume you shall assume,/ For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you ", presuppose the " awakening of Self", and can be understood as a state of "emergence" also. One might like to point out the similarity of experience contained in, " I am satisfied- I see,

dance,laugh, sing" of section 3, " I exist as I am, that is enough", of section 20, and " I know I have the best of time and space, and was never measured and never will be measured" of section 46. Whitman's mystical identification with the sinful and the suffering has been misunderstood as the "dark night of the soul". In fact, the poem works out its climax in the first section and thereafter expands and grows in a spatial sense. Malcolm Cowley suggests that the poem has been designed in the strict narrative form or order of a "moment of ecstasy" to a "moment of climax". He outlines the poem in nine sequences of which first and the last look like a prologue and an epilogue. However, no such pattern is clearly discernable. Mr Cowley's observation that the "Song of Myself" "comes closer to being a rhapsody or tone poem, one that modulates from theme to theme, often changing in key and tempo, falling into reveries and rising toward moments of climax, but always preserving its unity of feeling as it moves onward in a wavelike flow"[5] is perhaps a more valid delineation of the structure of the poem. But his endeavour to split the poem into nine sequences violates, like the previous analyses, the essential form of the poem. The psychological sequences pointed out by Cowley are arranged in the following order: First sequence: chants 1-4; Second: chant 5; Third: chants 6-19; Fourth: chants 20-25; Fifth: chants 26-29; Sixth: chants 30-38; Seventh: chants 39-41; Eighth: chants 42-50; Ninth: chants 51-52. The same objection as we raised against the structural patterns of Strauch and Miller can be levelled against the sequential design of Cowley. According to Cowley the "ecstasy" occurs in the second sequence. But Whitman is obviously referring to the <u>experience</u> in retrospect. The power of <u>identification</u> of the sixth sequence pervades the "Song of

Myself".

The above discussion would show that the "Song of Myself" does not suffer to be compartmentalized into any scheme based on thematic progression. Gay Wilson Allen's remark that the poem "is constructed on a basic spatial order of images" solves the problem to a great extent. The "Spatial order" is not logical or temporal. ' The images that float into the mind of a poet are arranged only by their mysterious associations. In its composition, there is no room for Aristotelian logic: beginning, middle, and end, or, in narration, time sequence'.[6] But the poem has a unity " in tone, and image, and direction".[7] Chari also points out that "the gross paradoxical form in which the poem is cast allows for no real logical growth nor dramatic development. However, the tension of the "coinciding opposites" constituting this structure generates motion, and thus renders the presentation dramatic".[8] Roger Asselineau states that Whitman's method of aesthetic composition "was essentially agglutinative". He further says that "his (Whitman's) poems were composed like mosaics and, as in mosaics, a number of lines or passages are interchangeable".[9] In the light of the opinions of Allen, Chari, and Asselineau, the only mode of analysis that comes to my mind, and which seems proper as far as the present inquiry is concerned, is to treat the connected segments of the "Song of Myself" independently, section by section. This method will, I hope, render Whitman's meanings and position clearer; and also will help us in exploring the mystical "I" or "Self" of the poem which dominates as an all-inclusive theme. We will, however, avoid, as far as possible, any detailed discussion of the parts which overlap and the themes which recur.

Right at the outset, it might be stated that the "Song of Myself" opens with a unique celebration of the Self which is fully discovered and realized by the poet. Its true character reveals itself through identity with the "you" or the others, and the whole of Nature:

> I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
> And what I assume you shall assume,
> For every atom belonging to me as good belongs
> to you.[10]

It is in identity that the "I" or Self of Whitman assumes universal significance, both on a psychological and a democratic plane. The "I" being all-inclusive compells the reader to be reciprocal[11] and realize the dimensions of his own soul. Whitman's Self is engaged simultaneously "with itself and the world around, with time and space".[12] The sense of the Self's engagement is never missing, even though the poet enjoys a rare freedom and says:

> I loafe and invite my soul,
> I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear
> of summer grass.[13]

Undoubtedly, there is something sublime about the "I" which becomes One with the soul and merges itself in "a spear of summer grass" in the process of sheer observation. Unless we read the poet's words as outward symbols of the inner language we are likely to miss the import of the illumined awareness which he is trying to bring home to us. The word identity is crucial not only to the understanding of the opening section of the "Song of Myself" but also to the apprehension of the rest. Whitman shows a tremendous ability to lose himself in the object or objects of his contemplation. In terms of psychology, this faculty has been designated empathic identification,[14] though, on a spiritual level, it is much more than that.

Section 2 traces the atmosphere conducive to the awakening of the Self. The Self frees itself of the "houses and rooms" which "are full of perfumes" and goes "to the bank by the wood and" becomes "undisguised and naked". Indirectly, the "houses and rooms" stand for religions and philosophies of the world, and "perfumes" signify various modes of thought and feeling conditioned by modern civilization. It is, however, in nature that the Self finds its most ecstatic and nude expression: "The feeling of health, the full-noon trill, the song of me rising from bed and meeting the sun". It is in this mood that the poet interrogates the learning of others and invites them to have primordial relationship with the universe:

> Have you practis'd so long to learn to read?
> Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning of poems?
>
> Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess
> the origin of all poems,
> You shall possess the good of the earth and sun,
> (there are millions of suns left,)
> You shall no longer take things at second or third hand,
> nor look through the eyes of the dead, nor feed
> on the spectres in books,
> You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take
> things from me,
> You shall listen to all sides and filter them from your self.[15]

In section 3 Whitman sees, through the piercing Eye of the Self, everything fulfilled in the eternal present:

> There was never any more inception than there is now,
> Nor any more youth or age than there is now,
> And will never be any more perfection than there is now,
> Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now.[16]

Even the sexual or biological process of life: "Urge and urge and urge,/ Always the procreant urge of the world", acquires an everlasting significance in a perpetual "knit of identity". The dichotomy between body and soul also vanishes, and he says: "Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and

sweet is all that is not my soul". The themes of Time, Sex, and Body-Soul identity will develop in the forthcoming sections through the interaction of imagery and symbolism. But they are realized here as completely unified with the Self. The simultaneous knowledge of the sensible and the suprasensible, "the unseen is proved by the seen,/Till that becomes unseen and receives proof in its turn", brings to Whitman an unutterable sense of fulfilment: "I am satisfied - I see, dance, laugh, sing". Having this blissful knowledge or awareness, he is indifferent to both good and evil. He does not discuss like others; he is silent:

> Showing the best and dividing it from the worst
> age vexes age,
> Knowing the perfect fitness and equanimity of things,
> while they discuss I am silent, and go
> bathe and admire myself.[17]

Section 4 marks a sudden and very startling transition from the temporal world of existence to an apocalyptic reality of the Self. The real Self becomes the spectator and witnesses the endless spectacle of the world, "sharing all experience, yet unattached to it, standing apart and watching the masquerade of life":[18]

> Battles, the horrors of fratricidal war, the fever of
> doubtful news, the fitful events;
> These come to me days and nights and go from me again,
> But they are not the Me myself.
>
> Apart from the pulling and hauling stands what I am,
> Stands amused, complacent, compassionating, idle, unitary,
> .....
> Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it.[19]

The state of being "both in and out of the game" refers to the attached-unattached Self which identifies itself with the shifting scenes of the world and yet retains its transcendental identity. It is the detached-partcipant in the changing events of life with the Consciousness that

"they are not the Me myself". The paradox of the Self can be understood in the light of the Upanishadic reference in which its attached-unattched state is described:

> Two birds, companions (who are) always united, cling to the self-same tree. Of these two, the one eats the sweet fruit and the other looks on without eating.[20]

The one is the centre of the empirical reality, the other is the core of relatively Absolute Reality; the one is the manifested, the other is the manifesting; the one refers to the lower knowledge of the world of phenomena, the other refers to the higher knowledge of the Lower Brahman; the one experiences the joys and sorrows of the world, the other only sees and is beyond joys and sorrows. The "unitary" character of the Self can be described in these words also:

> He (the supreme self) appears to have the qualities of all the senses and yet is without (any of) the senses; unattached and yet supporting all, free from the gunas (dispositions of prakrti) and yet enjoying them.[21]

But, to Whitman, both aspects of the Self, the manifest and the manifesting are fundamental. This is where he basically differs with the Illusionists who consider the phenomenal world as simply Maya or Unreal. Whitman's Self integrates every thing and contains every thing. Whitman includes the universal themes of Love, Sex, Time, Death, Art, Democracy and War in the larger theme of the Self, and it is through the Self that every other theme unfolds itself. We have noticed in the first four sections how Nature, Time, Sex, and War are mystically absorbed in the Self whose true knowledge has brought Whitman an incommunicable wisdom and contentment. Even outside the "Song of Myself" the same wisdom permeates every page of the Leaves of Grass. In his "Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances", in "CALAMUS",

Whitman writes:

> To me these and the like of these are curiously answer'd
> by my lovers, my dear friends,
> When he whom I love travels with me or sits a long
> while holding me by the hand,
> When the subtle air, the impalpable, the sense that
> words and reason hold not, surround us and
> pervade us,
> Then I am charged with untold and untellable wisdom,
> I am silent, I require nothing further.

The feeling of being "charged with untold and untellable wisdom" dominates section 5 of the "Song of Myself". The poet describes his mystical union with Soul in terms of figurative language charged with sexual imagery:

> 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. [22]

The defiant praise of the senses and the erotic tone of the above-quoted lines form the essential paradox in the "Song of Myself". James E.Miller aptly writes:

> Whereas normally the mystical state is achieved only through a mortification of or escape from the senses, the poet of "Song of Myself" asserts that it is through the transfigured senses that he reaches mystical consciousness....When the Soul plunges his tongue to the "bare-stript heart" of the poet, the physical becomes transfigured into the spiritual, the body from beard to feet is held in the grip of the soul, and body and soul become one.[23]

The unorthodox celebration of body and sex is an unusual feature of Whitman's mystical experience. Unlike the traditional mystic, he

borrows his images and descriptions, metaphors and phrases from the facts of sex.[24] In this respect he cannot be identified with either Christian or Oriental mystics. His self-awareness is connected with sexual awakening. But it is through the consummation of body and soul that he arrives at the spiritual certainties of 'peace and knowledge' and 'love' that embrace the whole universe. Hence the concluding lines of section 5 of the "Song":

> 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 limitless are leaves stiff or drooping in the fields,
> And brown ants in the little wells beneath them,
> And mossy scabs of the worm fence, heap'd stones,
> elder, mullein and poke-weed.

The mystical experience which occurs as a result of intense contact of soul with body transcends earthly understanding and logic. The poet is in complete union with his soul and still remains brother and lover of all men and women, because the "kelson of creation is love".[25] This experience which is most 'integral' and 'intuitive' has been considered unique in the history of mystical poetry. Richard Maurice Bucke records the nature or mode of its occurrence in these words:

> It comes suddenly, like a flash, just as self-consciousness does - The person, suddenly, has a sense of being immersed in a flame-colored or rose-colored cloud; bathed in an emotion of joy, assurance, triumph,"Salvation"; and there comes to the person a clear conception, in outline, of the drift of the universe- a Consciousness that the overruling power which resides in it is infinitely beneficent: a vision of THE WHOLE, or, at least, of an immense WHOLE, which dwarfs all conception, imagination, or speculation springing from and belonging to ordinary self-consciousness, making the old attempts

> to mentally grasp the universe and its meaning petty
> and even ridiculous.[26]

William James cites section 5 as "a classical expression of this sporadic type of mystical experience"[27] in which the poet gains sudden, fleeting insight or transcendent knowledge. Generally speaking, all mystical states have certain marked characteristics: ineffability, noetic quality, transiency, passivity, consciousness of the Oneness of everything, sense of timelessness, and realization of the real "I" which is transcendental and distinct from the familiar phenomenal ego.[28] Whitman's experience abounds in almost all the above-stated traits, though the duration of mystical state and the frequency of recurrence cannot be determined with any amount of certitude. However, the section under study remains as a grand example of mystic interfusion of body and soul. Sex becomes the root metaphor of the poem as the only mode of spiritual realization. Senses are at a premium in the poetry of Whitman, though they are used to trigger the mystical experience of Reality beyond themselves. From this point the Self proceeds further in its long journey proving its kinship and identity with every thing and any thing that comes its way.

In section 6, " a spear of summer grass" (of section 1) becomes a symbol of immortality. It reveals the mystery of life and death. It is the Self entering into the meaning of the universe. It has no boundaries to obey. But it has a definite message:

> The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,
> And if ever there was it lead forward life, and
> does not wait at the end to arrest it,
> And ceas'd the moment life appear'd.

All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed,
and luckier.[29]

Through the complex imagery of sprout-self unity, the poet suggests a pantheistic belief in the non-reality of death. Death, if at all it exists, proves instrumental in the onward evolution of life. Existence presupposes eternal life; death simply functions as a part of the process which implies "change- material and spiritual, but, not disintegration".[30] Whitman's attitude toward death is a part of the "Long Journey" motif which explains his insistence that there is no real death, and that life is a ceaseless process, an eternal journey toward perfection on the scale of being'.[31] The themes of immortality and death develop further in sections 7 and 8 and assume new proportions. In section 7, the Self once again takes its position in all situations: "I pass death with the dying and birth with the new-wash'd babe", and introduces a really democratic note in its involvement with the whole of humanity:

I am the mate and companion of people, all just as
immortal and fathomless as myself,
(They do not know how immortal, but I know.)[32]

Section 8 is devoted to the cycle of life in its three most significant phases: birth, love (sexual), and death. The imagery of the first part is visual and tactile because it refers to the most important experiences in the life of the individual':[33]

The little one sleeps in its cradle,
I lift the gauze and look a long time, and
silently brush away flies with my hand.

The youngster and the red-faced girl turn aside
up the bushy hill,
I peeringly view them from the top.

> The suicide sprawls on the bloody floor of the
> bedroom,
> I witness the corpse with its dabbled hair,
> I note where the pistol has fallen.[34]

The tone of the second part changes with "the blab of the pave, tires of carts, sluff of boot-soles, talk of promenaders". The emphasis shifts on auditory imagery, because we are now right in the heart of the city, listening to all sorts of sounds and noises of public life. The individual self of the first part merges with the collective self of the second part. Whitman 'continually endeavours to link the inner with the outer, to show that both worlds exist simultaneously and must be affirmed together for one's own identity'.[35] This identification of the Self with the life of the people epitomizes Whitman's "ideal democracy".[36] Section 8 also marks the beginning of a complex net of catalogues which have a purpose as mystical as the experience itself: an interpenetration of all life. The process of spiritual identification continues. In section 9 the scene shifts from the crowded life of a city to rustic and simple life of a country. The Self shares the experience of the harvester. In section 10 the locale is wild nature and her lonely spots. But the Self finds itself at home everywhere:

> Alone far in the wilds and mountains I hunt,
> Wandering amazed at my own lightness and glee.[37]

The Self, absorbed in its being, becomes one with the boatmen, the clam-diggers, the runaway slave, and the trappers. The marriage of a red girl in section 10 presents a beautiful contrast with the isolated and lonely woman of section 11 who "owns the fine house by the rise of the bank", and who is yearningly watching the handsome bathers from her window:

> Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore,
> Twenty-eight young men and all so friendly;
> Twenty-eight years of womanly life and all
> so lonesome.[38]

The Self becomes the erotic woman and moves with her in her thoughts; it is also the witness and the invisible presence:

> Where are you off to, lady? for I see you
> You splash in the water there, yet stay stock
> still in your room.
>
> .....
>
> An unseen hand also pass'd over their bodies,
> It descended tremblingly from their temples and ribs.[39]

Apart from its sexual connotations and profound symbolic meaning, the section is rich in prosodic elements. One has only to apprehend the fundamental principle of rhythmic recurrence or the regularity of stress and beat in order to enjoy the vocal character of Whitman's verses. The rhythmic pattern of his lines is in complete assonance with the organic theory of composition. To quote Sculley Bradley:

> His lines are apparently lawless at first perusal, although on closer examination a certain regularity appears, like a recurrence of lesser and larger waves on the sea-shore, rolling in without intermission, and fitfully rising and falling.[40]

To continue with our major argument, we should return to the Self who has now shifted from the lonely and empty world of a twenty-eight years young or old woman to the busy world of the butcher boy and the blacksmiths (section 12). The Self simply watches "their movements" "from the cinder-strew'd threshold". In section 13 the Self enlarges its range and expanse. It reflects Whitman's infinite love of life and its paraphernalia. The "I" participates not only in the life of a negro driver but also

caresses every other object, animate as well as inanimate:

> In me the caresser of life wherever moving, backward
> as well as forward sluing,
> To niches aside and junior bending, not a person
> or object missing,
> Absorbing all to myself and for this song.
>
> Oxen that rattle the yoke and chain or halt in the
> leafy shade, what is that you express in
> your eyes?
> It seems to me more than all the print I have read
> in my life.[41]

A sympathetic awareness of all life is fundamental to Whitman; love is the key to its understanding. Whitman's conceptions are founded on the intuition of reality which transcends all distinctions. Again, it is through the organic metaphor of 'love' that he announces his democratic metaphysics to the world. His democracy is cosmic, 'far surpassing the merely political meaning'.[42] His cosmic range explains to a very great extent the necessity of endless catalogues of the materials of his observation. The foot-lights of identification are constantly on. In section 14, the poet, or the Self, or the "I" continues to find purpose and meaning and identity in "What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest". There is no essential difference between the poet and the "wild gander" or "the prairie-dog": "I see in them and myself the same old law".[43] Sections 15 and 16 are long catalogues of pictures falling on the retina in a quick succession. The catalogues contain portrayals of people from all walks of life. To a casual reader the catalogues or inventories would be quite boring. But once their deeper significance is understood they seem to be gaining in interest. David Daiches regards cataloguing as "an endeavour to cultivate a kind of awareness of other

people" which is essential to achieve " a new kind of relationship between your ineradicable self and the external world".[44] To accomplish this relationship Whitman invites us to his characters, ranging from "the pure contralto" to "a lunatic", from the "quadroon girl" to "the connoisseur", from "the bride" to "the prostitute", from "the opium-eater" to "flatboatmen" and"Coon-seekers". And, again, as usual, Whitman identifies himself with the living and the dead, and the grand drama of "empathic identification" carries on:

> The city sleeps and the country sleeps,
> The living sleep for their time, the dead sleep
> for their time,
> The old husband sleeps by his wife and the
> young husband sleeps by his wife;
> And these tend inward to me, and I tend outward
> to them,
> And such as it is to be of these more or less I am,
> And of these one and all I weave the song of myself.[45]

Section 16 asserts the cosmic experience of the poet in 'being' every thing. The awakened Self has bestowed upon him an intuitive glimpse of the Divine Reality- the riddle of existence has been solved. Thus with "Christ-like sympathy he speaks for all people in all places":[46]

> I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise,
> Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,
> Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man,
> Stuff'd with the stuff that is coarse and stuff'd
> with the stuff that is fine,
>
> .....
>
> Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and religion,
> A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker,
> Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.
>
> <u>I resist anything better than my own diversity</u>.
>
> .....
>
> (The moth and the fish-eggs are in their place,

> The bright suns I see and the dark suns I cannot see
> are in their place,
> The palpable is in its place and the impalpable is
> in its place.)[47]

The cosmic concept of Identity underneath "diversity" is basic to Whitman. Whitman 'resists anything better than his own diversity',and, unlike the traditional mystic, he does not surrender himself to his vision. Even after having fully developed Cosmic Consciousness, he remains attached to the world of his senses, sight, hearing, taste, feeling, etc. He clearly states: "I believe in you my soul, the other I am must not abase itself to you,/ And you must not be abased to the other".[48] His universal Self exists with his individual self "as friendly co-workers together".[49] Whitman manages this in a unique way. That is how he establishes his identity with all people and their sorrows. In his universal aspect Whitman looks like the cosmic Krishna of the Gita.[50] But the parallelism cannot be stretched too far, because Whitman and Krishna differ widely in their catalogues of "Kosmos". Whitman's Kosmos is profoundly democratic, whereas Krishna's "Kosmos" is fundamentally aristocratic. Whitman identifies himself with the commonplace and lowly, whereas Krishna sees himself in the "highest in the scale of life, thought and things":[51]

> I am Vishnu: I am the radiant sun among the light-
> givers: I am Marichi, the wind-god: among the stars
> of night, I am the moon.
>
> I am the Sama Veda: I am Indra, king of heaven: of
> sense-organs, I am the mind: I am consciousness in
> the living.
>
> .....
> Know me as Brihaspati, the leader of the high priests,
> and as Skanda, the warrior-chief. I am the ocean
> among the waters.

> .....
> I am Himalaya among the things that cannot be moved.
>
> .....
> Of weapons I am God's thunderbolt: I am Kamadhenu, the heavenly cow: I am the love-god, begetter of children: I am Vasuki, god of snakes. I am Ananta, the holy serpent: of water beings, I am Varuna: Aryaman among the Fathers:I am Death, who distributes the fruit of all action. I am Prahlada, the giant: among those who measure, I am Time: I am the lion among beasts: Vishnu's eagle among the birds.
>
> Among purifiers, I am the wind: I am Rama among the warriors: the shark among fish: Ganges among the rivers. I am the beginning, the middle and the end in creation: I am the knowledge of things spiritual: I am the logic of those who debate.
>
> In the alphabet, I am A: among compounds, the copulative: I am Time without end: I am the sustainer: my face is everywhere.
>
> I am death that snatches all: I, also, am the source of all that shall be born: I am glory, prosperity, beautiful speech, memory, intelligence, steadfastness and forgiveness.
>
> .....
> I am Krishna among the Vrishnis, Arjuna among the Pandavas, Vyasa among the sages, Ushanas among the illumined poets.
>
> I am the sceptre and mastery of those who rule, the policy of those who seek to conquer: I am the silence of things secret: I am the knowledge of the knower.[52]

Moreover, Whitman of the Leaves of Grass and Krishna of the Gita are not identical. Whitman enjoys only Cosmic Consciousness, whereas Krishna contains the Absolute which is beyond Time and Space; which is beyond motion and speech; which is free from the cycles of birth and rebirth; and which is beyond even Cosmic Consciousness. Sri Krishna speaks of the Absolute in these words:

> There are two kinds of personality in this world, the mortal and the immortal. The personality of all creatures is mortal. The personality of God is said to be immortal.

> It is the same for ever. But there is one other than these; the Impersonal Being who is called the supreme Atman. He is the unchanging Lord who pervades and supports the three worlds. And since I, the Atman, transcend the mortal and even the immortal, I am known in this world and in the Vedas as the supreme Reality.[53]

In the light of the above, it may be emphasized here that Whitman's Self does not offer any parallel to the Supreme Absolute or Higher Brahman of The Bhagavad Gita.[54] Dr. Mercer finds little or none of the Higher Brahman in Whitman. Gay Wilson Allen quotes Mercer in these words:

> There are two Brahmans, the Higher Brahman and the lower Brahman. The former is absolute identity with the over-soul and is unspeakable, indescribable...'any attempt to describe it indicates that one has not realized it'. .....It is the lower Brahman which is significant for the interpretation of Whitman's mysticism. The Lower Brahman is the great Mayin who, for sport, creates spontaneously this 'seeming' world out of itself.[55]

It is fairly obvious now that Whitman has the intuitive knowledge of the Lower Brahman, and his mystical experience includes both the aspects, the manifest and the unmanifest of the Lower Brahman or Isvara. 'All beings abide in It who is the absolute creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe. But It is independent of Its creation; It is Transcendent and yet Immanent'.[56] Its Reality can be apprehended only through intuition or mystical experience. It can be conveyed in symbols and paradoxes. Mystics, all the world over, have always been affirming the same Reality, though their modes of apprehension and their points of emphasis have been varied.[57] Whitman falls in line with them; he does not claim any originality of vision. But he is unique, or even original in the sense that he simultaneously perceives the Creator and the Creation, the Knower and the known; that his mysticism is surcharged with sexual realism; and that his

vision is more democratic than exclusive:

> These are really the thoughts of all men in all ages
> and lands, they are not original with me,
> If they are not yours as much as mine they are
> nothing, or next to nothing,
> If they are not just as close as they are distant
> they are nothing.
>
> This is the grass that grows wherever the land is
> and the water is,
> This is the common air that bathes the globe.[58]

'The symbol of 'grass' gains in complex, multiple and finally indeterminate meaning, though it functions as an organic metaphor through its various strands of imagery'.[59] Here it refers to the Cosmic Sensibility which is not the monopoly of any race in any land but is commonly shared by "all men in all ages and lands". Section 18 reveals once again Whitman's power of reconciling the opposites, not through any dialectic process, but through intuition which dissolves and annuls the sense of opposition.[60] By showing an equal amount of sympathy for the victor and the vanquished, Whitman strikes a unific note on the theme of War. Since "battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won", there is no ontological difference between "the slayer and the slain". The mood represented here is fundamentally that of a musical pattern, "With music strong I come, with my cornets and my drums". But apart from the "musico-poetic-texture"[61] of his lines, Whitman attains that "condition of music" which obliterates all dichotomies and contradictions of ordinary perception. In section 19, the all-embracing Self of the poet makes "appointments with all", the righteous and the wicked:

> I will not have a single person slighted or left away,
> The kept-woman, sponger, thief, are hereby invited,
> The heavy-lipp'd slave is invited, the venerealee is invited;
> There shall be no difference between them and the rest.[62]

And the poet once again conveys his mergence with and emergence from people in terms of highly sexual imagery:

> This is the press of a bashful hand, this the float
> and odor of hair,
> This the touch of my lips to yours, this the
> murmur of yearning,
> This the far-off depth and height reflecting my own face,
> This the thoughtful merge of myself, and the outlet again.[63]

Whitman's sexual intonations offended, rightly or wrongly, many a Christian, but the fact remains'that his love of all men, irrespective of their character, weaknesses, failings or crimes is rooted in the heart of the Christian Tradition.[64] Section 20 reaffirms the eternal relation of Self with others and solves the mystery of death. Immortality becomes a certainty:

> I know I am deathless,
> I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a
> carpenter's compass,
> I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue
> cut with a burnt stick at night.[65]

Death remains valid only on the plane of material existence; it does not occur in the spiritual realm. Though death occupied Whitman's thoughts increasingly as he grew older-'but only as an interlude between one life and another'.[66](see "WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH") Therefore, Whitman betrays an emotion of perennial contentment in the mere fact of existence:

> I exist as I am, that is enough,
> If no other in the world be aware I sit content,
> And if each and all be aware I sit content.[67]

Section 21 is a little more emphatic and direct statement of the poet's sexual vision connected with his mystical vision:

> 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,
>
> .....

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,
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.[68]

And in this "chant of dilation and pride", Whitman achieves a grand effect by employing images and symbols of fertility from the celestial world: earth, moon, star, sun etc. The "unspeakable passionate love" is communicated through at least five variations upon the single image of night: tender and growing night, bare-bosom'd night, magnetic nourishing night, still nodding night, and mad naked summer night. Though the sexual connotations are obvious, the body dilates in a spiritual sense; woman is considered as "the mother of men". In this context, I am not willing to agree with Floyd Stovall who considers Whitman as'the poet of the body almost exclusively and the poet of the soul in theory only'.[69] Section 22 is, in more than one sense, a continuation of section 21. It carries forward the lyrical mood of the previous section, as also its implied courage to say what has not so far been said with such boldness:

I am not the poet of goodness only, I do not decline
to be the poet of wickedness also.

What blurt is this about virtue and about vice?
Evil propels me and reform of evil propels me, I
stand indifferent,
My gait is no fault-finder's or rejector's gait;
I moisten the roots of all that has grown.[70]

In one sweep of intuitive imagination, Whitman stands freed from all sense of moral good and evil. He accepts both good and evil, and yet is "indifferent". Like the true knower of the Self he transcends all ethical distinctions; he has no puritanical inhibitions. But this does not mean to suggest that he is unacquainted with evil as such, because he moistens "the roots of all that has grown". In section 23 Whitman accepts the reality of materialism and positive science, even though he says: " and

yet they are not my dwellings,/ I but enter by them to an area of my dwelling".[71] He regards the world of "facts" as only relatively real. He also clarifies the metaphysical concept of total Time which contains all time past, time present, and time future, and describes its function:

> Endless unfolding of words of ages !
>
> .....
> Here or henceforward it is all the same to me, I
> accept Time absolutely,
> It alone is without flaw, it alone rounds and completes all,
> That mystic baffling wonder alone completes all.[72]

Section 24 marks a sudden shift in the narrative which is, thematically, a continuation of attitudes. The poet removes the mask of the first person, personal pronoun "I" of the first 23 sections of the poem, and substitutes the specific name 'Walt Whitman'.[73] Up to now, Whitman has been engaged, more or less, in identifying himself with every thing in the cosmos. But the realization that the whole universe is an emanation of the creative self has impelled him to become "Kosmos" himself. As he writes elsewhere, "the universe is in myself- it shall pass through me as a procession", his recent shift is only genuine. Since we have already discussed the nature of Whitman's "Kosmos", we will only record its pattern here:

> Through me the afflatus surging and surging, through me
> the current and index,
>
> I speak the pass-word primeval, I give the sign of democracy,
> By God ! I will accept nothing which all cannot have
> their counterpart of on the same terms.
>
> Through me many long dumb voices,
> Voices of the interminable generations of prisoners and
> slaves,
>
> .....
> Through me forbidden voices,
> Voices of sexes and lusts, voices veil'd and I remove the veil,
> Voices indecent by me clarified and transfigur'd.

Copulation is no more rank to me than death is.

I believe in the flesh and the appetites,
Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part
and tag of me is a miracle.

Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I
touch or am touch'd from,
The scent of these arm-pits aroma finer than prayer,
This head more than churches, bibles, and all the creeds.[74]

It is in this unique pattern that the poet establishes the basic spirituality of man in terms of images which otherwise are used to present him as a debased creature. It also offers another variation upon the theme of Sex in which the body becomes a temple. Whitman actually loses himself in the immense awakening of this moment: "I dote on myself, there is that lot of me and all so luscious,/ Each moment and whatever happens thrills me with joy.... A morning glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books".[75]

As Malcolm Cowley suggests, section 25 is a sort of dialogue between the poet and his power of communication, during which the former asserts that his ultimate Self is beyond expression. Though the power of speech can "encompass worlds and volumes of worlds", though it is the twin of his vision, it cannot measure and express the final merit of the Self; for it is cloaked in mystery, there is a hush on Its lips:

My final merit I refuse you, I refuse putting from me
what I really am,
Encompass worlds, but never try to encompass me,

.....
With the hush on my lips I wholly confound the skeptic.[76]

To quote Carl F. Strauch:

In silence the first great half of the poem ends, all
instruments mute, the mystical Being quiescent, passive,

> not storming out upon the world, not identifying itself with all the varied life-forms, but ready to receive into itself the magic flow of life-- The second half of the poem begins with twenty-six. Here instead of expression we have impression - phenomena flowing in.[77]

However, the inflow and the outflow continues. Section 26 is a long catalogue of sounds, heard as well as spoken. The sounds flow in, the reaction flows out:

> I hear the chorus, it is a grand opera,
> Ah this indeed is music - this suits me.
>
> .....
> I hear the train'd soprano (what work with hers is this?)
> The orchestra whirls me wider than Uranus flies,
> It wrenches such ardors from me I did not know I
> possess'd them.[78]

The atmosphere of the whole section is symphonic which lends charm and puzzle to the <u>experience:</u>

> ...I lose my breath,
> Steep'd amid honey'd morphine, my windpipe throttled
> in fakes of death,
> At length let up again to feel the puzzle of puzzles,
> And that we call Being.[79]

The poet now luxuriates in the ecstasy of senses. The "puzzle of puzzles" produced by the tonal effects of the musical sounds of section 26 is being explored in sections 27, 28, and 29 which abound in the poet's sensitivity to <u>touch</u>. The sense of touch transforms the physical into the spiritual, and gives the sensation of Being to the poet: "Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new identity".[80] The sexual imagery of these sections has been anticipated in sections 11, 21, and 24:

> To touch my person to some one else's is about as much
> as I can stand.[81]
>
> On all sides prurient provokers stiffening my limbs,
> Straining the udder of my heart for its withheld drip,

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,

.....
You villain touch! what are you doing? my breath is tight
in its throat,
Unclench your floodgates, you are too much for me.[82]

Blind loving wrestling touch, sheath'd hooded sharp-
tooth'd touch!
Did it make you ache so, leaving me?[83]

It is through the physical experience that Whitman arrives at the spiritual or the "immaterial" centre of reality. He is quivered into a "new identity" by a physical sensation of touch. He employs the symbolism of the material and the concrete to convey the elusive concept of "immateriality". Section 30 is an affirmation to this effect. It confirms the validity of touch as the sense of being and truth:

All truths wait in all things,
They neither hasten their own delivery nor resist it,
They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon,
The insignificant is as big to me as any,
(What is less or more than a touch?)

Logic and sermons never convince,
The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul.[84]

As Wordsworth says in his Immortality Ode: "To me the meanest flower that blows can give/ Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears", or as Blake writes: "To see a world in a grain of sand,/ and a heaven in a wild flower,/ Hold infinity in the palm of your hand/ And eternity in an hour", Whitman also transmutes the commonplace into the rare, and finds the miraculous in the smallest object:

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the
journey-work of the stars,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain
of sand, and the egg of the wren,

.....
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions
of infidels.[85]

The above-quoted lines also speak of Whitman's "spiritual equalitarianism". It is his microscopic and telescopic vision that makes him discover infinite wonders in the most familiar objects. In section 32, Whitman enters the animal world a little more explicitly, and finds in animals "tokens" of himself: "They bring me tokens of myself, they evince them plainly in their possession". In a satirical vein, he contrasts the purity of animals with the tainted life of man suffering from delusions:

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are
so placid and self-contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the
mania of owning things,
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived
thousands of years ago,
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.[86]

Still he believes that a man who has realized his Self will contain and surpass the purest of the pure. The Self contains the whole world and is above it. The Self is the only truth, pure and simple. "One should meditate only on the Self as his (true) world. The work of him who meditates on the Self alone as his world is not exhausted, for out of that very Self he creates whatsoever he desires".(Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, I.4.15) It is the Self which moves forward "then and now and forever". It is the Self which encloses All Time and Space, and yet shoots beyond space and time. It is the Self which enables the poet to say, "I am afoot with my vision". The dynamic Self of the poet moves within the reference of cosmic identi-

fication; moves within the accidents of time and space, and yet transcends their bondage. He (Whitman) comprehends the mystery of time and space and traverses the entire show of phenomenal reality, as the one who is constantly "in and out of the game". In the space-time catalogue of section 33, we move with the poet from the city houses to the forests; from the meadows to the mountains; from the prairies to the battle-fields; from the rivulets to the Niagara Falls; from the beats of human hearts to the screams of birds; and from

> Where the bull advances to do his masculine work, where
> the stud to the mare, where the cock is treading
> the hen,
>
> .....
> Where burial coaches enter the arch'd gates of a cemetery,
>
> .....
> By the cot in the hospital reaching lemonade to a feverish
> patient,
> Nigh the coffin'd corpse when all is still, examining
> with a candle.[87]

But we part company with the poet at this point. The poet enters here the world of lucent existence, beyond the limits of time and space, and flies the "flights of a fluid and swallowing soul". Thus with the expanded Consciousness, the disembodied Self resumes Its journey:

> Walking the old hills of Judaea with the beautiful gentle
> God by my side,
> Speeding through space, speeding through heaven and
> the stars,
> Speeding amid the seven satellites and the broad ring,
> and the diameter of eighty thousand miles.[88]

Within these two movements, the "material and the immaterial", which are spiritually One, is contained the third movement of the drama of identification. The poet <u>becomes</u> the hounded slave, the wounded person, and

the mash'd fireman. He partakes of the sufferings of the world of phenomena:

> I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there.
>
> .....
> I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs,
>
> .....
> I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself
> become the wounded person,
>
> .....
> I am the mash'd fireman with breast-bone broken.[89]

However, the poet's participation in the sufferings of the world should not be treated as "despair" on his part, or confused with the dark night of the soul, as Miller has suggested. For the all-inclusive Self of the poet is not attached to the tragedies of the mortals. He anchors his "ship" on the shore of human misery"for a little while only", and he says: "Agonies are one of my changes of garments". Still further, the poet wears the garb of Time and becomes Time which " rounds and completes all", Time which is Brahman, "the creator, the preserver, and the destroyer", and all objects "distant and dead" are transformed into the metaphors of the dial and the clock which are but the material forms of the poet's Self:

> Distant and dead resuscitate,
> They show as the dial or more as the hands of me,
> I am the clock myself.[90]

But this does not mean to suggest that the poet's implication or involvement in human suffering is without the accent of genuineness. Sympathy (not pity) is one of the fundamentals of Whitman's mystical Self. The Self has the power to transcend time and space, and yet descends to see and share the suffering of mankind. However, the singular character of this

Self is that it never gives way to nihilistic thinking, despite its knowledge of tragedy in life. It is in this mood of universal sympathy that the Self pervades sections 34-36. Section 34 recounts in retrospect the sad spectacle of an after-war-scene in Texas in which ' four hundred and twelve young men' were captured and murdered in cold blood:

> ..... they were brought out in squads
> and massacred, it was beautiful early summer,
> The work commenced about five o'clock and was over
> by eight.
>
> .....
> A few fell at once, shot in the temple or heart, the
> living and dead lay together.[91]

Sections 35 and 36 describe "an old-time sea-fight" and point out the utter hollowness of victory as well as defeat in human terms. To put it in the language of paradox, the defeated stands victorious and the victor stands defeated:

> Toward twelve there in the beams of the moon they
> surrender to us.[92]
>
> Stretch'd and still lies the midnight,
> Two great hulls motionless on the breast of the darkness,
> Our vessel riddled and slowly sinking, preparations to
> pass to the one we have conquer'd,
> The captain on the quarter-deck coldly giving his orders
> through a countenance white as a sheet,
> Near by the corpse of the child that serv'd in the cabin,
>
> .....
> These so, these irretrievable.[93]

In spite of the human woe and misery resulting from the war, and the quiet gloom of the above-noted lines from sections 34-36, the underlined verses betray a feeling of poise on the part of the poet. In "these so, these irretrievable", the Self does not show any sign of agony; rather it is full of compassion over the inevitable situation and the predicament

of man under ignorance. Section 37 traces four different movements, rather stages of compassionate identification of the Self:

> Not a mutineer walks handcuff'd to jail but I am
> handcuff'd to him and walk by his side.
>
> .....
> Not a youngster is taken for larceny but I go up too,
> and am tried and sentenced.
>
> Not a cholera patient lies at the last gasp but I
> also lie at the last gasp,
> My face is ash-color'd, my sinews gnarl, away
> from me people retreat.
>
> Askers embody themselves in me and I am embodied in
> them,
> I project my hat, sit shame-faced, and beg.[94]

In these instances, the Self manifests a level of sublime lowliness which is a mark of spiritual greatness. With the awakening of Christ-like humility, the Self unmasks another facet of its being and assumes the role of a universal preacher, an answerer, and a healer. Section 38 shows a transition from the process of mere metaphysical identification with all forms of life to the discovery of a new "power" which can ameliorate the appaling world of human misery by invoking Self-realization as a goal for every one. Undoubtedly, Man, in his present state is in dire necessity of rising above the web of doubts and delusions. The poet achieves this through the image of crucifixion and walks over the whole earth, hand in hand with man, and yet above him in every respect:

> I troop forth replenish'd with supreme power, one of
> an average unending procession,
> Inland and sea-coast we go, and pass all boundary lines,
> Our swift ordinances on their way over the whole earth,
> The blossoms we wear in our hats the growth of
> thousands of years.

Eleves, I salute you! come forward!
Continue your annotations, continue your questionings.[95]

In section 39, the poet, the answerer, resumes his journey by characteristically posing a question: "The friendly and flowing savage, who is he?" And, his answer is:

Wherever he goes men and women accept and desire him,
They desire he should like them, touch them, speak to them, stay with them.[96]

The imagery of the above answer suggests that the poet treats the 'savage as the symbol of divinity which the civilized man has lost. Here the poet, Christ, and the savage become one'.[97] The poet is now sought after. "Wherever he goes men and women accept and desire him". He has got the superhuman powers of healing the sufferer. He walks among human beings as a Christian Messiah or a Bodhisattva. Section 40 describes his infinite compassion for and power over mankind:

Man or woman, I might tell how I like you, but cannot,
And might tell what it is in me and what it is in you, but cannot,

.....
I do not ask who you are, that is not important to me,
You can do nothing and be nothing but what I will infold you.[98]

The poet emphatically denies the reality of death, and asserts everlasting life which can be apprehended only through intuition or faith:

To any one dying, thither I speed and twist the knob of the door,
Turn the bed-clothes toward the foot of the bed,
Let the physician and the priest go home.

I seize the descending man and raise him with resistless will,
O despairer, here is my neck,
By God, you shall not go down! having your whole weight upon me.[99]

The poet moves forward, dilating every one "with tremendous breath",

and assuming the role of a new prophet, a creator:

> I heard what was said of the universe,
> Heard it and heard it of several thousand years;
>
> .....
> Magnifying and applying come I,
> Outbidding at the start the old cautious hucksters,
> Taking myself the exact dimensions of Jehovah,
> Lithographing Kronos, Zeus his son, and Hercules
> his grandson,
> Buying drafts of Osiris, Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha,
> In my portfolio placing Manito loose, Allah on a leaf,
> the crucifix engraved,
> With Odin and the hideous-faced Mexitli and every
> idol and image,
> Taking them all for what they are worth and not a
> cent more,
> Admitting they were alive and did the work of their
> days.100

All that the above-quoted catalogue means is the poet's awareness of "what was said of the universe" during the past"several thousand years" by other world-luminaries - Jehovah, Kronos, Zeus, Brahma, Buddha and the rest, and by "admitting they were alive and did the work of their days", Whitman wants to give his own message, in his own day, in the context of the democratic tradition of America. Whitman, to my mind, never means to draw any arrogant comparisons between himself and the other luminants or incarnates. As already pointed out(Chapter I, p.8) Bucke's position on this issue is quite vulnerable. Of course, by "becoming already a creator", he does not need to shrink before the gods; rather he must take "the exact dimensions of Jehovah". Also, the Self now becomes the phallic creator of the universe: "On women fit for conception I start bigger and nimbler babes"(section 40) and, "Putting myself here and now to the ambush'd womb of the shadows". (section 41) It (the Self) deepens the "depths" of the sex motif. In section 42, the Self moves forward in the open air with the

voice of hope and abundant faith and love for all:

> A call in the midst of the crowd,
> My own voice, orotund sweeping and final.
>
> Come my children,
> Come my boys and girls, my women, household and
> intimates,
>
> ..... I feel the thrum of your climax and close.[101]

And, the poet, resounding from the pinnacle of his democratic vision, filled to the brim with love - "ever love, ever the sobbing liquid of life" - leaps to inform his lovers his own and their final destiny:

> I acknowledge the duplicates of myself, the weakest
> and shallowest is deathless with me,
> What I do and say the same waits for them,
> Every thought that flounders in me the same
> flounders in them.[102]

The section closes with a set of questions, perennially looming on the horizon of mind, but, which, perhaps can never be answered adequately excepting by the voice of Soul:

> The saints and sages in history - but you yourself?
> Sermons, creeds, theology- but the fathomless human brain,
> And what is reason? and what is love? and what is life?[103]

In order that the above questions might be answered and man's relation with the Unknown might be understood finally, the human self must take its position in the heart of every religion and all worship ancient and modern; it must believe in the divinity of Shastras, the Vedas, the Koran, and the Gospels. But it should also look beyond them to "what is yet untried and afterward". Even 'after five thousand years' the poet will be found engaged in the quest of Reality which he considers has not been revealed in the Gospels or the Vedas. The poet is indeed right in intuitionally but vaguely feeling some such Reality which is beyond even

the Unknown. We have been told in the Upanishads that that Reality is not knowable in the human form. Therefore, in order to become One with that which is, one has to be first freed from the cycles of transmigratory existence, birth and rebirth (Katha-Upanishad I.1.6; I.2.18-20). Perhaps, the poet is expecting to come back as an incarnate (Avatar) of the Supreme Identity to whom karma and rebirth as such will be meaningless. Whatever that might be, the poet's saying, "And what is yet untried and afterward is for you, me, all precisely the same" is a grand utterance of optimism amidst the ordinary mortals who are perpetually suffering the throes and pangs of life, who are wet with "torment, doubt, despair, and disbelief", and who are

> Down-hearted doubters dull and excluded,
> Frivolous, sullen, moping, angry, affected,
> disherten'd, atheistical.[104]

Section 44 deals at length with the concept of birth and rebirth, and the poet, fired with his optimism and insight, leads 'all men and women forward into the Unknown'. The Self indicates man's relation to Eternity, the ceaseless continuum:

> We have thus far exhausted trillions of winters
> and summers,
> There are trillions ahead, and trillions ahead
> of them.
>
> Births have brought us richness and variety,
> And other births will bring us richness and variety.
>
> I do not call one greater and one smaller,
> That which fills its period and place is equal to any.[105]

It is this unique and mystical sense of relationship with the Infinite Time which makes the poet sing with his "robust soul", "I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I an encloser of things to be". This is how the

Self encloses all time past and all time future:

> Before I was born out of my mother generations guided
> me,
> My embryo has never been torpid, nothing could overlay it.[106]

As section 44 reveals the integral experience of the Self with the infinity of time, section 45 integrates the Self with the infinity of space, and through the instrumentality of time and space, indicated in the earlier sections also, the Self achieves its mystical union with the Eternal Divine:

> See ever so far, there is limitless space outside of that,
> Count ever so much, there is limitless time around that.
>
> My rendezvous is appointed, it is certain,
> The Lord will be there and wait till I am on perfect
> terms,
> The great Camerado, the lover true for whom I pine
> will be there.[107]

But to arrive at the "rendezvous" one must "tramp a perpetual journey" to which the poet invites each one of us. In section 46, the poet lays down the code and the route of the journey:

> Not I, not any one else can travel that road for you,
> You must travel it for yourself.
>
> It is not far, it is within reach,
> Perhaps you have been on it since you were born
> and did not know,
> Perhaps it is everywhere on water and on land.[108]

The "journey" after truth is always an inward journey. It is the realization of one's own deeper self which pervades the universe. "It is within reach", only if our eyes are open enough to see. It explains the paradox of solitariness of individuality and the interiority of the "isolated Self", because in this journey no one can accompany any one else. It is personal and exclusive, and yet pervasive. Each one of us must find the answer from within. The poet who has accomplished this road feels

compassion for us, and out of sheer love he says:

> Long enough have you dream'd contemptible dreams,
> Now I wash the gum from your eyes,
> You must habit yourself to the dazzle of the light
> and of every moment of your life.[109]

Gustav Bychowski has treated the poet's compassionate act of washing the gum from our eyes which have so far dreamt "contemptible dreams", as one of the instances of the "intricate ways of sublimation". He finds in the "dreams" some sexual connotations and a hidden feeling of guilt and repression which the poet seems to be compensating through an exalted poetic expression.[110] However, to my mind, "contemptible dreams" indicate, metaphorically speaking, all doubts and delusions under which one suffers till the dawning of the "light" or the awakening which it is necessary to be perceived with clear eyes. The theme of self-reliance is carried over from section 46 to section 47. The poet is teaching every one to depend upon his own inner convictions to receive the best of the teacher and yet "destroy the teacher". In order to comprehend his teaching, one needs to go in the open air:

> If you would understand me go to the heights or
> water-shore,
> The nearest gnat is an explanation, and a drop or
> motion of waves a key,
> The maul, the oar, the hand-saw, second my words.
>
> No shutter'd room or school can commune with me,
> But roughs and little children better than they.[111]

Section 48 reiterates the theme of "Self" and asserts its reality over every thing else - soul, body, God. It also repeats Whitman's central message, the equality of the soul and the body:

> I have said that the soul is not more than the body,
> And I have said that the body is not more than the soul,
> And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self is.[112]

The Self which is all-pervasive, transcendent, and immortal contains in itself the reality of God. It does not need to understand God as a separate entity, because it is one with God. And, since Self finds itself reflected in every phenomenon, God is a necessary correlative of that reflection:

> Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
> I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four,
> and each moment then,
> In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my
> own face in the glass,
>
> .....
> Others will punctually come for ever and ever.[113]

Section 49 repudiates once again the validity of "death" for the Self: "and as to you Death, and you bitter hug of mortality, it is idle to try to alarm me". Life is an endless process of births and deaths. We do not die ever; we only change the form (rupa). Death has no sting; for it means the continuation of the cycle of evolution toward a higher spiritual reality:

> And as to you Life I reckon you are the leavings of
> many deaths,
> (No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before.)
>
> I hear you whispering there O stars of heaven,
> O suns -- O grass of graves -- <u>O perpetual transfers and promotions</u>,
> If you do not say any thing how can I say any thing?[114]

Obviously, the poet is referring to the endless mutations of Life which even a blade of grass affirms. This is what suggests the unity of <u>all</u> life. But this Unity is mysterious; as mysterious as Creation, as mysterious as Love. It teases "us out of thought, as doth eternity". Its "smile shines in the heart of the hush like the star-mist of midnight".[115] It is experienced mystically, and is highly ineffable. Section 50 narrates

the mute and exhausted condition of the poet after the mystical experience is over:

> There is that in me - I do not know what it is -
> but I know it is in me.
>
> Wrench'd and sweaty - calm and cool then my body
> becomes,
> I sleep - I sleep long.
>
> I do not know it - it is without name - it is a
> word unsaid,
> It is not in any dictionary, utterance, symbol.[116]

Though the poet finds it difficult to define the <u>experience</u> even in terms of poetic language, his poetic sensibility confirms its reality. He realizes that <u>happiness</u> (ananda) which comes out of the sense of Unity is the ultimate truth, all else is an illusion:

> Do you see O my brothers and sisters?
> It is not chaos or death - it is form, union, plan-
> it is eternal life - it is Happiness.[117]

After the ecstasy of the mystical experience, the poet is now ready to leave the stage, in order to take his position in the future states of Existence. Section 51 describes the volatile character of the Self which comes and goes; which is graspable and elusive; which pervades everywhere, now and here, then and there:

> The past and present wilt - I have fill'd them,
> emptied them,
> And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.[118]

If we bear in mind the <u>intuitive certainty</u> of what the poet has passed on to endless generations of men and women, any discursive or argumentatively cold approach to the "Song of Myself" seems impossible. One might find it riddled with contradictions of <u>thought</u>. But then, the poet is not claiming a consistent pattern of thought-development for his poem.

We can hope to understand and share the Integral Experience of the poet only upon his own terms, and his terms are:

> Do I contradict myself?
> Very well then I contradict myself,
> (I am large, I contain multitudes.)[119]

All contradictions are seeming; they are a part of the Whole. Therefore, they do not even need to be resolved. Underlying them is that unity or consistency which nourishes upon faith rather than argument, upon silence rather than dialogue. In the valedictory section of the poem (section 52), the poet becomes one with that mystery which is "untranslatable", and departs as air, and shakes his white locks at the runaway sun. But this valediction is a metaphorical device, because the poet shall be re-born soon:

> I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass
> I love,
> If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.[120]

In a subtle sense, the end of "Song of Myself" means only its beginning, as the beginning of the Song contains its climax. In the same sense the poem is incomplete and continuous.[121] The poet is yet not gone; for he reminds:

> Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
> Missing me one place search another,
> I stop somewhere waiting for you.[122]

The foregoing discussion of the "Song of Myself" is in no way conclusive. However, an effort has been made to show that in spite of the somewhat unorganized and miscellaneous character of the various catalogues there is a unity of substance and purpose underneath the complex pattern of the poem. The whole treatment has been designed to establish the unique

position of Whitman in the realm of mystical poetry, without paying much attention to the biographical details of his mystical experience. At least, I have not been inclined to trace the source of this grand experience in some woman who might or might not have been the cause of Whitman's vision of life and love.[123] The study of Whitman's imagery and symbolism, the rhythmic form and the oceanic character of his verses has been analogous to the study of theme or themes in the "Song of Myself". One is likely to observe that, at no stage in the present analysis, has the writer made any deliberate attempt to bring out the various themes which are integrated in the theme of the Self. The themes rather emerge automatically and spread like waves over the sea of the "Song of Myself". This is one reason that in this thematic study, I have designated the Self of the "Song" as single theme-multiple theme. This also explains, and is explained by, the paradoxical nature of Whitman's poetry. In this way, the Self and Whitman's art become one, and thereby art remains as one of the implicit themes throughout the portrayal of the Self. Both the Self and art enter the ceaseless continuity, an endless motion. To clarify this point further, I would like to quote Whitman's own words on the nature and character of his art:

> Its likeness is not the stately solid palace, nor the sculpture that adorns it, nor the paintings on its walls. Its analogy is the Ocean. Its verses are the liquid, billowy waves, ever rising and falling, perhaps sunny and smooth, perhaps wild with storm, always moving, always alike in their nature as rolling waves, but hardly any two exactly alike in their size or measure, never having the sense of something finished and fixed, always suggesting something beyond.[124]

It is in the light of the above that the "Song of Myself", in spite of

its being the single greatest expression of Whitman's Integral Experience, points at its own subtle incompleteness and continuity. It continues "beyond" and its single theme--multiple theme pervades the whole of Leaves of Grass. Therefore, to stop at the "Song of Myself" as the most finished and "completely realized work", as Cowley suggests, would lead to an erroneous judgment of Whitman as a whole. There are other poems also which, though they do not match the "Song of Myself" in its epic scope and the dramatic character, have an immensity and a relevance of their own. The poems which follow the "Song of Myself" do not show any marked development over the range of its spiritual reality, but they seem to gain over the "Song" in artistic or aesthetic execution and clarity of vision. The "Song of Myself" is Whitman's own inner life made symbolic; it is also "a blue-print for a much greater whole".[125] To prove the truth of the above remarks, I propose to undertake in the next chapter of the present study an examination of some of the most significant poems which, I feel, carry forward the theme or themes of the "Song of Myself".

## CHAPTER IV

## CONTINUATION: SOME OTHER POEMS CONSIDERED

Apropos our suggestion that the "Song of Myself" is the reservoir of themes which weave the texture of the poems that follow its publication, it should be reiterated that the poems under reference have subtleties and artistic beauties of their own. The theme of Love, manifested in a variety of ways in the "Song", dominates the poems under "CHILDREN OF ADAM" and "CALAMUS" sections. Poems like "I Sing the Body Electric", "Spontaneous Me", "Out of the Rolling Ocean the Crowd", and "Once I Pass'd through a Populous City", in "CHILDREN OF ADAM" section epitomize Whitman's attitude toward sex and passionate love.[1] Sex has been treated as a Life Force and a symbol of Energy. In its spiritual connotations, sex provides the link between the past and the future generations. "I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing", "To a Stranger", "I Dream'd in a Dream", and "O You Whom I Often and Silently Come" of "CALAMUS" section deal with the idealized subject of friendship between man and man, and immortalize the feeling of Comradeship.[2] Whitman's notions of War and spiritual Democracy dominate the poems under "DRUM-TAPS"[3] and "MEMORIES OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN" sections. In this connection, "Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field One Night", "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd", and "By Blue Ontario's Shore" deserve special mention. Whitman's eschatology and the problem of good and evil receive their best expression in poems, "Whispers of Heavenly Death", "Assurances", "Quicksand Years", and "Chanting the Square Deific" of "WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH" section. Time and Space become the recurrent symbols of the poems, "Song of Prudence",

"To Him That was Crucified", and "Kosmos" of "AUTUMN RIVULETS" section. In other words, this all too brief survey of the various sections of the Leaves of Grass helps to show that thematically, they can be traced back to the "medley of motifs" in the "Song of Myself".

At any rate, the present chapter cannot aspire to illustrate, at any great length, the thematic parallelisms which it provokes. It also does not aim to analyse the poems which have been mentioned above, for the simple reason that there are some other poems which demonstrate our contentions, thematic as well as aesthetic, more conclusively and comprehensively, and which are considered as most significant among Whitman's major poems. They are "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry", "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking", and "Passage to India". All these poems indicate to a great extent an advance in aesthetic merit over the poetic compositions of the 1855 Edition, though Whitman achieved this effect through constant revisions of the poems over the years. He gained in 'taste, picturesqueness and comeliness of phrase'. He also bettered his verses rhythmically.[4] In "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry", Whitman attained a rare structural coherence "by a treatment of symbols closely parallel to the musical development of themes".[5] The symbolism embodied in the other two poems also reflects the poet's subtle sense of philosophical concepts, even though philosophy remains nebulous in Whitman.[6] Because of the richness of meaning, Whitman's symbols acquire a certain "flexibility" of interpretation to which can be traced the differing responses of his readers.[7] Above all, the poems succeed in presenting or unfolding the themes in a more organized manner. In order that these observations may be substantiated, we should now proceed with the examination of the above-noted three poems, in order of

their publication.

In "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry", the poet seizes the imagination of the reader in emphasizing a special relationship between himself and his audience. The technique employed is one of "indirect expression". The reader virtually partcipates in the various movements of the poem in which the poet stresses 'the essential spirituality and unity of all human experience', be it of variety or oneness, of instant or eternity, of material or spirituality. Simultaneity of perception is a unique feature of this experience which is instrumental in transcending the barriers of time and space.[8] The poem is rendered in nine sections. James E. Miller has traced the drama of an "imaginative fusion" of the poet and the reader through three stages: sections 1-3, sections 4-6, and sections 7-9, considering the feeling of oneness with the poet essential to the emotional realization of a philosophical truth.[9] In section 1,the elemental images of 'Flood-tide' and 'half an hour high sun' indicate the gradual movement of the ferry-boats from shore to shore, and in this eternal movement ferry-boats are identified with the crowds of men and women, all of which enter the meditations of the poet. In section 2, the poet continues with his contemplation,and visualizes the conviction of spiritual unity growing in his heart, irrespective of the disintegrated nature of phenomenal experience. He becomes mystically one with the ferry-travellers of the past and the future:

> The similitudes of the past and those of the future,
>
> .....
> The others that are to follow me, the ties between
> me and them,
> The certainty of others, the life, love, sight,
> hearing of others.[10]

The "ferry" continues to grow as a spatial symbol, and its endless movement from shore to shore connotes the eternal process of life and death. In section 3, which is richest in imagery, the poet shows his intuitive transcendence of time and space by an emotional partcipation in the experience of men and women of all ages:

> It avails not, time nor place - distance avails not,
> I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or
> ever so many generations hence,
> Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky,
> so I felt,
> Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was
> one of a crowd.[11]

Section 4 explores a little further the poet's sympathetic identification with others on the ladder. Section 5 reaffirms the poet's transcendence of time and space. But, it also poses the paradox of identity with the physical world in which the body assumes the role of a ferry:

> I too had been struck from the float forever held in
> solution,
> I too had receiv'd identity by my body,
> That I was I knew was of my body, and what I should be
> I knew I should be of my body.[12]

Whitman always attains the spiritual through acceptance of the material. He does not lack the necessary courage and honesty to state the Whole truth, howsoever revolting it might appear. In section 6, he makes bold to admit delusions and evil as fundamental to spiritual awakening:

> It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,
> The dark threw its patches down upon me also,
> The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious,
>
> .....
> Nor is it you alone who know what it is to be evil,
> I am he who knew what it was to be evil,
>
> .....
> Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak,
> Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly, malignant,

The wolf, the snake, the hog, not wanting in me,
The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous
wish, not wanting,

.....
Lived the same life with the rest, the same old
laughing, gnawing, sleeping,
Play'd the part that still looks back on the actor
or actress,
The same old role, the role that is what we make it,
as great as we like,
Or as small as we like, or both great and small.[13]

The subjective symbolism of the above lines indicates a phase through which Whitman seems to have literally passed. But in a metaphorical sense, the recognition of evil in his own life leads Whitman to achieve full empathy into the psychological layers of the existential personality of his reader. It also suggests its paradoxical implication. Section 7 reveals once again his major interest in seeking union with the readers of all lands and all times, even prior to their birth. In section 8, the poet reaches the climax of his merger with all the people who live in the present- the present which means the totality of time without tenses. And he establishes the spiritual bond of love between himself and the world of men and women without indulging in dialectics or debate:[14]

What is more subtle than this which ties me to the
woman or man that looks in my face?
Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning
into you?

We understand then do we not?
What I promis'd without mentioning it, have you not
accepted?
What the study could not teach- what the preaching
could not accomplish is accomplish'd,
is it not?[15]

The confidence with which Whitman asks his reader,"We understand then do we not?", proves beyond doubt that the "ferry" symbol has been worked out on yet another level of meaning. The poem itself becomes a ferry and

carries Whitman's thoughts and sympathy beyond the limitations of his finite life. The poet's experience and his work of art achieve immortality.[16] Section 9 recapitulates the experience of earlier sections and invokes the river to flow and "suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution!" The paradoxical implication of the word "suspend" juxtaposed upon the "eternal float of solution" suggests the basic symbolism of the poem which is fixity in motion. Time, Life and River - all flow in an "eternal float", but the underlying unity (solution) of a vast spiritual continuum always stands suspended in the eternity of a single moment. The fluid movement of the "ferry" or the poem ends on a metaphysical note of rare intensity. The poet absorbs in his vision the reality of both the material and the immaterial, phenomenal and noumenal, visible and the invisible:

> Appearances, now and henceforth, indicate what you are,
> You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul,
> About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung
> our divinest aromas.[17]

Since it is through the finite that we realize the infinite, even "illusion" or Maya cannot be rejected as meaningless. Whitman realizes fully well the spiritual value of his sensuous experience:

> We use you, and do not cast you aside- we plant you
> permanently within us,
> We fathom you not - we love you - there is perfection
> in you also,
> You furnish your parts toward eternity,
> Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul.[18]

Whitman does not affirm the Self by a process of rejection. Once again he confirms his love of all reality in which Self is the centre of the perceiving Consciousness.

"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" in "SEA-DRIFT" section,

unfolds the mystery of Death through various levels of imagery and symbolism. The basic symbol of the sea embodies in its unceasing waves running towards the shore, the symbol of the cradle endlessly "rocking" - the cradle of birth and life. Cradle is the symbolic expression of the principle of maternity. It means continual movement and birth. But it also means "death" in so far as it completes the cyclic meaning of life and universe - a cycle of birth-death and rebirth which implies that death is but a transition between birth and rebirth. Life and death do not mean the beginning and end, but rather imply ceaseless continuations. Death, in other words, is birth into spiritual life. The whole paradox is presented and resolved through a subtle pattern of movement. The poem opens with a long sentence or prologue (lines 1-22) in which the poet announces that he will sing "a reminiscence" associated with the "mocking-bird" that chanted to him in his childhood. The experience, therefore, is recorded in retrospect, like Wordsworth's emotion recollected in tranquillity. It emerges

> From those beginning notes of yearning and love there
> in the mist,
> From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
>
> .....
> A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
> Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
> I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and
> hereafter,
> Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping
> beyond them.[19]

And, then, begins the story of the bird which has lost its mate. One might treat the poem as an elegy, and the bird as representative of some one who has lost his Love. Or one might as well accept it as a fairy tale. The symbolic meaning of the poem is too manifest to be missed. For the sake of coherent analysis, the poem from "Once Paumanok" to "The sea

whisper'd me" may be divided into seven inner movements or stages of development: First: lines 23-40; Second: lines 41-60; Third: lines 61-129; Fourth: lines 130-143; Fifth: lines 144-157; Sixth: lines 158-174; and Seventh: lines 175-182.[20]

In the first movement, the poet recollects the scented atmosphere of the Spring in which the two birds sing the song of their ideal love. Their love breathes happiness on a symbolic plane which the poet shares as a "curious boy". "Together" is the recurrent image of their song. They seem to be oblivious of the element of separateness in life:

> Shine! shine! shine!
> Pour down your warmth, great sun!
> While we bask, we two <u>together</u>.
>
> Two together!
> Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
>
> .....
> Singing all time, minding no time,
> While we two keep <u>together</u>.[21]

The second movement marks a sudden transition in the mood of the poem. The song of ideal love and togetherness changes into the song of lonesome love and separation. The she-bird disappears and is supposedly dead. The ecstasy becomes agony. It is a moment of crisis for the he-bird. He moans and calls for his mate everywhere, and his wailing merges with the rough "surging of the sea". The lone singer almost shouts to the winds:

> Blow! blow! blow!
> Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
> I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.[22]

The tragic effect of the whole situation is heightened by the contrasting images of the glistening stars, the full-moon and the calm weather. The "I" of the poem, however, continues to perceive the deeper significance of the mournful song of the he-bird:

Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

He call'd on his mate,
He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.[23]

The third movement reveals the poet's intensely empathic understanding of the he-bird's song which bewails the loss of his beloved. The poet, first of all, narrates his own movements to share the experience of the he-bird:

For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with
the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the
sounds and sights after their sorts,
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listen'd long and long.

Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you my brother.[24]

The imagery of the above lines strongly suggests the poet's emotional participation in the predicament of the he-bird from Alabama. The bird faces the stern reality of death, and the poet allows himself to become one with the bird's consciousness. And what ensues is a chaotic mass of sense-stimuli, concealing underneath some great secret of existence. The poet proceeds to translate the feelings of the solitary bird and thereby portray his own. The he-bird is almost frantically engulfed in a sense of loss. He has lost all sense of reality. In the hypnotic effect of his grief he imagines ) his mate is calling for him from somewhere. He finds the waves of the sea, the moon, the land, and the night loaded with love and pines for his own. He wildly calls for his mate over the sea-waves, over the land and in the woods; he calls to the winds, the "rising stars", and the low-hanging moon. But finally the he-bird emerges from

this despairingly mad song and realizes his sorrowful state and the gnawing reality of death:

> 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.[25]

In the fourth movement, the poet records the gradual "sinking" of the he-bird's deeply felt song and the continuity of every thing else, the stars, the winds, the moon, the sea. It is in the continuity of every thing in nature, including the echoes of the bird's music, that "the boy" of the poem, who is the future poet, discovers some deep and secret meaning:

> The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves,
> with his hair the atmosphere dallying,
> The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now
> at last tumultuously bursting,
> The aria's meaning, the stars, the soul, swiftly
> depositing,
>
> .....
> The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,
> To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some
> drown'd secret hissing,
> To the outsetting bard.[26]

In the fifth movement, the "child" of the poem 'is transported into manhood and poethood, and out of the confused experience of the third movement emerges a unity, aesthetic and philosophical'.[27] The poet has become the bard of sorrow in a special sense:

> Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul),
> Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it
> really to me?
> For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping,
> now I have heard you,
> Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
> And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs,
> clearer, louder and more sorrowful than yours,
> A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me,
> never to die.

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting
me,
O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease
perpetuating you,
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before
what there in the night,

.....
The unknown want, the destiny of me.[28]

The poet seems to have fully realized the informing spirit of the bird's death-song. However, the final vision comes to him from the sea - the symbol of life and death. In the sixth movement, the poet takes us back to the scene of his boyhood once again where the sea bequeaths to him the secret his soul longed for:

Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly
before day-break,
Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like
my arous'd child's heart,
But edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me
softly all over,
Death, death, death, death, death.[29]

In the seventh and the final movement, the poet achieves the symbolic fusion of his own voice with the voices of the bird and the sea: all the three voices merge into one great melody - the melody of death:

Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,
That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's
gray beach,
With the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
(or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet
garments, bending aside,)
The sea whisper'd me.[30]

The last few lines are a key to the primary meaning of the poem. The poet accepts death, realistically and metaphysically. Though death disturbs the mortal frame, it has but a transitional place in the grand drama of birth and rebirth. Whitman shows a rare sensibility by conceiving of ever-renewing life behind the shadow of death. Love, death and poetic power - all appear to him as the aspects of the same reality which is the Self. His vision contains in itself all the oppositions of the world at once together.[31] He resolves the conflicting tensions of suffering and death in the natural world by an emotional evocation rather than explicit statement. However, the images of birth as well as death dominate the poem. Richard P. Adams has remarked:

> The theme of death is emphasized, both in the process of personal integration and in the ultimate achievement of immortality. Life and immortality have meaning only in relation to death, as happiness and ease have meaning only in relation to toil and suffering. Without some powerful personal experience of the knowledge of sorrow, loss, and evil, the poet has nothing significant to say.[32]

The "powerful personal experience" may, however, be considered as a religious experience which is intuitively obtained and which throws light on the inner meanings of death, "sorrow, loss, and evil". Whitman shows a sufficient evidence of having transcended the superficial meanings by putting even death to the uses of the poetic imagination or the creative power. In this the poet achieves "a sort of expression of faith in a cultural myth of many peoples and lands".[33] The transcendence of the material meaning of reality is highlighted in a superb way in "Passage to India".

"Passage to India" is the symbolic expression of Whitman's sublime

idealism. Though inspired by certain landmarks in the history of material civilization, it aspires to reach even beyond the Soul which controls the world to the fathomless seas of God- the Supreme Reality. Whitman's exultation in the material progress of the world as a means to search for and discovery of the spiritual heritage of mankind is the most unique feature of this poem, nay, his art. His search takes him to the primal wisdom and spiritual richness of India. To quote Richard P. Adams:

> Whitman may be taken to mean that "Passage to India" expresses the final unity toward which the assimilation of diverse experience is supposed to lead. Its scope is universal. Whitman suggests a space-time continuum that includes all the lands and peoples of all time in union with God, and God is apparently conceived as essentially identical with the total principle of organization in the universe....."Passage to India", then, is the final and perfectly logical conclusion to which all of Whitman's art and all his thinking convergently lead.[34]

The action of the poem, however, does not stop with India; it moves on and on till it becomes the "passage to more than India", the fearless journey of the soul to the unutterable lands of God, the mystical voyage of the embodied self (Jivatman) to the Soul (Atman) and from the Soul to God (Paramatman). Thus the structure of the poem shows a dramatic progression.[35] The poet begins by celebrating the wonderful achievements of the modern times, opening of the Suez Canal which connects Europe and Asia by water, the "mighty railroad" spanning the American continent, and the transatlantic cable. But these material events of the present serve as a "passage" to the past - "the dark unfathom'd retrospect". The glory of the present events points to "the infinite greatness of the past; for what is the present after all but a growth out of the past?" The image of the present "impell'd by the past" weaves the modern with the ancient into a

spiritual unity. The dichotomy between the time present and the time past is demolished. The poet finds his route to the spiritual through the material. The vision becomes crystallized as soon as the embodied self of the poet and the Soul are understood to have assumed their non-dual relationship. With this power of vision the poet sees the essence of the past in the "myths Asiatic, the primitive fables". Section 2 places side by side the spiritual wisdom of the East and the enlightened materialism of the West:

> Not you alone proud truths of the world,
> Nor you alone ye facts of modern science,
> But myths and fables of eld, Asia's, Africa's fables,
> The far-darting beams of the spirit, the unloos'd dreams,
> The deep-diving bibles and legends,
> The daring plots of the poets, the elder religions;
>
> .....
> You too with joy I sing.[36]

In both the spiritual and material progress of the past and present, the poet sees some divine plan. He is happy over the prospect of the earth "spann'd, connected by network" and lands "welded together". By now the image "passage" and the symbol "India" have assumed gigantic significance. The passage to India is "not for trade or transportation only,/ But in God's name, and for thy sake O soul". Whitman ignores the purely commercial aspect of material progress and 'considers the material objects important insofar as they help in the achievement of a spiritual experience'.[37] In section 3, the poet makes his own spatial passage to India, the cradle of humanity, and mentions the material factors involved in this journey. He sees "the procession of steamships" on the Suez, and the "Pacific railroad surmounting every barrier". He hears the reverberating "echoes". All these refer to the fulfilment of Columbus' dream:

Tying the Eastern to the Western sea,
The road between Europe and Asia.[38]

The romantic dream of the Genoese becomes a reality in the imagination of the poet:

(Ah Genoese thy dream! thy dream!
Centuries after thou art laid in thy grave,
The shore thou foundest verifies thy dream.)[39]

In section 4, the poet admires the struggles and ingenuity of numberless sailors and explorers who have at last succeeded in accomplishing the "rondure of the world", in realizing the "purpose vast", and in fulfilling "man's long probation". The endless events of history rush back to the memory of the poet "like clouds and cloudlets in the unreach'd sky", or they are perceived "as a rivulet running" down the slopes of a mountain. The vision gives rise to a "ceaseless thought" in the mind of the poet and he connects the mastering of earth's roundness with some deep spiritual meaning: "lo, soul, to thee, thy sight, they rise". In section 5 the "vast rondure" of the world "swimming in space" becomes the dynamic symbol of the soul which is "cover'd all over with visible power and beauty", but with some "inscrutable purpose, some hidden prophetic intention". The poet believes in the existence of the divine purpose ever since man came out from the "gardens of Asia":

Wandering, yearning, curious, with restless explorations,
With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish, with never-happy hearts,
With that sad incessant refrain, wherefore unsatisfied soul? and whither O mocking life?[40]

The poet also believes that unless these restless explorations and the wonders of the material progress assume some spiritual meaning, mankind will remain feverish. The poet, then, as ordained, takes it upon himself to soothe the burning hearts. The poet alone can soothe man and reconcile

him with Nature, because the poet is the true son of God. To fulfil the divine purpose, the "first intent", this son of God "shall double the cape of Good Hope" and discover a spiritual India in which "Nature and Man shall be disjoin'd and diffused no more". In section 6, the poet resumes his spiritual journey to India, the "soothing cradle of man", and sees the "past lit up again":

> Lo soul, the retrospect brought forward,
> The old, most populous, wealthiest of earth's lands,
> The streams of the Indus and the Ganges and their
> many affluents,
> (I my shores of America walking today behold, resuming all,)[41]

After suggesting a spiritual union between India and America, the poet sums up the Eastern fables, religions, and the "flowing literatures" on the occultism of Brahma and the wisdom of Buddha. He thinks of the world's most ambitious adventurers from Alexander to Columbus, and adds to the symbolic value of each act of exploration into the unknown. Whitman immortalizes Columbus and makes him a symbol of exploration. In him, he sees a 'history's type of courage, action, faith'. Although Columbus died in poverty, dejected and slandered, the seed of his accomplishment "sprouts, blooms, to God's due occasion, and fills the earth with use and beauty". Thus, history acquires spiritual connotation through the poet's treatment of it. From the notion of spiritualized history, the poet moves into section 7 to the timeless world of the "primal thought". Passage to India also means the poet's "circumnavigation of the world" in the company of the soul: "O soul, repressless, I with thee and thou with me". For man, passage to India means

> the voyage of his mind's return -
> To reason's early paradise,
> Back, back to wisdom's birth, to innocent intuitions,
> Again with fair creation.[42]

Section 8 marks the transition from the poet's physico-spiritual passage to India on earth to some vast, unknown, symbolic voyage. So far the Soul (Atman) has been a sort of non-dual companion of the embodied self. The self and soul have been discriminated as "I" and "Thee". (In the "Song of Myself" the "I" or the "self" is the Actual Me or immersed in Soul, and is, therefore, transcendent.) But from now onwards the self and the soul become one, though the distinction is never completely obliterated. The poet, immersed in the soul, is now restless to sail the "trackless seas" for the "unknown shores on waves of ecstasy". It is in complete union with the soul that the poet hopes to sail into a mystical union with God who is the source of All, the creator of perfect unity and order:

> Ah more than any priest O soul we too believe in God,
> But with the mystery of God we dare not dally.
>
> O soul thou pleasest me, I thee,
> Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking in the
> night,
> Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death,
> like waters flowing,
> Bear me indeed as through the regions infinite,
> Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave me all over,
> Bathe me O God in thee, mounting to thee,
> I and my soul to range in range of thee.[43]

The thoughts of Time and Space and Death carry the poet to God. Water imagery helps to describe the spiritual experience. God is seen as a divine fountain, a source in whom the poet and his soul will bathe.[44] The poet sings his vision of God in these rapturous words:

> O Thou transcendent,
> Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
> Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou
> centre of them,
> Thou mightier centre of the true, the good, the loving,
> Thou moral, spiritual fountain - affection's source-
> thou reservoir,

.....
Thou pulse- thou motive of the stars, sun, systems,
That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious,
Athwart the shapeless vastness of space,
How should I think, how breathe a single breath, how
speak,if out of myself,
I could not launch, to those, superior universes?[45]

The "nameless" and the "transcendent" is beyond the grasp of rationality. It cannot be apprehended unless one realizes one's real self or soul first. Soul is the God principle in us which helps us to know the nature of reality on all planes. The empirical self or the finite ego is too puny to bear the light of God. It shrivels "at the thought of God,/ At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death". But then, the soul or the Actual Me comes to its rescue, and travels to the unknown realms of God:

But that I, turning, call to thee O soul, thou actual Me,
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.

Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding O soul thou journeyest forth;

.....
Reckoning ahead O soul, when thou, the time achiev'd,
The seas all cross'd, weather'd the capes, the voyage done,
Surrounded, copest, frontest God, yieldest, the aim attain'd,
As fill'd with friendship, love complete, the Elder Brother
found,
The Younger melts in fondness in his arms.[46]

Though the image "melts" is the image of dissolution, and the union of the soul and God (Over-soul) suggests 'spiritual interfusion and inseparability, both the soul and the over-soul retain their identity - the Elder Brother his and the Younger his'.[47] However, the divine union of soul with over-soul is certainly "Passage to more than India". In section 9, the poet expresses once again his belief that our knowledge of the empirical world is an aid to deeper intuition,[48] and that we should try to blend the known

with the unknown. The poet knows that man must pass through materialism and eventually discover the spiritual realm. But, in his ecstatic mood to have the vision of God, the poet yearns to transcend or leave the material world too far behind to disturb his present Consciousness:

> Passage, immediate passage! the blood burns in my veins!
> Away O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!
> Cut the hawsers--haul out--shake out every sail!
> Have we not stood here like trees in the ground long enough?
> Have we not grovel'd here long enough, eating and drinking like mere brutes?
> Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves with books long enough?
>
> Sail forth-- steer for the deep waters only,
> Reckless O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me,
> For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,
> And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.
>
> O brave soul!
> O farther farther sail!
> O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of God?
> O farther, farther, farther sail![49]

Steering for the "deep waters" only, and going "where mariner has not yet dared to go" indicate Whitman's unshakable determination to strike against the heart of mankind in whose essential divinity he firmly believes, urging "entrance for the faith that would glorify man if man would but open his heart".[50] The concluding verses reflect a grand precision of thought; these show the undaunting mode of quest of the self towards its final Destiny - the Supreme Reality.[51]

In the foregoing pages and the analyses, we have noted that the single theme-multiple theme of the Self, first transcribed in the "Song of Myself", pervades the entire body of the Leaves of Grass. We have also observed that in the poems which were published after the "Song", especially those which have been examined in this chapter, the theme has

been poeticized with a more subtle precision, philosophical as well as aesthetic. The connected themes of Time and Space, Love and Nature, Good and Evil, Birth and Rebirth, and Death and Art unfold themselves more systematically through an endless variety of imagery and symbolism. Underneath every thing Whitman has been found constantly emphasizing the theory of communication which, with its "indirect" method presupposes a certain bond between the poet and his reader. It is through this "indirect" art that Whitman takes upon himself the stupendous task of resuscitating the spiritual reality of Man. Whitman's poetry is a grand effort to revitalize <u>all</u> life, and in that it has the right to be called the poetry of the future. Whitman gives birth to a new, and broad tradition in English poetry which concerns itself with life, 'raised and illumined by a powerful intuition of the self of man and the soul of humanity'.[52]

# CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSION

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
T. S. ELIOT, Little Gidding

In this study of Whitman and his integral experience, I have consistently adhered to a pattern of analysis which his poetry suggests the most. Whitman's poetry being an invitation to delve into the realm of intuitional reality, mystically experienced and lived, it poses upon its reader a condition of faith. The reader must empty himself of the preconceived notions and beliefs. A perceptive critic would be obliged to come to terms with the canons of his art and accept whatever body of contradictions he might discern as a landscape strewn with dew drops which wither or merge into the earth as soon as the sun rises. The vision of a mystic cannot be apprehended through a rational logic. Any one trying to find a system built on philosophical niceties (or ambiguities) will be disappointed with the poetry of Whitman. He does not evince any programme for the sociologist; nor does he betray much concern for human perversions and morbidities - this does not mean that he shows no psychological insight into the complexities of human behaviour and motivation.(see "I Sit and Look Out") Judged from absolute mystical standards, he falls short. But then, his mysticism preaches integration rather than cessation. Without contesting the right of the individual reader to reservations and exposures, I must emphasize once again that the poetry of Whitman is best understood within

the context of its own paradoxes and seeming contradictions.

It is from this vantage point that one can appreciate the centrifugal-centripetal character of Whitman's poetry. His poetry is the healthiest amalgam of the material and the immaterial, the body and the soul, the sensual and the spiritual, the scientific and the mythic, and the living and the dead. There are no dichotomies or polarities; every thing is self-illumined ( or illumined by the Self). His art is at once naturalistic and surrealistic; it is simultaneously exoteric and esoteric. It is in the spontaneous perception of all these facets that the joyous and luminous nature of Whitman's Self can be grasped. The all-inclusive Self in Whitman is a divine principle. Middleton Murry has rightly observed:

> The self that Whitman 'promulges' is the self that he has discovered at the point of its unity with the All; it is beneath anything that we are accustomed to regard as personality.[1]

Whitman's vision grants the highest position to man in this existential age, for "he sees eternity in men and women, he does not see men and women as dreams or dots".[2] He advances over Wordsworth by bringing the average man into poetry. He considers the endless potentialities of human beings and says:

> I am for those that have never been master'd,
> For men and women whose tempers have never been
> master'd,
> For those whom laws, theories, conventions, can
> never master,
>
> I am for those who walk abreast with the whole earth,
> Who inaugurate one to inaugurate all.[3]

It is in this sense that Whitman is said to have given birth to a new tradition in English poetry. For him every little object is unique and every little experience is profound. On the plane of substance, he does

not slight sensual experience, rather, he seeks the spiritual through the physical, he does not distinguish bodily delight from spiritual ecstasy.[4] It is with Whitman that the aura of the traditional forms of poetry is demolished. In Whitman's poetics, conception and content are more important than literary execution, though he emphasizes the inner organic principle in the arts. By defying the traditional aesthetic, he captures the distinctive American ethos; he breaks old myths and establishes new ones instead.[5] Whitman is particularly conscious of the essential meanings of American experience. Therefore, Leaves of Grass is to be treated as a spiritual perspective for American genius.[6] But on the side of language, Whitman suggests a certain limited departure from conventional poetic diction. In spite of his early colloquial language and Americanisms, his diction remains "comparable only to the greatest in English poetry".[7] His imagery and symbolism express the true substance of poetry by reflecting the spirituality of the external, sensuous world:[8]

> The noiseless myriads,
> The infinite oceans where the rivers empty,
> The separate countless free identities, like eyesight,
> The true realities, eidolons.
>
> .....
> The body permanent,
> The body lurking there within thy body,
> The only purport of the form thou art, the real I myself,
> An image, an eidolon.[9]

In his conception of time, Whitman shows, in his own way, no less interest than T.S.Eliot in the ever-developing tradition and the poet's relation to it.[10] Past is dear to him, but as a vital source of the present. Therefore, the poet's mirror must reflect the present. Whitman's view of history is most comprehensive. He envisions the future poetry fulfilling

science and democracy by encompassing the paradoxical elements in both- science must prove the truths of mythology, and democracy must satisfy and dissolve the contradictory feelings of individuality and equality. "Passage to India" and the "CALAMUS" poems are a great beginning. Viewed as a whole Whitman's Leaves of Grass has been considered as the greatest epic of modern times. Ferner Nuhn has treated T.S.Eliot's "The Waste Land", Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn", and Herman Melville's "Moby Dick" also as American epics,[11] but he claims that

> Leaves of Grass represents a true epic of modern democratic, scientific civilization, related creatively both to Nature and God. There is no flight from the responsibilities of the modern world, nor is there a sense of despair and defeat because of its complexities. Rather the hero meets his modern tests, points the way to be taken, speaks his word clearly and strongly. Leaves of Grass adds a Paradiso to the Inferno of Moby Dick and the Purgatorio of The Waste Land. It brings Ishmael and Huck Finn home from their wanderings, as Odysseus returned home.[12]

Without reiterating any further the notions which form the body of this essay, I only wish to mention the well-known fact that the Whitman tradition in modern literature continues to be pervasive in this century, in the writings of great many literary figures.[13] The tradition is powerfully alive in writers like Carl Sandburg, Allen Ginsberg, Henry Miller, D.H.Lawrence, Hart Crane, Dylan Thomas, to name only a few. The influence of Whitman's poetry has been felt in Hopkins[14] and Ezra Pound[15] also. However, it is not within the scope of the present inquiry to trace Whitman's specific influences, as it has not concerned itself with his specific sources.

Before I conclude, I should like to say that Whitman's real fame does not depend entirely upon his influence over one or the other great

writer of the present century. The cause of his world-wide reputation[16] is rooted somewhere in the soul of man. Man always realizes intuitively that human destiny cannot be fulfilled through material and technological advancement alone. A purely materialistic civilization in which there is a pragmatic emphasis on "doing" or action as an end, and which nourishes the notions of feverish competitiveness and ceaseless activity toward merely physical expansion, is the negation of all such values as are essential to the fulfilment of Democracy or Humanity. In order that our material pursuits should acquire some meaning we must work for a corresponding progress toward spiritual self-integration. Our actions must have their relevance in our contemplation. While we listen to the endless voices or noises of the world, we must also pay heed to the voice of the soul. Without inner stability and repose man cannot understand the ultimate Ideal of Being. Whitman's poetry is a corrective to the modern ideal of physical progress and expansion; it is a timely reminder to the American civilization to study the dangerous implications of her own dynamic progress. Whitman envisions that without the infusion of a spiritualizing essence progress and democracy in America or elsewhere in the world will prove to be a utter failure. Time and again, he suggests a union of the material and the spiritual as the way to world happiness:

> I have the idea of all, and am all and believe
> in all,
> I believe materialism is true and spiritualism is
> true, I reject no part.[17]

There is no doubt in my mind regarding Whitman's irrefutable position in the annals of literary history. He will always be considered as one of the greatest poets not only of America but of the whole world.

Whitman scholars, wherever they might belong, will continue their researches into the complexities of this great genius and his mystical vision. But, at the same time, a certain irony will lurk about his popularity with scholars and university professors. It will be long, perhaps too long, before his vision can be shared by the commonality of mankind whom he celebrated in his poetry, and before his country can absorb him "as affectionately as he has absorbed it".[18] The only consolation is that this irony is not something new in world history and literature; it has been recurrent. Men of vision and prophecy always suffer and wait till their voices become a part of the collective consciousness of the race.

## FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

Chapter I: Pages 1-15

[1]Thomas J. Rountree, "Whitman's Indirect Expression And Its Application to 'Song of Myself'", PMLA, LXXIII (1958), 551-552.

[2]Walt Whitman, Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, ed. James E. Miller, Jr., (Boston: 1959), 413.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Henry Wallace, Walt Whitman: Seer A Brief Study, (London: 1904), 39-40.

[5]Ibid., 48.

[6]Walt Whitman, The Complete Writings, ed. Richard Maurice Bucke, Thomas B. Harned, and Horace L. Traubel, (New York: 1902), II of The Complete Prose Works, 105-106.

[7]"Hast Never Come to Thee an Hour?".

[8]"Introduction", Leaves of Grass: The First (1855) Edition, (New York: 1965), x.

[9]"The Poetry of Barbarism: Walt Whitman Considered", Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, (New York: 1900), 175.

[10]Ibid., 179-180.

[11]Walt Whitman Reconsidered, (New York: 1955), 7-9.

[12]Ibid., 59 and 63.

[13]Quoted in James E. Miller, Jr., "Whitman and Eliot: The Poetry of Mysticism", Southwest Review, XLIII (Spring, 1958), 113. The source of Eliot's remark about Whitman is not given. However, this paper deals with the "similarities of idea and technique which renders a comparison of value" between otherwise two vastly diverse poems- Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" and T.S.Eliot's Four Quartets.

[14]Quoted in Herbert Bergman, "Ezra Pound and Walt Whitman", American Literature, XXVII (1955), 57. This paper deals with the influence of Walt Whitman on Ezra Pound, and controverts the observations of Eliot on Whitman.

[15]"Whitman", Whitman: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce, (New Jersey: 1962), 18.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., 13.

[18]See Cosmic Consciousness: A Study In The Evolution of The Human Mind, (New York: 1961), 178-196. This was originally published in 1901.

[19]See A Critical Guide to Leaves of Grass, (Chicago: 1957).

[20]See Walt Whitman's Poems, ed. Allen and Davis, (New York: 1959).

[21]See "Introduction" Leaves of Grass: The First (1855) Edition, (New York: 1965).

[22]The under-noted are some of the studies which refer to Whitman's Orientalism and mysticism, and suggest that Leaves of Grass or "Song of Myself" may be read in the light of world mysticism:
W.D.O' Connor, The Good Gray Poet: A Vindication, (Toronto: 1927), Originally printed in 1866, reprinted in R.M.Bucke's Walt Whitman (Philadelphia: 1883), 99-130; H.L.Traubel, R.M.Bucke, and T.B.Harned, eds. In Re Walt Whitman, (Philadelphia: 1893), "Walt Whitman" by Gabriel Sarrazin, translated from the French by Harrison S. Morris, 159-194; John Burroughs, Whitman: A Study, (New York: 1896); W.N.Guthrie, Walt Whitman: The Camden Sage, (Cincinnati: 1897); Milla Tupper Maynard, Walt Whitman: The Poet of Wider Selfhood, (Chicago: 1903); Edward Carpenter, Days With Walt Whitman: With Some Notes on His Life and Work, (London: 1906); Bliss Perry, Walt Whitman, (New York: 1906); G.R.Carpenter, Whitman, (New York: 1909); James Thomson ("B.V."), Walt Whitman: The Man and The Poet, (London: 1910); Will Hayes, Walt Whitman: The Prophet of the New Era, (London: undated); O.E.Lessing, "Walt Whitman and His German Critics", JEGP, IX (1910), 85-98; Vernon Louis Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, III. 1860-1920, (New York: 1930), "The Afterglow of the Enlightenment: Walt Whitman", 69-86. Swami Rama Tirtha, Swami Vivekananda, Tagore and Sri Aurobindo of India also pointed out Whitman's kinship with Indian thought and mysticism.

[23]Cowley, op. cit., xi-xii.

[24]Whitman in the Light of Vedantic Mysticism: An Interpretation , with an Introduction by Gay Wilson Allen, (Lincoln, Nebraska: 1964), 11.

[25]The reference here is to such fair -minded studies as Anne Gilchrist, "An Englishwoman's Estimate of Walt Whitman", Anne Gilchrist: Her Life and Writings, ed. Herbert Harlakenden Gilchrist, (London: 1887), 287-307; William M.Salter, The Great Side of Walt Whitman, (Philadelphia: 1899); Henry Wallace, Walt Whitman:Seer-A Brief Study,(London: 1904); Oscar Lovell Triggs, "Introduction", Selections From The Prose and Poetry of Walt Whitman, (Boston: 1906), xiii-xliii; L. Conrad Hartley, The Spirit of Walt Whitman: A Psychological Study, (Manchester: 1908); Basil De Selincourt, Walt Whitman: A Critical Study, (New York: 1914); Roland D. Sawyer, Walt Whitman: The Prophet Poet, (Boston: 1918); Henry Alonzo Myers, "Whitman's Consistency", American Literature, VIII (1936), 243-257; Floyd Stovall, "Walt Whitman:

the Man and the Myth", South Atlantic Quarterly, LIV (November,1955), 538-551; Clarence A. Brown, "Walt Whitman and The New Poetry", American Literature, XXXIII (March, 1961), 33-45; Sculley Bradley, "The Teaching of Whitman", College English, XXIII (May,1962), 618-622; etc., etc.
For biased studies, in addition to the ones examined in the body of this chapter, one might refer to Norman Foerster, "Whitman and The Cult of Confusion", North American Review, Vol. 213 (1921), 799-812; R.W.Flint, "The Living Whitman", Partisan Review, XXII (1955), 391-399; and much of the Whitman criticism which has been done in the Freudian tradition — Robert Forrey, in his "Whitman and the Freudians", Mainstream, XIV (1961), 45-52, has brought to our notice some useful information.

[26]Bucke, Cosmic Consciousness, 192.

[27]Refer to Carl F. Strauch, "The Structure of Walt Whitman's 'Song of Myself'", English Journal, XXVII (1938), 597-607; James E. Miller, Jr., "'Song of Myself' as Inverted Mystical Experience", PMLA, LXX (1955), 636-661; and Malcolm Cowley, "Introduction", Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass: The First (1855) Edition, (New York: 1965), vii-xxxvii. These studies, however, offer very sound and admirable analyses of the poem.

[28]Chari, op. cit.; and Dorothy F. Mercer, Leaves of Grass and the Bhagavad Gita: A Comparative Study, (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1933). Some of Dr. Mercer's work has been published in a series of articles in Vedanta and the West: "Walt Whitman on Reincarnation", IX (November-December, 1946), 180-185; "Walt Whitman and the Theory of Maya", X (January-February, 1947), 20-23; "Walt Whitman on Learning and Wisdom", X (March-April, 1947), 57-59; "Walt Whitman on God and the Self", X (May-June, 1947), 80-87; "Walt Whitman on Love", X (July-August, 1947), 107-113; "Walt Whitman on Karma Yoga", X (September-October, 1947), 150-153; "Whitman on Raja Yoga", XI (January-February, 1948), 26-31; "Whitman on Prophecy", XI (July-August, 1948), 118-123; "Limitations in Leaves of Grass", XII (January-February, 1949), 21-25; and "Limitations in Leaves of Grass", XII (May-June, 1949), 82-87. Dr. Chari's work, substantially the text of his "Whitman and Indian Thought: An Interpretation in the Light of Hindu Mysticism", (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., Benares Hindu University, 1950), though excellent in its exposition and execution, tends to over-emphasize Whitman's relationship to Indian thought, and in doing so, reveals more of Vedanta than Whitman. Similarly, Miss Mercer's work, though a comparative study of ideas aiming to state both the area of agreement and the disagreement between Whitman's ideas and the philosophical ideas of the Gita, sometimes literally equates Whitman's ideas with Hindu thought or concepts - a procedure to be discouraged and guarded against.

[29]Chari, op. cit., 17.

[30]The reference is to the under-noted studies (arranged chronologically): W.S.Kennedy, Reminiscences of Walt Whitman, (London: 1896); Bliss Perry, Walt Whitman, (New York: 1906); R.D.O'Leary, "Swift and Whitman as Exponents of Human Nature", Ethics, XXIV (1914), 183-201; John B. Moore, "The Master of Whitman", Studies in Philology, XXIII (1926), 77-89; Clarence Gohdes, "Whitman and Emerson", Sewanee Review, XXXVII (1929), 79-93; R.C.Harrison,

"Walt Whitman and Shakespeare", PMLA, XLIV (1929), 1201-1238; M.C.Boatright, "Whitman and Hegel", University of Texas Studies in English, (1929), 134-150; Gay Wilson Allen, "Biblical Echoes in Whitman's Works", American Literature, VI (1934), 302-315; M.O.Johnson, "Walt Whitman as a Critic of Literature", University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature and Criticism, Number 16 (1938), 1-73; F.M.Smith, "Whitman's Poet-Prophet and Carlyle's Hero", PMLA, LV (1940), 1146-1164; R.P.Falk, "Walt Whitman and German Thought", JEGP, XL (1941), 315-330; Carlos Baker, "The Road to Concord: Another Milestone in the Whitman-Emerson Friendship", Princeton University Library Chronicle, (1946), 100-117; Gay Wilson Allen, "Walt Whitman and World Literature", Walt Whitman Handbook, (Chicago: 1946), 442-538; Frederick Schyberg, "Walt Whitman at Thirty-six", Walt Whitman, trans. from the Danish, Evie Allison Allen, (Columbia: 1951), 30-76 ; Floyd Stovall: "Whitman's Knowledge of Shakespeare", Studies in Philology, XLIX (1952), 643-669, "Whitman, Shakespeare, and Democracy", JEGP, LI (1952), 457-472, "Walt Whitman and the Dramatic Stage in New York", Studies in Philology, L (1953), 515-540, "Notes on Whitman's Reading", American Literature, XXVI (1954), 337-362; Edmund Wilson, "Emerson and Whitman: Documents on Their Relations-1855-1888", ed. The Shock of Recognition, (New York: 1955), 244-295; E.W.Todd, "Indian Pictures and Two Whitman Poems", Huntington Library Quarterly, XIX (November, 1955), 1-11; and Roland A.Duerksen, "Shelley's 'Defence' and Whitman's 1855 'Preface': A Comparison", The Walt Whitman Review, X (September, 1964), 51-60.

[31]Gay Wilson Allen, The Solitary Singer, a Critical Biography of Walt Whitman, (New York: 1955), 172.

[32]G. Ferris Cronkhite, "The Transcendental Railroad", The New England Quarterly, XXIV (1951), 306.

[33]Henry Bamford Parkes, "Romanticism in America", American Literature of the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology, ed. William J. Fisher, et al., (New Delhi: 1965), 22.

[34]Ibid., 16.

[35]Ibid., 23.

[36]"Transcendentalism", Men and Movements in American Philosophy, (New York: 1952), 116.

[37]See Arthur Christy, The Orient in American Transcendentalism, (New York: 1963) ; and V.K.Chari, "Whitman and Indian Thought", Western Humanities Review, XIII (1959), 291-302. Christy's work is the only complete survey of the impact of Oriental thought on American letters. Chari's paper deals specifically with Whitman's knowledge of Indian mystical thought.

[38]Fisher, et al., eds. "Backgrounds", op. cit., 33. The editors have expressed their gratitude to Dr. V.K.Chari of the English Department of Benaras Hindu University, for his valuable help and information regarding several of the most significant and interesting parallels between Indian thought and the writings of Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman.

[39]Vernon Louis Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought: The Romantic Revolution in America- 1800-1860, II (New York: 1954), 373-374.

[40]Alexander Kern, "The Rise of Transcendentalism", Transitions in American Literary History, ed. Harry Hayden Clark, (North Carolina: 1953), 252. Mr Kern has beautifully summed up the situation regarding the position of American Transcendentalists: "Negatively, they rejected the following ideas: (1) the sensationalist, anti-idealist features of Locke's philosophy; (2) the associationist psychology which denied the active shaping power of the human mind; (3) the concept of a mechanical universe with a by-standing God, which derived from Newton and Paley; (4) the sensationalist and associationist features of the Scottish Common Sense School; (5) the materialist philosophy and "pale negations" of the conservative unitarians - their institutionalized ritual, their coolness etc; (6) the Calvinistic acceptance of total depravity, predestination, and pessimism; (7) the need to adhere to the generalized, balanced, formalized style of neo-classicism; (8) the commercial ideal of thrift, industry, profit, and success as attested by vulgar monetary standards; (9) the improvement of society by social legislation through the will of the majority. Affirmatively, the Transcendentalists adopted the following concepts: (1) an intuitive idealism which accepted ideas as ultimates; (2) a view of the imagination or intuition (in their language Reason) giving a direct apprehension of reality which the logical faculties (the understanding) could not furnish; (3) the concept of an organic universe in which Nature, suffused by an immanent God, corresponded with Spirit in such a way that the connections and indeed the whole could be grasped by contemplation and intuition; (4) a living religion in which miracles seemed natural; (5) the divinity of man, who consequently did not need salvation; (6) a concept of Genius which could produce works of art by recording its intuitions through the use of nature symbols; (7) a freedom and spontaneity in art to permit the creation of works liberated from the artificialities produced by talent or mechanical rules alone; (8) an individual moral insight which should supersede the dollor as the standard of conduct; (9) self-improvement as the primary avenue of social improvement;(10) individualism, i.e. reliance on God, rather than conformity to the will of a political or social majority; (11) an optimism about the potentialities of individual lives and of the universe. Also see C.D.Narasimhaiah, "Transcendentalism in American Literature: An Introductory Essay", The Literary Criterion, V,iii (1962), 48-65.

[41]Herbert W. Schneider, A History of American Philosophy, (New York: 1963), 232.

[42]Cameron Thompson, "John Locke and New England Transcendentalism", The New England Quarterly, XXXV (1962), 451. Also refer to Wellek Rene, "Emerson and German Philosophy", NEQ, XVI (1943), 61-62.

[43]Schneider, op. cit., 233.

[44]Rod W. Horton, and Herbert W. Edwards, Backgrounds of American Literary Thought, (New York: 1952), 110-111.

[45]Christopher Pearse Crauch, "Transcendentalism", The Transcendentalists: An Anthology, ed. Perry Miller, (Massachusetts: 1960), 302. Also see Charles Mayo Ellis, "An Essay on Transcendentalism", The American Transcendentalists: Their Prose and Poetry, ed. Perry Miller, (New York: 1957), 21-35.

[46]Chester E. Eisinger, "Transcendentalism: Its Effects upon American Literature and Democracy", The American Renaissance: The History and Literature of an Era, ed. George Hendrick, (Bonn: 1961), 22.

[47]Ibid., 26.

[48]Ibid., 27.

[49]Ibid., 33.

[50]Henry A. Pochmann, German Culture in America: Philosophical and Literary Influences 1600-1900, (Madison: 1957), 433.

[51]Will Hayes, Walt Whitman: The Prophet of The New Era, (London: Undated), 30. Hayes writes: "I write of the Mountain of Vision, for it was from this eminence that the Prophet of Nazareth gave to the world his great sermon. From the same mountain came the Vedas, the "Dhammapada", the "Bhagavad Gita", and the Koran, and all books that have become sacred to humanity. And it was to the Mount of Vision that Whitman climbed before he sang the "Song of Myself" ".

[52]Carleton Noyes, An Approach to Walt Whitman, (Boston: 1910), 88.

[53]"To Think of Time", Section 9.

[54]Noyes, op. cit., 93. I have underlined certain expressions for the sake of emphasis or distinction.

Chapter II: Pages 16-37

[1]"The Sleepers", Section 1. Throughout this paper, I have underlined some portions of Whitman's poetry in order to emphasize the meaning, or to point out the paradox.

[2]Ibid., Section 2.

[3]"Song of The Open Road", Section 1.

[4]Ibid., Section 3.

[5]Ibid., Section 5.

[6]Ibid., Section 6.

[7]"There Was a Child Went Forth".

[8]Som Parkash Sharma, A Study of Themes, Self, Love, War And Death in Relationship to Form in the Poetry of Walt Whitman, (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., The University of Wisconsin, 1964), 108-109. In order to deepen the significance and the understanding of the child in Whitman, Mr. Sharma has drawn beautiful comparisons and contrasts with the child in Wordsworth, Rilke and Tagore.

[9]Karl Jaspers, Truth and Symbol from Von Der Wahrheit, trans. with an Introduction. Jean T. Wilde, William Kluback and William Kimmel, (New York: 1959), 47.

[10]Frederick Copleston, S.J., A History of Philosophy: Modern Philosophy: The British Philosophers, V, Part I, (New York: 1964), 86-88.

[11]Ibid., 203.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, with an Introduction by Arthur Symons, (London: 1952), Ch.XIII, 145-146.

[14]For a detailed discussion of Coleridge's theory of Imagination, see I.A.Richards, Coleridge on Imagination (London: Kegan Paul, 1934). Also George Whalley, "Two Views of Imagination", Poetic Process (London: Kegan Paul, 1953), 46-63.

[15]M.H.Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and Critical Tradition (New York: 1958), 59.

[16]S.T.Coleridge, "Dejection: An Ode", IV, "Introduction" The Portable Coleridge, I.A.Richards, (New York: 1961), 170.

[17]V.K.Chari, Whitman in the Light of Vedantic Mysticism: An Interpretation (Lincoln: 1964), 21.

[18]Henry Thomas and Dana Lee Thomas, Living Biographies of Great Philosophers (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1960), 165.

[19]"Introduction", The Philosophy of Kant: Immanuel Kant's Moral and Political Writings, (New York: 1949), xxix-xxx.

[20]Chari, op. cit., 22.

[21]Ras Vihary Das, "Fichte, Schelling and Hegel", History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, II, ed. S.Radhakrishnan and others, (London: 1953), 268.

[22]Ibid., 267.

[23]Frederick de Wolfe Bolman, Jr., Translated with Introduction and Notes, Schelling: The Ages of the World, (New York: 1942), 4.

[24]Ras Vihary Das, op. cit., 268-269.

[25]See Elmer O'Brien, S.J., "Introduction", The Essential Plotinus, (Toronto: The New American Library of Canada Limited, 1964).

[26]A.R.Wadia, "Socrates, Plato and Aristotle", History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, II, ed. S.Radhakrishnan and others, (London: 1953), 46-52.

[27]Ibid., 54-55.

[28]An Idealist View of Life, (London: 1961), 31.

[29]T.M.P.Mahadevan, "The Upanisads", History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, I, ed. S.Radhakrishnan and others, (London: 1952), 55.

[30]Chandogya Upanishad:6.1.2-3, The Principal Upanisads, Edited with Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes. S.Radhakrishnan, (London: 1953), 446.

[31]Chandogya: 6.13.1-3.

[32]Swami Prabhavananda, The Spiritual Heritage of India, (London: 1962), 283-284.

[33]Ralph Waldo Emerson, Essays: First and Second Series, with an Introduction by Shiv Kumar, (New Delhi: 1965), 37.

[34]Ibid., 197.

[35]Ibid., 404-405.

[36]Sharma, op. cit., 105.

[37]"Salut au Monde!", Section 13.

[38]"Laws For Creations" in "AUTUMN RIVULETS".

[39]"Starting From Paumanok", Section 12.

[40]See R.P.Falk, "Walt Whitman and German Thought", JEGP, XL (1941), 315-330. Also "The Base of All Metaphysics" in "CALAMUS".

[41]Ibid., 321.

[42]"Whitman and Hegel", University of Texas Studies in English, (1929), 134-150.

[43]"Whitman's Triadic Imagery", American Literature, XXIII (1951), 99-126.

[44]"Whitman The Non-Hegelian", PMLA, LVIII (1943), 1073.

[45]Ibid., 1078.

[46]V.K.Chari, "Whitman and Indian Thought" Western Humanities Review, XIII (1959), 297.

[47]Ibid., 294.

[48]Malcolm Cowley, "Introduction", Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass: The First (1855) Edition, (New York: 1965), xxii.

[49]Leon Howard, "For a Critique of Whitman's Transcendentalism", Modern Language Notes, XLVII (1932), 83.

[50]Henry Bryan Binns, A Life of Walt Whitman, (New York: 1905), 71.

[51]F.O.Matthiessen, American Renaissance: Art and Expression In The Age of Emerson and Whitman, (New York: 1957), 524-525.

[52]James E. Miller, Jr., Walt Whitman, (New York: 1962), 154.

[53]Louis Untermeyer, "Introduction", The Inner Sanctum Edition of The Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman, (New York: 1949), 67.

[54]Sharma, op. cit., 141.

Chapter III: Pages 38-79

[1]V.K.Chari, Whitman in the Light of Vedantic Mysticism: An Interpretation, with an Introduction by Gay Wilson Allen, (Lincoln, Nebraska: 1964), 121. Chari acknowledges to have borrowed the phrase " the paradox of identity" from Richard Chase, Walt Whitman Reconsidered, though he has put it to his use in a different way.

[2]"The Structure of Walt Whitman's 'Song of Myself'", English Journal, XXVII (1938), 599. Strauch designates the numbered sections of "Song of Myself" paragraphs.

[3]Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness, (London: 1957), 169-170. Underhill describes the five phases of the mystical life as under:
(1) The Awakening of the Self to Consciousness of Divine Reality; (2) Purgation or the Purification of Self; (3) Illumination or the Apprehension of the Absolute; (4) The Dark Night of the Soul; and (5) Union with Absolute Life.

[4]"'Song of Myself' as Inverted Mystical Experience", PMLA, LXX (1955), 637.

[5]"Introduction", Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass: The First (1855) Edition, (New York: 1965), xvi.

[6]Gay Wilson Allen and Charles T. Davis, eds. Walt Whitman's Poems: Selections With Critical Aids, (New York: 1959), 5-9. Also see Gay Wilson Allen, Walt Whitman Handbook, (Chicago: Packard and Company, 1946), 117.

[7]Cowley, op. cit., xx.

[8]Chari, op. cit., 124.

[9]The Evolution of Walt Whitman: The Creation of a Book, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1962), 224.

[10]"Song of Myself", Section 1.

[11]Thomas J. Rountree, "Whitman's Indirect Expression And Its Application to 'Song of Myself'", PMLA, LXXIII (1958), 552.

[12]V.K.Chari, "Structure and Poetic Growth in 'Leaves of Grass'", The Walt Whitman Review, IX (September, 1963), 59.

[13]"Song of Myself", Section 1.

[14]Raymond A. Cook, "Empathic Identification in 'Song of Myself': A Key to Whitman's Poetry", The Walt Whitman Review, X (March, 1964), 5.

[15]"Song of Myself", Section 2.

[16]Ibid.,Section 3.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Chari, Whitman in the Light of Vedantic Mysticism: An Interpretation, 75.

[19]"Song of Myself", Section 4.

[20]Mundaka Upanishad: 3.1.1, The Principal Upanisads, Edited with Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes. S. Radhakrishnan, (London: 1953), 686.

[21]The Bhagavadgita, With an Introductory Essay, Sanskrit Text, English Translation and Notes. S.Radhakrishnan, (London:1948), XIII.14, 306.

[22]"Song of Myself", Section 5.

[23]Miller, op. cit., 639.

[24]John Addington Symonds, Walt Whitman: A Study, (London & New York: 1893), 79.

[25]Clarence Gohdes, "A Comment on Section 5 of Whitman's 'Song of Myself'" Modern Language Notes, LXIX (1954), 585.

[26]"Walt Whitman and The Cosmic Sense", In Re Walt Whitman, ed. Horace L. Traubel, Richard Maurice Bucke and Thomas B. Harned, (Philadelphia: 1893), 335. I have reproduced the quotation in an abridged form without altering the language of Dr. Bucke.

[27]The Varieties of Religious Experience, (London: 1952), 387.

[28]Ibid., 370-372. Also F.C.Happold, Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology, (Middlesex, England: 1964), 45-50.

[29]"Song of Myself", Section 6.

[30]Miller, op. cit., 641.

[31]Gay Wilson Allen, "Walt Whitman's 'Long Journey' Motif", JEGP, XXXVIII (1939), 79-81. Reprinted with slight revisions in Gay Wilson Allen, Walt Whitman as Man, Poet, and Legend, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), 62-83.

[32]"Song of Myself", Section 7.

[33]Chadwick C. Hansen, "Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself": Democratic Epic", The American Renaissance: The History and Literature of an Era, ed. George Hendrick, (Bonn: 1961), 81-82.

[34]"Song of Myself", Section 8.

[35]Steven Foster, "Bergson's "Intuition" and Whitman's "Song of Myself" " Texas Studies in Literature and Language, VI (1964), 378.

[36]See Helena Born, Whitman's Ideal Democracy and Other Writings, (Boston, Massachusetts: Everett Press, 1902), 3-19.

[37]"Song of Myself", Section 10.

[38]Ibid., Section 11.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Sculley Bradley, "The Fundamental Metrical Principle in Whitman's Poetry", American Literature, X (1939), 439. The paper emphasizes the counting of syllables in the lines of Whitman to mark the number of stresses which determine their organic form .

[41]"Song of Myself", Section 13.

[42]Maximilian Beck, "Walt Whitman's Intuition of Reality", Ethics, LIII (1942), 19-20.

[43]"Song of Myself", Section 14.

[44]"Walt Whitman as Innovator", The Young Rebel in American Literature, ed. Carl Bode, (New York: 1960), 34-35.

[45]"Song of Myself", Section 15.

[46]Gay Wilson Allen, Walt Whitman Handbook, (Chicago: 1946), 118.

[47]"Song of Myself", Section 16.

[48]Ibid., Section 5.

[49]Richard Maurice Bucke, Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of The Human Mind,(New York: 1961), 192.

[50]See The Song of God: Bhagavad-Gita, trans. Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, (New York: The New American Library, 1956).

[51]Som Parkash Sharma, A Study of Themes, Self, Love, War And Death in Relationship to Form in the Poetry of Walt Whitman, (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1964), 39.

[52]Bhagavad-Gita, op. cit., Ch. X, 88-90.

[53]Ibid., Ch. XV, 113.

[54]Dorothy F. Mercer, Leaves of Grass and the Bhagavad Gita: A Comparative Study, (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of California: 1933), 62.

[55]Walt Whitman Handbook, (Chicago: 1946), 460.

[56]Mercer, op. cit., 64.

[57]See Sidney Spencer, Mysticism in World Religion, (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Inc., 1963).

[58]"Song of Myself", Section 17.

[59]Richard P. Adams, "Whitman: A Brief Revaluation", Tulane Studies in English, V (1955), 131. The 'grass' image is used in Sections: 1, 5, 6, 9, 17, 31, 33, 39, 49,& 52.

[60]Olive W. Parsons, "Whitman the Non-Hegelian", PMLA, LVIII (1943), 1077.

[61]Georgiana Pollak, "The Relationship of Music to 'Leaves of Grass'", College English, XV (1954), 393.

[62]"Song of Myself", Section 19.

[63]Ibid.

[64]William M. Salter, The Questionable Side of Walt Whitman, (Philadelphia: 1899), 149.

[65]"Song of Myself", Section 20.

[66]Marcus Cunliffe, The Literature of the United States, (Middlesex, England: 1964), 125.

[67]"Song of Myself", Section 20.

[68]Ibid., Section 21.

[69]"Main Drifts in Whitman's Poetry", American Literature, IV (1932), 5.

[70]"Song of Myself", Section 22.

[71]Ibid., Section 23.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Joseph M. Defalco, "The Narrative Shift in Whitman's Song of Myself", The Walt Whitman Review, IX (September, 1963), 82.

[74]"Song of Myself", Section 24.

[75]Ibid.

[76]Ibid., Section 25.

[77]op. cit., 603.

[78]"Song of Myself", Section 26.

[79]Ibid.

[80]Ibid., Section 28.

[81]Ibid., Section 27.

[82]Ibid., Section 28.

[83]Ibid., Section 29.

[84]Ibid., Section 30.

[85]Ibid., Section 31.

[86]Ibid., Section 32.

[87]Ibid., Section 33.

[88]Ibid.

[89]Ibid.

[90]Ibid.

[91]Ibid., Section 34.

[92]Ibid., Section 35.

[93]Ibid., Section 36.

[94]Ibid., Section 37.

[95]Ibid., Section 38.

[96]Ibid., Section 39.

[97]Miller, op. cit., 653-654.

[98]"Song of Myself", Section 40.

[99]Ibid.

[100]Ibid., Section 41.

[101]Ibid., Section 42.

[102]Ibid.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Ibid., Section 43.

[105]Ibid., Section 44.

[106]Ibid.

[107]Ibid., Section 45.

[108]Ibid., Section 46.

[109]Ibid.

[110]"Walt Whitman: A Study in Sublimation", Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences, III (1951), 230. This paper may be of some special value for the professional psychoanalyst or a psychiatrist.

[111]"Song of Myself", Section 47.

[112]Ibid., Section 48.

[113]Ibid.

[114]Ibid., Section 49.

[115]Quoted in Rabindranath Tagore, Creative Unity, (London: 1922), 18. The poem from which I have quoted is written by some Eastern poet whose name is not mentioned, and it is a translation.

[116]"Song of Myself", Section 50.

[117]Ibid.

[118]Ibid., Section 51.

[119]Ibid.

[120]Ibid., Section 52.

[121]Jon Bracker, "The Conclusion of 'Song of Myself'", The Walt Whitman Review, X (March, 1964), 22.

[122]"Song of Myself", Section 52.

[123]The reference is to the inconclusive studies of Emory Holloway: Whitman: An Interpretation in Narrative, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), 65-71, "Walt Whitman Pursued", American Literature, XXVII (1955), 1-11, and Free and Lonesome Heart: The Secret of Walt Whitman, (New York: Vantage Press, 1960). I do not, however, mean to undermine the relative importance of these studies.

[124]Quoted in Horace L. Traubel, Walt Whitman in Camden, 3 vols., (Boston: 1906), I, 414-415. Also see Van Wyck Brooks, The Times of Melville and Whitman, (New York: E.P.Dutton & Co. Inc., 1947), 125-126.

[125]Henry Seidel Canby, Walt Whitman: An American, (Boston: 1943), 117. Also see Canby's essay "Walt Whitman", Literary History of the United States, ed. Robert E. Spiller, and others, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), 472-498.

Chapter IV: Pages 80-99

[1]See James E. Miller, Jr., A Critical Guide to Leaves of Grass, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 36-51. Also Harry R. Warfel, "Whitman's Structural Principles in "Spontaneous Me"", College English, XVIII (1957), 190-195.

[2]See Clark Griffith, "Sex and Death: The Significance of Whitman's Calamus Themes", Philological Quarterly, XXXIX (1960), 18-38. This paper deals with all the aspects, symbolic and sexual, of the "CALAMUS" poems, but in its final analysis stresses the point of comradeship.

[3]See Edward E. Sullivan Jr., "Thematic Unfolding in Whitman's Drum Taps", Emerson Society Quarterly, No. 31 (1963), 42-45; and Sam Toperoff, "Reconciliation of Polarity in Whitman's Drum Taps", Emerson Society Quarterly, No. 31 (1963), 45-47.

[4]Killis Campbell, "The Evolution of Whitman as Artist", American Literature, VI (1934), 254-263.

[5]Calvin S. Brown, "The Musical Development of Symbols: Whitman", Interpretations of American Literature, ed. Charles Feidelson, Jr., and Paul Brodtkorb, Jr., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 187.

[6]Alice L. Cooke, "A Note on Whitman's Symbolism in 'Song of Myself'", Modern Language Notes, LXV (1950), 231.

[7]V.A. Shahane, "Aspects of Walt Whitman's Symbolism", The Literary Criterion, III (1962), 72.

[8]James E. Miller, Jr., "Introduction", Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, (Boston: 1959), xlvi.

[9]Miller, A Critical Guide to Leaves of Grass, 80.

[10]"Crossing Brooklyn Ferry", Section 2.

[11]Ibid., Section 3.

[12]Ibid., Section 5.

[13]Ibid., Section 6.

[14]James W. Gargano, "Technique in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry": The Everlasting Moment", JEGP, LXII (1963), 262.

[15]"Crossing Brooklyn Ferry", Section 8.

[16]Gay Wilson Allen and Charles T. Davis, Walt Whitman's Poems, (New York: 1959), Critical note on the poem, 158. Allen calls the poet as "Time Binder", meaning time negating or time abolishing.

[17]"Crossing Brooklyn Ferry", Section 9.

[18]Ibid.

[19]"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking".

[20]See The Portable Walt Whitman, with a biographical and critical introduction by Mark Van Doren, (New York: The Viking Press, 1963), 220-228. In this volume of Whitman's works, the poem, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" has been divided into ten sections. In no other edition of Whitman's poems, the poem is divided into sections. I have, however, differed with the above-mentioned scheme, and divided the poem into eight parts.(see pages 86-87 of the thesis.)

[21]"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking".

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Gay Wilson Allen and Charles T.Davis, op. cit., critical note on the poem, 165.

[28]"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking".

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Leo Spitzer, "Explication De Texte Applied to Walt Whitman's Poem 'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking'", A Journal of English Literary History, XVI (1949), 239.

[32]Richard P. Adams, "Whitman: A Brief Revaluation", Tulane Studies in English, V (1955), 138-139.

[33]V.A.Shahane, op. cit., 75.

[34]op. cit., 141 & 143.

[35]See James E. Miller's analysis of the poem in A Critical Guide to Leaves of Grass,(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 120-129. Also critical note on the poem in Gay Wilson Allen and Charles T. Davis, Walt Whitman's Poems, (New York: Grove Press, INC., 1959), 242-248. For other critical studies see Stanley K. Coffman, Jr., "Form and Meaning in Whitman's 'Passage to India'", PMLA, LXX (June, 1955), 337-349; John Lovell, Jr., "Appreciating Whitman: 'Passage to India'", Modern Language Quarterly, XXI (June, 1960), 131-141; and Clare R. Goldfarb, "The Poet's Role in 'Passage to India'", The Walt Whitman Review, VIII (1962), 75-79. For an excellent study of revisions and Whitman's conscious art see Fredson Bowers, "The Earliest Manuscripts of Whitman's 'Passage to India' and Its Notebook", Bulletin of New York Public Library, LXI (July, 1957), 319-352.

[36]"Passage to India", Section 2.

[37]Clare R. Goldfarb, op. cit., 76.

[38]"Passage to India", Section 3.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid., Section 5.

[41]Ibid., Section 6.

[42]Ibid., Section 7.

[43]Ibid., Section 8.

[44]Clare R. Goldfarb, op. cit., 78.

[45]"Passage to India", Section 8.

[46]Ibid.

[47]James E.Miller, op. cit., 128.

[48]Stanley K. Coffman, op. cit., 348.

[49]"Passage to India", Section 9.

[50]John Lovell, Jr., op. cit., 140.

[51]See Alan W. Watts, The Supreme Identity,(New York: The Noonday Press, 1965), 76-98. This is an excellent treatment of the concept of the Self.

[52]"Sri Aurobindo on Rabindranath", Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore, (Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1961), 1-6. Aurobindo remarks that with the poetry of Whitman, Carpenter, A.E., and Tagore, the idea of the poet who is also the Rishi (Sage) has made again its appearance. Also see Sri Aurobindo, The Future Poetry, (Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1953), 248-264.

Chapter V: Pages 100-105

[1]Middleton Murry, Unprofessional Essays, (London: 1956), 141.

[2]"By Blue Ontario's Shore", Section 10. On this point see John Bailey, Walt Whitman, (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1926), 65.

[3]Ibid., Section 17.

[4]Charles T. Davis, "Walt Whitman and The Problem of an American Tradition", Comparative Literature and Arts Journal, V (September, 1961), 12-13.

[5]William Randel, "Walt Whitman and American Myths", South Atlantic Quarterly, LIX (1960), 103-113.

[6]Davis, op. cit., 15.

[7]Rebecca Coy, "A Study of Whitman's Diction", University of Texas Studies in English, (1936), 124.

[8]James E. Miller, Jr., "Whitman and the Province of Poetry", Arizona Quarterly, XIV (Spring, 1958), 6.

[9]"Eidolons".

[10]Miller, op. cit., 9.

[11]Ferner Nuhn,"'Leaves of Grass' Viewed as an Epic", Arizona Quarterly, VII (1951), 328-329.

[12]Ibid., 330.

[13]See James E.Miller, Jr., Karl Shapiro, and Bernice Slote, Start With the Sun: Studies in Cosmic Poetry, (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1960).

[14]William Darby Templeman, "Hopkins and Whitman: Evidence of Influence and Echoes", Philological Quarterly, XXXIII (1954), 48-65.

[15]Herbert Bergman, "Ezra Pound and Walt Whitman", American Literature, XXVII (1955), 56-61.

[16]See Charles B. Willard, Whitman's American Fame: The Growth of His Reputation in America After 1892, (Providence: Brown University, 1950), and Gay Wilson Allen, ed. Walt Whitman Abroad: Critical Essays from Germany, France, Scandinavia, Russia, Italy, Spain and Latin America, Israel, Japan, and India, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1955). Also see Frederic I. Carpenter, "American Transcendentalism in India", The Emerson Society Quarterly, No. 31 (1963), 59-62. This paper traces the interest of India in American Transcendentalists, Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman. The author contends that the ideas of Self-Reliance promulgated by the American Transcendentalists appeal to the traditional thought and experience of India.

[17]"With Antecedents", Section 2.

[18]Walt Whitman, "Preface to 1855 Edition of 'Leaves of Grass'" Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, ed. James E. Miller, Jr., (Boston: 1959), 427.

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