The Journey and the Voyage Motif in Selected Major Poems, Clusters, and Short Lyrics of the Final Edition (1891-92) of Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass

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THE JOURNEY AND THE VOYAGE MOTIF IN
SELECTED MAJOR POEMS, CLUSTERS, AND SHORT LYRICS
OF THE FINAL EDITION (1891-92) OF WALT WHITMAN'S
LEAVES OF GRASS

By
Donald Norman Schweda

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE JOURNEY AND VOYAGE MOTIF IN LEAVES OF GRASS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. &quot;INSRIPTIONS&quot; AND &quot;STARTING FROM PAUMANOK&quot;</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. &quot;SONG OF MYSELF&quot;</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. &quot;CHILDREN OF ADAM&quot; AND &quot;CALAMUS&quot;</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. ELEVEN SONGS</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. REPRESENTATIVE POEMS</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

THE JOURNEY AND VOYAGE MOTIF IN LEAVES OF GRASS

I

A journey and voyage motif appears in nearly every major poem, cluster, and short lyric in Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass and contributes significantly to the dramatic structure, the poetic effectiveness, and the unity of many individual poems in which it appears as well as to the book as a whole. This motif appears in varying ways in the imagery, metaphors, and themes throughout Whitman's book. In most instances, the use of the motif as a poetic device reinforces the philosophic vision expressed throughout Leaves of Grass.

II

Although given various identifying labels, the journey and voyage motif has been referred to by several critics who have written about Whitman's works. For example, Bliss Perry, an early Whitman scholar and biographer, in Walt Whitman: His Life and Work (1906), suggests that the motif

is a significant one in *Leaves of Grass* and that it characterizes the spirit of Whitman's early life:

In one of the random, undated scraps of writing which Whitman's literary executors have published with such pious care, occurs this memorandum for a future poem: "A Poem--Theme: Be Happy. Going forth, seeing all the beautiful perfect things." These words suggest the motif of more than one of his productions, and they may serve to indicate the spirit of blissful vagrancy which dominated his early manhood.²

However, Perry does not elaborate on the motif or identify or discuss the poems in which he says the motif appears.

Frederick Schyberg, in *Walt Whitman* (1933), in his discussion of "Song of Myself," says:

The wander motif . . . is the leit-motif of *Leaves of Grass*, and in "Song of Myself" is combined with religious purpose in a pre-view of the themes which Whitman was to work out further and make into separate poems in later editions. The wander motif afterwards inspired two famous poems: "Song of the Open Road," with its purely Rousseauistic theme of wandering in nature, and "Pioneers! O Pioneers!"³

The most extensive consideration of the journey and voyage motif is Gay Wilson Allen's "The 'Long Journey' Motif," in *Walt Whitman as Man, Poet, and Legend* (1939, 1961). Allen says that "the journey motif includes a scientific theory, a metaphysics, a religious faith, and a personal philosophy; in fact, it provides a background for the various themes of *Leaves of Grass*--evolution, for


Allen claims that "the journey motif is the key to Whitman's style": "Whitman's insistence that each person must travel the road for himself and his own individualistic nature would inevitably lead to the desire for independence in style." He refers to the works of Hans Christian Andersen and Henrik Wergeland as possible sources for Whitman's use of the "Long Journey" motif. According to Allen, Whitman borrowed the term "Long Journey" from Johannes V. Jensen, a disciple in Denmark:

In *The Wheel* (1905) Jensen translated long sections from *Leaves of Grass* and showed through his Whitmanesque hero and his falsely Whitmanesque hero and his falsely Whitmanesque villain the vital and the dangerous elements in Whitman's doctrines. In this novel, Jensen also advanced his "Long Journey" theory to be developed later in a series of five novels, now called, in the English translation, *The Long Journey*.

In Allen's article, examples from *Leaves of Grass* are brief, and much of the subsequent discussion is devoted to possible sources and influences; but his conclusion emphasizes the importance that should be seen in Whitman's thematic use of the "Long Journey" motif:

> The "Long Journey" motif is . . . of the greatest importance in a study of the genesis of *Leaves of Grass*, in the interpretation of its message, and in understanding the psychology of Whitman's style. The theme, moreover belongs to a nineteenth-century movement in world literature; and when studied against this background, both the content

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5 Ibid., p. 69.

6 Ibid., pp. 74-79.

7 Ibid., p. 79.
and the method of Leaves of Grass take on new and broader significance. Lacking historical training and weak in dramatic skill, Walt Whitman could not write a Wergeland epic or a Jensen saga; nevertheless, his mystic vision of the cosmic journey has been a major inspiration to world literature.8

Richard Chase, in Walt Whitman Reconsidered (1955), also refers to the appearance of the journey and voyage motif in Leaves of Grass:

In some of his best as well as in some of his worst poems, Whitman actually conceives of the self as making a journey—for example, "Song of the Open Road," "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," and "Passage to India." In others the self journeys, as it were, not forward and outward but backward and inward, back to the roots of its being, and discovers there a final mystery, or love, comradeship, or death—for example, the Calamus and Sea Drift poems.9

Another important Whitman scholar, James E. Miller, Jr., in A Critical Guide to "Leaves of Grass" (1966) notes the pervasive occurrence of "the image of the journey" in Whitman's poetry:

If some aspects of the structure of Whitman's book remind one on occasion of a man-built structure, a house or building, other aspects, paradoxically enough, remind one of the great outdoors and a journey. From "On Journeys through the States" and "The Ship Starting" in "Inscriptions," through "Song of the Open Road," and concluding with the prose piece with which Whitman closed his book, "A Backward Glance o'er Travel'd Roads," the image of the journey appears again and again in Leaves of Grass.10

Miller is concerned primarily with the defense of his theory

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8Ibid., p. 82.


of the structural integrity of the final version of *Leaves of Grass*; he does, however, not see how the journey motif contributes to an ordered structure:

Although the journey motif running through *Leaves of Grass* is strong, it is difficult to assert just how the successive images of travel, both by land and by water, constitute a structure. If it may be said that the destination is unknown, then it may be asserted that the apparent disorder in *Leaves of Grass* is justifiable. This metaphor, instead of unlocking the secret of the book's structure, provides a rationalization for its lack of structure.\(^{11}\)

In 1968, Alvin Rosenfeld, in his article "Whitman's Open Road Philosophy," saw the journey and voyage motif as central to *Leaves of Grass*. In his discussion, Rosenfeld presents most of his examples from "Song of the Open Road," but he says at the beginning of his article:

"I tramp a perpetual journey" writes Whitman in the long poem of the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* that was later to be "Song of Myself," and in the declaration he initiates a theme that was to appear and reappear in a number of poems throughout all succeeding editions of his book.\(^{12}\)

Thus, the pervasiveness and significance of the journey and voyage motif has been noted by the critics. There is, however, no book-length study devoted exclusively to the motif.

III

The identifying phrase chosen in this study, "the journey and voyage motif," could be subsumed under the more inclusive phrase, "the travel motif," or under some other

\(^{11}\)Ibid., pp. 171-172.

nearly synonymous inclusive phrase, such as Allen's "The 'Long Journey' motif" or Schyberg's "The wander motif." Nevertheless, this study will show that preservation of a distinction between the terms "journey" and "voyage" often helps to explain the metaphoric and dramatic framework of many poems as well as to explain Whitman's arrangement of the final, or "deathbed," edition of *Leaves of Grass*. In general, the "I" of *Leaves of Grass* journeys through life and over America as if "on the Road." This "I" frequently looks forward to continuing the journey through life as a voyage after death into the unknown spiritual realm, which is generally symbolized by the sea. The term "journey," as opposed to "voyage," is the more generic term of the two, but the *OED*, for example, does indicate that "journey" is "usually applied to land travel, or travel mainly by land, in contradistinction to a voyage by sea."\(^{13}\) The *OED* also indicates that "journey" used figuratively, as Whitman so often does, is frequently a metaphor for "the 'pilgrimage' or passage through life,"\(^{14}\) "Voyage," on the other hand, is usually applied to "a journey by sea or water from one place to another (usually to some distant place or country)."\(^{15}\) Also, the *OED* indicates that "voyage" is often used figuratively "to denote . . . the fate of persons after death."\(^{16}\)

\(^{13}\)"Journey," *OED*.

\(^{14}\)Ibid.

\(^{15}\)"Voyage," *OED*.

\(^{16}\)Ibid.
In general, Whitman tends to preserve this distinction.

In *Leaves of Grass*, whenever Whitman celebrates life and people and events of the material world, he tends to use land-travel or journey imagery. "Song of the Open Road," for example, begins:

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good fortune, I myself am good fortune,

Strong and content I travel the open road.

(1.1-7.149)17

On the other hand, whenever Whitman writes of the soul (as opposed to the body), especially the soul as it is or will be after death, he tends to use sea-travel or voyage imagery; for example, in "Gliding O'er All":

Gliding o'er all, through all,
Through Nature, Time, and Space,
As a ship on the waters advancing,
The voyage of the soul--not life alone,
Death, many deaths I'll sing.

(1-5.276-277)

It is true that Whitman often depicts the body and the soul as journeying through life together, but he tends to place emphasis upon the soul as it continues the journey as a

17 Throughout this study, the parenthetical notation following each quotation from *Leaves of Grass* indicates, first, the section number(s) of the poem quoted, second, the line number(s), and third, the page number(s) on which the quotation appears in the Comprehensive Readers Edition. Thus, "1.1-7.149" reads: section 1, lines 1-7, page 149. If a quotation is taken from a poem that is not divided into sections, only two sets of figures are used. Thus, "1-5.276-277" reads: lines 1-5, pages 276-277.
voyage on the sea of eternity:

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

("Joy, Shipmate, Joy!"
1-7.501-502)

Contrary to Miller's assertion that "it is difficult to assert just how the successive images of travel, both by land and by water, constitute a structure," the appearance of the journey or the voyage motif or both does aid one to understand the overall structure of Leaves of Grass. Had Miller insisted on a distinction between journeys and voyages, he would have had one more argument in support of his thesis that there is "a basic three-part structure" in Leaves of Grass. Briefly stated, Miller's thesis is the following:

In its simplest terms the book may be said to be the creation of an individual, yet typical, personality for the New World. This creation or delineation first portrays an expanding awareness of the self and its relation to all else; next shows the impingement of a specific time and a particular place on self; and finally engages the self with the fundamental and all-encompassing "law" of spirituality. Miller uses Whitman's own words to entitle the group of poems that comprises each of the three basic parts. The first major part is entitled "Gigantic embryo or skeleton of personality," a phrase Whitman used in a letter to William Douglas O'Connor to distinguish the separately

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18 Miller, p. 171.
19 Ibid., p. 185.
published *Drum-Taps* of 1865 from the earlier 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. According to Miller the poems in the first part are all the poems from "Song of Myself" to "By the Roadside." The second major part Miller entitles "This time and land we swim in," a phrase Whitman used in the aforementioned letter to O'Connor to describe the themes of the poems appearing in the 1865 edition of *Drum-Taps*. In the final arrangement of *Leaves of Grass*, all the poems from "Drum-Taps" to "Autumn Rivulets" belong to the second category. Finally, Miller entitles the third group, which includes all poems from "Proud Music of the Storm" to "Whispers of Heavenly Death," "The resistless gravitation of spiritual law," a phrase Whitman used in a footnote in the 1876 preface to *Leaves of Grass* to explain why certain poems were chosen for the concluding portions of the book. According to Miller, all poems not included in one of the basic three parts belong to one of three minor sections: 1) "Introduction to themes and greetings," 2) "Review of themes and farewell," or 3) "Afterthoughts: the Annexes."

The poems in Miller's first two major groups are characterized by the predominance of the journey rather than the voyage motif because the persona tends to journey over the past and present real or material world. When, however,
in the third part, the poet turns his attention to the engagement of "the self with the fundamental and all-encompassing 'law' of spirituality," he uses images of the sea and of voyaging with more and more frequency than in the first two parts. The discussions of individual poems in subsequent chapters of this study will substantiate the validity of the preceding generalizations.

IV

Throughout *Leaves of Grass*, the journey and voyage motif appears in several ways. First, the speaking voice or the "I" (i.e., the cosmic and mythical poet of "Song of Myself," "Walt Whitman, a cosmos, of Manhattan the son" 24.497.52) frequently describes his own past, present, and future movements and activities with images of journeying or voyaging. For example, after the initial mystic experience described in "Song of Myself," the poet remembers how in his vision he went "Voyaging to every port to dicker and adventure" (33.786.64). In "Facing West from California's Shores," from the "Children of Adam" cluster, the poet says, "Long having wander'd since, round the earth having wander'd,/ Now I face home again" (8-9.111). Also, in "The Sleepers," Whitman says, "I wander all night in my vision" (l.1.424).

Second, the journey and voyage motif frequently appears in various poems as the poet refers to, describes, and celebrates other people who journey and voyage. For example, in the "Song of the Answerer," Whitman claims that "The sailor and traveler underlie the maker of poems"
Also, in "Song of the Exposition," he writes:

I say I see, my friends, if you do not, the illustrious emigre, (having it is true in her day, although the same, changed, journey'd considerable,)
Making directly for this rendezvous, vigorously clearing a path for herself, striding through the confusion.

A third frequent appearance of the journey and voyage motif occurs in various poems, especially in the "Drum-Taps" cluster, as Whitman describes and celebrates military campaigns, parades, and marches. For example, in "Bivouac on a Mountain Side," Whitman says, "I see before me now a traveling army halting" (1.300); and in "An Army Corps on the March," he writes:

The swarming ranks press on and on, the dense brigades press on,
Glittering dimly, toiling under the sun--the dust cover'd men,
In columns rise and fall to the undulations of the ground,
With artillery interspers'd--the wheels rumble, the horses sweat,
As the army corps advances.

Also, after a Japanese embassy paraded down Manhattan's Broadway, Whitman wrote "A Broadway Pageant," which begins:

Over the Western sea hither from Niphon come,
Courteous, the swart-cheek'd two sworded envoys,
Leaning back in their open barouches, bareheaded, impassive,
Ride to-day through Manhattan.

A fourth frequent appearance of the journey and voyage motif occurs whenever Whitman refers to, describes, and celebrates anything that moves or is in a state of flux,
such as the sea, the positions of the stars, and the world. For example, in "Salut Au Monde," Whitman says that he sees "a great round wonder rolling through space" (4.43.139). In "In Cabin'd Ships at Sea," he celebrates motion and the life of the sailor:

Here are our thoughts, voyagers' thoughts,

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
We feel the long pulsation, ebb and flow of endless motion,

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
The boundless vista and the horizon far and dim are all here,

And this is ocean's poem.

(9-16.3)

Referring to "the farther systems" of the universe, Whitman says in "Song of Myself,"

Wider and wider they spread, expanding,
always expanding,
Outward and outward and forever outward.

(45.1185-1186.82)

In "I Sing the Body Electric," he writes:

(All is a procession,
The universe is a procession with measured and perfect motion.)

(6.89-90.98)

Finally, there is a fifth way in which the journey and voyage motif appears. Frequently, a poem in Leaves of Grass begins with the poet in a passive, musing, or almost indolent position. For example, in "Song of Myself," the poet says,

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

(1.4-5.28)

The indolence suggested in the above excerpt is usually temporary, for the poet's imagination soon takes flight as he begins to identify with envisioned passing scenes and
activities and to participate in them. For example, in "Song of Myself," after a mystic vision experienced while "loafing," the new, mysticized personality sees himself thus:

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

The Yankee Clipper is under her sky-sails, she cuts the sparkle and scud,
My eyes settle the land, I bend at her prow or shout joyously from the deck.

(10.175-181.37)

In the early lines of "Song of Myself," the poet describes himself as if he were "loafing"; however, in his visions he not only describes himself as "Wandering amazed" in the "wilds," but also, a few lines later, describes himself as voyaging on a "Yankee Clipper." Later, in the lines immediately following those last quoted, the poet envisions himself searching the sea-shore for clams:

The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early and stopt for me,
I tuck'd my trowser-ends in my boots and went and had a good time;
You should have been with us that day round the chowder-kettle.

(10.182-184.37)

Thus, the poet may initiate his visions and reflections by "loafing," but in his visions, he journeys and voyages over wide expanses of space and time by spectacular leaps or journeys of the imagination. It is this type of journeying and voyaging which so often places the various poems in an effective poetic and dramatic framework.
The journey and voyage motif is philosophically functional in *Leaves of Grass* because it is an excellent metaphor and poetic analogue for Whitman's frequently expressed belief in a constant and beneficent material and spiritual evolutionary process. For example, in "Song of Myself," the motif as metaphor expresses his optimistic faith in evolution:

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

(6.129-130.35)

This optimism is reiterated throughout *Leaves of Grass*. For example, in "A Song of the Rolling Earth," he says:

To her children the words of the eloquent dumb great mother never fail,
The true words do not fail, for motion does not fail and reflection does not fail,
Also the day and night do not fail, and the voyage we pursue does not fail.

(1.41-43.221)

And in "Song of the Universal," he says of the soul:

Yet again, lo! the soul, above all science,
For it has history gather'd like husks around the globe,
For it the entire star-myriads roll through the sky.

In spiral routes by long detours,
(As a much-tacking ship upon the sea,) For it the partial to the permanent flowing, For it the real to the ideal tends.

For it the mystic evolution,
Not the right only justified, what we call evil also justified.

(2.13-21.227)

Whitman also uses the journey and voyage motif as a
poetic device to aid his celebration of the vastness and
diversity of nineteenth-century America. In "On Journeys
through the States," he writes:

We dwell a while in every city and town,
We pass through Kanada, the North-east,
the vast valley of the Mississippi, and
the Southern States.

(7-8.10)

And in "Song of the Exposition," he writes:

Behold, America! . . .
For thee come trooping up thy waters and
thy lands;
Behold! thy fields and farms, thy far-off
woods and mountains,
As in procession coming.

(8.177-180.203)

A third important function of the journey and voyage
motif is its use by Whitman as a device to engage the
reader. For example, frequently he will address the reader
directly, as in the concluding lines of "Song of the Open
Road":

Camerado, I give you my hand!
I give you my love more precious than money,
I give you myself before preaching or law;
Will you give me yourself? Will you come
travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as
we live?

(15.220-224.159)

The journey and voyage motif always functions as a
figure of speech and as allegory. However, the figures of
speech are not always distinguishable as pure metaphor or
simile within the dramatic or visionary framework of the
many poems in which the motif appears. For example, in the
following line from "Song of Myself," the journey motif
appears and is used by the poet for obvious metaphoric
purposes: "One of that centripetal and centrifugal gang I turn and talk like a man leaving charges before a journey" (43.1111.79). When the poet of "Song of Myself" says "I tramp a perpetual journey" (46.1202.83), he speaks metaphorically, allegorically, and dramatically. As metaphor, the preceding excerpt and many similar lines announce the truism that the poet's life is like a journey through time; and Whitman implies in many poems that, if one believes in everlasting life, the individual's soul continues the journey after death as a voyage on the sea. But the line is dramatically functional also, because "Song of Myself" and many other poems in Leaves of Grass present an imaginary fictive record and proclamation of the experiences and subsequent knowledge of one who has journeyed and voyaged over the past, present, and future worlds. Also, throughout Leaves of Grass, many poems, especially those toward the end, proclaim the aspirations and faith of one who looks forward to continuing the journey as a voyage in the spiritual realm after death. For example, in "Sail Out for Good, Eidólon Yacht!" Whitman writes:

Heave the anchor short!
Raise main-sail and jib--steer forth,
O little white-hull'd sloop, now speed
on really deep waters,
(I will not call it our concluding voyage,
But outset and sure entrance to the truest,
best, maturest;)

(1-5.539)

Thus, since the poet uses the rhapsodic and subjective "I" in many of his poems, the journey and the voyage motif often contributes to the drama of the poems as well as to the
allegorical meaning.

VI

In the succeeding chapters of this study, Whitman's poetry is discussed and interpreted by placing particular emphasis upon the appearance of the journey and voyage motif. Ideally, the chief method of examining Whitman's poetry would be to explicate Whitman's poems in the order a reader would encounter them as he reads *Leaves of Grass* from beginning to end. However, in order to avoid undue repetition, this method is followed (in Chapters II through V) for approximately the first third of the poems that comprise *Leaves of Grass*. Within the first third of the book, the journey and voyage motif appears in all the various ways Whitman uses the motif. Nevertheless, the motif continues to pervade all succeeding poems. Thus, the remaining poems are discussed in a single chapter (Chapter VI), but representative and major poems of those remaining are discussed in detail. A final chapter (Chapter VII) summarizes findings and attempts to account for some sources not previously discussed in this study of Whitman's pervasive use of the journey and voyage motif.

In addition to explicating Whitman's poetry by placing particular emphasis upon the appearance of the journey and voyage motif, the following study will include much quotation from the poems. As Randall Jarrell says, "to show Whitman for what he is one does not need to praise or explain or argue, one needs simply to quote. He himself said, 'I and
mine do not convince by arguments, similes, Rhymes, / We convince by our presence." 24

Following Howard J. Waskow's example, I have chosen to examine Whitman's poems as they appear in the 1892 or final edition of *Leaves of Grass*, even though critics argue about its poetic success as opposed to earlier editions. 25 Specifically, Waskow maintains that "the 1892 edition of *Leaves of Grass* is convenient for presenting a way into the full range of Whitman's poetry because it, more than any other, is the record of attitudes explored throughout his poetic life, and although those attitudes may not have changed fundamentally, it is useful to have on hand as many representations of them as possible." 26 Insofar as this study is concerned, I concur with Waskow's generalization.


26 Ibid., pp. 4-5.
CHAPTER II

"INSCRIPTIONS" AND "STARTING FROM PAUMANOK"

I

Several poems in the "Inscriptions" cluster and the poem "Starting from Paumanok" demonstrate well how Whitman's poetry is informed and made dramatic by the poet's use of the journey and voyage motif. Excluding the title-page epigraph, "Come, said my Soul," the twenty-four poems in the "Inscriptions" cluster are the first poems the reader encounters when he opens the final edition of Leaves of Grass. These poems serve to greet the reader and to introduce him to the principal themes to be elaborated upon throughout the book.¹ "Starting from Paumanok," the poem following the "Inscriptions" cluster and preceding "Song of Myself," is similar in theme and content to the "Inscriptions" poems. The editors of Leaves of Grass: Comprehensive Reader's Edition say that "Starting from Paumanok" is itself an extended "Inscription," as the original titles "Premonition" and "Proto-Leaf"... suggest. But it is much more than an announcement of intent; like "Song of Myself" it is both a mythic and personal portrait of the poet—the new man of the Western World.²


Nevertheless, because "Starting from Paumanok" is similar to the "Inscriptions" cluster, and for the sake of convenience, I choose to categorize it in this study with the first cluster rather than with "Song of Myself," the subject of the next chapter.

In the "Inscriptions" cluster there are three poems, out of a total of twenty-four, in which images of journeying or voyaging predominate: "In Cabin'd Ships at Sea," "On Journeys Through the States," and "The Ship Starting." In "In Cabin'd Ships at Sea," Whitman, as he does elsewhere in *Leaves of Grass*, likens his book to a traveller or sailor:

Speed on my book! spread your white sails
my little bark athwart the imperious waves,
Chant on, sail on, bear o'er the boundless blue from me to every sea,
This song for mariners and all their ships.

(22-24.3)

"In Cabin'd Ships at Sea" is the third poem (excluding the aforementioned epigraph) that a reader encounters in the final edition of *Leaves of Grass*. In this poem Whitman introduces the sea as a symbol that is to pervade and to expand in suggestiveness throughout his book. Toward the end of the first stanza, the poet says, "By sailors young and old haply will I, a reminiscence of the land, be read" (7.2). Then, in the second stanza, and in italics, he refers to what a reader can expect to find in his book:

Here are our thoughts, voyagers' thoughts,
Here not the land, firm land, alone appears, may then by them be said,
The sky o'erarches here, we feel the undulating deck beneath our feet.
We feel the long pulsation, ebb and blow of endless motion, the tones of unseen mystery, the vague and vast suggestions of the briny world, the liquid-flowing syllables, the perfume, the faint creaking of the cordage, the melancholy rhythm, the boundless vista and the horizon far and dim are all here, and this is ocean's poem.

Whitman's book, *Leaves of Grass*, is the "ocean's poem" in the sense that in many of the poems the poet is attempting to announce or to understand the spiritual mysteries that can only be discussed by the use of metaphor and suggestion because of the ultimate non-discursive nature of those mysteries. Like the spiritual mysteries he is trying to affirm, to explain, or to understand, the sea is an archetype for a mysterious, dangerous, and yet fascinating element. Critic Robert La Rue, in "Whitman's Sea: Large Enough for Moby Dick," maintains that, contrary to those critics who would assign a specific interpretation to Whitman's pervasive sea-symbol, the sea and ocean as symbols have "many connotations." Whitman, as La Rue demonstrates in his article, exploits and uses the various symbolic connotations of the sea. Insofar as this study is concerned, the sea or ocean as a symbol often represents either the medium upon which a voyage toward ultimate knowledge of the universe is made or the ambiguous destination itself, toward which the voyage is headed. Thus, the

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3Robert La Rue, "Whitman's Sea: Large Enough for Moby Dick," *WWR*, 12 (September, 1966), 51.
book as "ocean's poem" celebrates paradoxically both the voyage and the destination. Not until one reads through *Leaves of Grass* and looks back upon these early poems can one perceive as much as possible the total suggestiveness of the sea as a major symbol.

In "On Journeys through the States" Whitman fuses both the journey and the voyage motif:

> On journeys through the States we start,  
> (Ay through the world, urged by these songs,  
> Sailing henceforth to every land, to every sea,)  
> We willing learners of all, teachers of all  
> and lovers of all.  
> (1-4.10)

At the beginning of this particular poem, the poet appears to be addressing his soul as if his material self and his soul are about to embark upon a voyage around the world. In the succeeding lines of the poem the voyage no longer is an anticipated one, because the poet speaks as if the voyage were already in progress:

> We dwell a while in every city and town,  
> We pass through Kanada, the North-east,  
> the vast valley of the Mississippi,  
> and the Southern States.  
> (7-8.10)

In its own context, the poem does not make clear the exact purpose or value of the voyage, because the poem concludes in an abstraction suggesting that the poet's soul and the seasons are one:

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And what you effuse may then return as the seasons return, And may be just as much as the seasons. (13-14.10)

Nonetheless, the poem does emphasize the efficacy, as ambiguously announced as it is, of journeying and voyaging forth. Also, as an "Inscriptions" poem, "On Journeys through States" serves as an announcement or preview of what the reader can expect on his poetic journey through the Leaves of Grass. While the poet is ostensibly addressing his soul, the reader can, as Whitman wants him to do in so many poems, identify himself with the "we" of the poem. The poet seems to say to the reader that during a reading of Leaves of Grass, the reader, too, will "dwell a while in every city or town."

"The Ship Starting" is the third poem directly informed by the journey and voyage motif. Out of the context of the entire Leaves of Grass or of the "Inscriptions" cluster, this poem is a lyrical idealization of movement and sailing. It is short enough to be quoted in full:

Lo, the unbounded sea,  
On its breast a ship starting, spreading all sails, carrying even her moonsails,  
The pennant is flying aloft as she speeds so stately--below emulous waves press forward,  
They surround the ship with shining curving motions and foam.  
(1-4.12)

As an objective and impressionistic short lyric, it is effective enough as a poem to stand apart from the cluster in which it appears, as are many of Whitman's short poems.
With its voyage, sea and ship imagery, the poem captures the voyage and movement of the ship on the moving "emulous waves." But, in the context of the "Inscriptions" cluster, the poem also serves to suggest again metaphorically and allegorically that the poet wants the reader to see him and his book as ships plunging toward some destiny. Also, considering again the placement of the poem in the "Inscriptions" cluster, the poem extends to the reader an implied invitation to join the poet on a journey or voyage by reading further on into *Leaves of Grass*. "The Ship Starting" is a more objective and dramatic poem than "In Cabin'd Ships at Sea," in which the poet merely claimed that his book "is ocean's poem" (16.3). "The Ship Starting" suggests that there is a symbolical or allegorical significance to the sea-scape described, although the precise symbolic significance of the scene described is not readily apparent in the poem as it exists out of context. Adding to the effectiveness of the poem is the way it is presented by an unidentifiable, passive observer who merely, but dramatically and lyrically describes the "stately" voyage of a ship and its conjunction with the waves of the sea. As noted previously, the significance of the sea as a symbol continues to emerge as one continues to read on into *Leaves of Grass*.  

There are other poems in the "Inscriptions" cluster

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in which the journey or voyage motif appears as an image in one or more of the forms mentioned in the previous chapter. For example, in "Eidólons," the poet speaks of a past journey on which he "met a seer" (1.5) who urged him to celebrate the fact that, while all material phenomena fluctuate and change, every thing tends toward, grows into and participates in some vast but permanent spiritual reality similar to Emerson's "Oversoul":

All space, all time,
(The stars, the terrible perturbations of the suns, Swelling, collapsing, ending, serving their longer, shorter use,) Fill'd with eidólons only.

The noiseless myriads, The infinite oceans where the rivers empty, The separate countless free identities, like eyesight, The true realities, eidólons.

Not this the world, Nor there the universes, they the universes, Purport and end, ever the permanent life of life, Eidólons, eidólons. (49-60.7)

Not only does the poem emerge out of the fictive meeting of the journeying poet with the mysterious "seer," but also that which is announced by the "seer" is described in terms of great cosmic motion. Thus, the poet presents himself as a journeyer within a great cosmic journey, which paradoxically occurs in an ultimate cosmic and spiritual permanence.

In "To Thee Old Cause," the abstract notion of the spirit of liberty is described as an "eternal march" (7.4) around which the poet's book revolves "as a wheel on its axis turns" (17.5). In "Poets to Come" the poet would have
his readers identify him as "a man who, sauntering along without fully stopping, turns a casual look upon you and then averts his face" (7.14). This "sauntering" but loving stranger appears frequently in *Leaves of Grass*. In the penultimate poem of the cluster, "To You," the poet speaks as if he were journeying on a street with other people and hoping for a personal encounter with a person who is also seeking an encounter with a kindred soul. Although there are only two lines to the poem, it and others like it suggest that the efficacy of certain journeys and quests involves the spiritual restoration that can occur when there is a merging of others who are journeying, but who, unlike the poet, do not at first realize that they are indeed on a spiritual quest:

Stranger, if you passing meet me and desire to speak to me, why should you not speak to me?  
And why should I not speak to you?  
(1-2.14)

What is to follow in *Leaves of Grass* can be considered Whitman's attempt to speak to the passing strangers, the readers of the present and the future.

III

Although James E. Miller, Jr. warns of the danger of using metaphors to describe the structure of *Leaves of Grass*, he does suggest that to read Whitman's book from beginning to end is to engage upon a poetic journey with the poet as guide. Miller, for example, maintains that "'Song of Myself"
launches the poetic journey," and he suggests that the poems in the "Inscriptions" cluster and in "Starting from Paumanok" not only serve to announce the nature of what will be encountered on the journey but also serve to invite and entice the reader to embark on the journey. No doubt the metaphor of a poetic journey is applicable to many long, epic-like works, but it is a particularly apt metaphor in the case of what can exist between Whitman's poetry and the reader. Toward the end of his life, Whitman saw both his past life and his years of poetic activity as "Travel'd Roads":

So here I sit gossiping in the early candle-light of my age—I and my book—casting backward glances over our travel'd road. After completing, as it were, the journey—(a varied jaunt of years, with many halts and gaps of intervals—or some lengthen'd ship-voyage, wherein more than once the last hour had apparently arrived, and we seem'd certainly going down—yet reaching port in a sufficient way through all discomfitures at last)

("A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads," 6-11.561-562)

Although "Starting from Paumanok" more or less summarizes in a single poem the announcements and greetings contained in the twenty-four individual poems collected in the "Inscriptions" cluster, this long, single poem also contributes to the reader's knowledge of the identity and background of the person who wishes to guide the reader on the projected poetic journey. For example, in the first stanza of "Starting from Paumanok," the poet introduces himself by alluding to his origins, to his unusual studies, and to his

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solitary and wandering life, which eventually led him to "strike up for a New World":

Starting from fish-shape Paumanok where I was born,
Well-begotten, and rais'd by a perfect mother,
After roaming many lands, lover of populous pavements,
Dweller in Manhattan my city, or on southern savannas,
Or a soldier camp'd or carrying my knapsack and gun, or a miner in California,

... 

Having studied the mocking-bird's tones and the flight of the mountain-hawk,
And heard at dawn the unrivall'd one, the hermit thrush from the swamp-cedars,
Solitary, singing in the West, I strike up for a New World.

(1.1-14.15-16)

Throughout *Leaves of Grass*, the poet emphasizes his wide, solitary wanderings, as he does in the above excerpt. As a poetic and dramatic device, descriptions of and constant referrals to journeys over America and the world often function to urge the reader's acceptance of the authority of the speaking voice. The new knowledge that the poet announces must necessarily come from a new and different personality, and this Whitman creates by frequently describing or alluding to his unique (as he would have it) past and wide-ranging journeys. The descriptions of the poet's past and present realistic and mystical wanderings are frequently either accompanied or followed by reflections upon his relationship to the people, material phenomena, and events encountered on his journeys. The poet usually finds that all people and material phenomena hint at certain new truths. For example, in "Starting from Paumanok," one of
the mystical truths arrived at and promulgated by the poet

is that

All hold spiritual joys and afterwards loosen
them:

How can the real body ever die and be buried?

(13.179-180.23)

The above excerpt is typical of the didactic utterances
which pervade Leaves of Grass. There didactic conclusions,
whether ecstatically or calmly presented, often occur in a
dramatic context. The reader's acceptance or rejection of
the didactic conclusion should be determined by whether or
not he has been appealed to or caught up in the drama and
credibility of the poetic voice rather than whether or not
he accepts the validity of the metaphysical and mystical
conclusions. When Whitman provides an effective dramatic
context in his poems by establishing a credible, dramati-
cally developing persona, many of his individual poems work
as poetry; but when Whitman uses a poem solely as a vehicle
for good or bad philosophy, the poems fail. Usually those
poems are effective in which the persona of the poem is
described as a realistic or cosmic journeyer or voyager.

In "Starting from Paumanok," the poet not only
announces the themes of what he encountered and learned on
his various realistic and mystic journeys but also invites
the reader to accompany him in the poetic reconstruction of
the journeys. In the last stanza of "Starting from Paumanok,"
for example, Whitman extends the following enticing invita-
tion:
O cameron close! O you and me at last,
    and us two only.
O a word to clear one's path ahead endlessly!
O something ecstatic and undemonstratable!
    O music wild!
O now I triumph--and you shall also;
O hand in hand--O wholesome pleasure--
    O one more desirer and lover!
O to haste firm holding--to haste,
    haste on with me.
(19.266-271.28)

Between the opening lines of "Starting from Paumanok," quoted previously, and the concluding invitation to the reader, quoted above, a significant transition occurs in the voice of the poet. The voice of the speaker at the beginning of the poem is ostensibly autobiographical. This voice soon changes to one that is prophetic and cosmic in the sense that the reader seems to be hearing the voice of a disembodied, omniscient, god-like individual, who seems to have the capability of soaring at will over the past, present and future world. For example, the personal but self-confident voice of Section 1, after presenting the reader with a short biography, concludes the section by saying that he will "strike up for a New World" (1.14.16). Then Section 2 begins abruptly in a voice that is cosmic rather than personal:

Victory, union, faith, identity, time,
The indissoluble compacts, riches, mystery,
Eternal progress, the kosmos, and the modern reports.

This then is life,
Here is what has come to the surface after so many throes and convulsions.
(2.15-19.16)

Many of the prophetic announcements and abstract
affirmations in "Starting from Paumanok," as in other poems, are made dramatic and concrete by Whitman's use of the personal pronoun, "I," which, upon repetition, gives a sense of identity and palpability to the cosmic voice. For example, in Section 14 the cosmic voice says after naming a variety of sights and places in America:

O all and each well-loved by me! my intrepid nations! 0 I at any rate include you all with perfect love! I cannot be discharged from you! not from one any sooner than another! O death! O for all that, I am yet of you unseen this hour with irrepressible love, Walking New England, a friend, a traveler. (14.210-13.25)

In addition to the dramatically moving, wide ranging voice of a cosmic "I," the various affirmations and announcements are often made concrete by imagery suggesting voyaging, journeying, or motion in general. For example, in Section 5, after claiming that he has surveyed the rise and fall of nations "on other shores" (5.56.18) and of the peoples who populated those nations, the poet says of himself and of America, the "New World":

I stand in my place with my own day here

[19th Century America].

Here lands female and male, Here the heir-ship and heiress-ship of the world, here the flame of materials, Here spirituality the translatress, the openly-avow'd, The ever-tending, the finale of visible forms, The satisfier, after due long-waiting now advancing, Yes here comes my mistress the soul. (5.63-68.18)
When the reader finally is invited at the end of "Starting from Paumanok" to accompany the poet on the projected poetic journey, he should know that he will be guided by a unique poetic personality who will either repulse or attract because of his extraordinary and audacious ego. This ego is not at all intimated by the cosmic mysteries, for he can say with confidence:

I am myself just as much evil as good, and my nation is—and I say there is in fact no evil,

I too, following many and follow'd by many, inaugurate a religion, I descend into the arena.

(7.100-102.19-20)

If the unusual and egotistic personality of the predominant voice of "Starting from Paumanok" fails to encourage the reader to accept the invitation to accompany the poet, the knowledge and experiences announced by the poet should at least entice the reader to embark upon the soon to be launched poetic journey. Also, should the reader accept the invitations extended to accompany the poet, acceptance of most of the didactic conclusions should become natural outgrowths of the poetic journey. When Leaves of Grass is put aside and when the reader's imaginative journey is terminated, Whitman's philosophy may be found wanting, but, while the book is being read, the poet usually provides and evokes an exciting dramatic and imaginative experience. Frequently contributing to this experience is the journey and voyage motif.
CHAPTER III

"SONG OF MYSELF"

I

Whitman's "Song of Myself" is a dramatic recreation of the experiences of an individual who attempts and, eventually, urges others to attempt the "untaught sallies of the spirit" called for by Emerson in his essay, "Nature."¹ In "Nature,"

¹ All subsequent quotations from and references to Emerson's "Nature" (1836) are as found in the following text: Stephen E. Whicher, ed., Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1957), pp. 21-56. Particularly confusing in regard to an attempt to document Whitman's direct indebtedness to Emerson are Whitman's own contradictory statements regarding whether or not he had read Emerson before the publication of the first Leaves of Grass. For example, John Taylor Trowbridge says in his autobiography that Whitman "freely admitted that he could never have written his poems if he had not first 'come to himself,' and that Emerson helped him to 'find himself. I asked him if he thought he would have come to himself without that help. He said, 'Yes, but it would have taken longer.' And he used this characteristic expression: 'I was simmering, simmering, simmering; Emerson brought me to a boil,'" (as quoted in Edmund Wilson, The Shock of Recognition [New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1947], p. 270). Later, however, Whitman wrote a letter to W. S. Kennedy in which he denied that he had read Emerson: "It is of no importance whether I had read Emerson before starting Leaves of Grass or not. The fact happens to be that I had not," (as quoted in Wilson, p. 289). There may be circumstances in Whitman's life which would account for his attempts to deny his indebtedness to Emerson, but the influence of Emersonian and Transcendental ideals are present in "Song of Myself," as well as in other parts of Leaves of Grass. As a case in point, Whitman's "Song of Myself" is a poem that is informed and seems to be influenced by several ideas contained in Emerson's essay, "Nature." (See, Donald N. Schweda, "Emersonian Ideas and Whitman's 'Song of Myself,'" Journal of the Loyola Historical Society, II [Fall, 1967], 93-102.)
Emerson stated:

The best read naturalist who lends an entire and devout attention to truth, will see that there remains much to learn of his relation to the world, and that it is not to be learned by any addition or subtraction or other comparison of known quantities, but is arrived at by untaught sallies of the spirit, by a continual self-recovery, and by entire humility.\(^2\)

The journey and voyage motif frequently appears in "Song of Myself" as an image or metaphor which gives dramatic verisimilitude to the experiences and visions of one who speaks as an introspective, nineteenth century individual and as a bardic poet-prophet.\(^3\) Also, the motif appears as a metaphor or analogue for the poet's optimistic belief in a constant and beneficent evolutionary flux of the material and spiritual cosmos.

The didactic purpose of "Song of Myself" is to urge the reader to embark on a journey of self-recovery that will eventually allow him to enjoy an understanding of and a relation to the universe such as that which the "I" of the poem claims to have attained and subsequently celebrates throughout the poem. The poet assumes that all of his readers are already embarked on a spiritual quest or journey, but he wishes to guide and to give the readers' journey direction. For example, toward the end of Section 2, the


\(^3\)Richard Chase, too, has noted the appearance of two voices in "Song of Myself": "The I in 'Song of Myself' has two aspects or voices: the wistful, lonely, hurt, feminine, erotically demanding voice which alternates with that of the bearded, sunburned, masculine, democratic 'rough.'" Walt Whitman Reconsidered, p. 50.
poet extends a direct invitation to the reader: "Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all poems" (2.33.30). In the penultimate section, the poet is still urging the reader to accompany him on a continuing journey:

Who has done his day's work? Who will soonest be through with his supper? Who wishes to walk with me?

(51.1328-29.89)

And at the completion of the poem, he speaks as if he were a completely disembodied or spiritualized poet-prophet:

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

(52.1344-46.89)

As Ronald Beck has noted, "there is the sense, admittedly vague, throughout the poem of a journey being taken."4 Similarly, Edwin Haviland Miller has noted that "like most poetry . . . Whitman's greatest poems depict a journey."5 The goal of the journey is never precisely defined or identified, but the poem suggests throughout that the goal is the terminus of a quest for the unification of body and soul and for a completely new and intuitive understanding of the cosmic processes. Linking "Song of Myself" to Walden and Moby Dick, and viewing all three of the works as essentially meditative works, Edwin Haviland Miller says that the


meditations of each of these works, "originating in deep personal dissatisfactions and cultural inhibitions, take the form of literal and symbolic journeys in search of a unifying principle that will simplify and harmonize the disparities of life." 6 "Song of Myself," by its very nature and form as a poem, presents the most symbolic and metaphoric journey of the three works mentioned by Miller. While the poem urges great physical action and strength, such as would be necessary on an actual journey over rugged terrain, the symbolic journey celebrated in the poem is initiated by "loafing," passivity, and solitude. In this passive or indolent state, the self can turn to deep introspection and contemplation of the self and of the stimuli flowing in from external reality. The journey upon which the contemplating individual will embark upon is imaginary, mystic, and "psychic." 7 Whitman's rather peculiar celebration of his own loafing while urging his readers to embark on quests and journeys lends to poems such as "Song of Myself" interesting and significant poetic tensions.

In addition to the direct invitations that are extended by the poet in a metaphoric language suggesting that the relationship between poet and reader is one analogous to that which exists between guide and traveller, the reader is also urged indirectly to embark on a journey of self-recovery by the first-person accounts of the visionary experiences

6Ibid., p. 19.
7Ibid., p. vii, et passim.
celebrated by the poet after he himself is in possession of a mystical "peace and knowledge that pass all the argument of the earth" (5.91.33). The poet describes his own mystical experience in Section 5:

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

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

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all the argument of the earth. (5.82-91.32-33)

Prior to the mystical experience described in the above quotation, the poet expressed his need to retreat from that which "would intoxicate" (2.16.29) him. He retreats "to the bank by the woods," where he desires to become "undisguised and naked" (2.19.29).

After his mystical transformation, the poet describes subsequent experiences and visions as if he were a disembodied spirit who careens and wanders over the world to observe and to participate in a variety of natural and human activities. As in the following brief sample excerpts, the visions and experiences recorded by the "I" of the poem are frequently made dramatically effective by the poet's use of
Alone far in the wilds and mountains I hunt, Wandering amazed at my own lightness and glee.  
(10.175-176.37)

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night.  
(21.433.49)

I went myself first to the headland, my own hands carried me there.  
(28.638.58)

And again as I walk'd the beach under the paling stars of the morning.

My ties and ballasts leave me, my elbows rest in sea-gaps.
I skirt sierras, my palms cover continents,
I am afoot with my vision.  
(33.713-716.61)

I am voyaging to every port to dicker and adventure.  
(33.786.64)

I tread day and night such roads.  
(33.797.65)

I anchor my ship for a little while only.  
(33.804.65)

My feet strike an apex of the apices of the stairs,
On every step bunches of ages, and larger bunches between the steps,
All below duly travel'd, and still I mount and mount.  
(44.1149-1151.81)

I tramp a perpetual journey. . . .  
(46.1202.83)

In vessels that sail my words sail, I go with fishermen and seamen and love them.  
(47.1260.85)

I ascend from the moon, I ascend from the night.  
(49.1306.87)

Thus, the "loafing," private persona of the opening stanzas of "Song of Myself" becomes so enlarged and transported as a result of a mystical experience that he can reconfront
the world as an active, soaring celebrant of the world's activities and of his own, both of which he now perceives in a new way. In fact, this new, active persona becomes a symbol for the processes of the cosmic evolution that are described, for example, towards the end of Section 6: "All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses" (6.129.35). The "I," too, as part of the "all" seems to be going "onward and outward" throughout "Song of Myself."

In addition to the symbolic significance of the journeying persona discussed in the previous paragraph, Whitman, as poet, frequently achieves in "Song of Myself," and in other similar poems or sections of poems in _Leaves of Grass_, what Emerson demanded of the poet in "Nature":

By a few strokes . . . the poet delineates, as on air, the sun, the mountain, the camp, the city, the hero, the maiden, not different from what we know them, but only lifted from the ground and afloat before the eye. He unfixes the land and the sea, makes them revolve around the axis of his primary thought, and disposes them anew. Possessed himself by a heroic passion, he uses matter as symbols of it. The sensual man conforms thoughts to things; the poet conforms things to thoughts.

The key phrase in the above passage, insofar as this study is concerned, is the one in which Emerson says that the poet should delineate his world "as on air," for Whitman does often speak from an elevated, all-seeing, moving, vantage above the world. Frequently, Whitman lends drama to sections of "Song of Myself" by alternating sections of general assertions about himself with several succeeding

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8 Emerson, "Nature," p. 44.
sections of vignettes in which the persona is depicted as if he were a disembodied traveller who pauses in his cosmic flight to observe or to participate in specific human activities. For example, in Section 7, the "I" identifies himself for the reader and generalizes about his own cosmic abilities:

I am not an earth nor an adjunct of an earth,
I am the mate and companion of people, all just
as immortal and fathomless as myself,

Undrape! you are not guilty to me, nor stale
nor discarded,
I see through the broadcloth and gingham whether
or no,
And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless,
and cannot be shaken away. (7.136-147.35)

Then, in the next section and for several succeeding sections, the persona dramatizes and particularizes his experiences by giving extended examples and descriptions of scenes he observes on his cosmic travels:

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 busy 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.

Arrests of criminals, slights, adulterous
offers made, acceptances, rejections with
convex lips,
I mind them or the show or resonance of them--
I come and I depart. (8.148-166.35-36)

Thus, as the "I" seems to careen over the countryside and
cities, he describes many scenes of varying human activity as if he were speeding "on air" as a cosmic observer. This method of description often yields the long catalogs, such as those in Section 15 and 33, in which the poet shifts and refocuses his attention from line to line. A brief example from Section 15 illustrates how the focus in the catalogs is shifted:

The pure contralto sings in the organ loft,
The carpenter dresses his plank, the tongue of his foreplane whistles its wild ascending lisp,
The married and unmarried children ride home to their Thanksgiving dinner,
The pilot seizes the king-pin, he heaves down with a strong arm.

(15.264-267.41)

The long catalog in Section 33 emphasizes the "I" as a cosmic traveller even more explicitly and dramatically than may be apparent in Section 15 and other sections of the poem. The long catalog of Section 33 is introduced in the following manner:

Space and Time! now I see it is true,
what I guess'd at,
What I guess'd when I loaf'd on the grass,
What I guess'd while I lay alone in my bed,
And again as I walk'd the beach under the paling stars of the morning.

My ties and ballasts leave me, my elbows rest in sea-gaps,
I skirt sierras, my palms cover the continents,
I am afoot with my vision.

(33.710-716.61)

Then as if to verify dramatically that he is indeed "afoot with . . . [his] vision," the poet describes the many activities he observes in the same manner as he does in the catalog in Section 15; that is, he shifts and refocuses his
attention from line to line. However, throughout Section 33, the poet maintains and emphasizes the metaphor that the journeys and voyages of his vision are of soaring, cosmic proportions by beginning nearly every line with a preposition or present participle suggesting that the "I" observes as if "on air" or as if he were travelling along a road that weaves in and out of the cities and countryside of America; eventually, his visionary travels take him over the whole world and into the nebulous realms beyond space and time. In the following compressed examples, the subject, "I," is doing the travelling and observing:

Over the growing sugar, over the yellow-flower'd cotton plant, over the rice in its low moist field,
Over the sharp-peak'd farm house, with its scallop'd scum and slender shoots from the gutters,

Scaling mountains, pulling myself cautiously up, holding on by low scragged limbs,
Walking the path worn in the grass and beat through the leaves of the brush,

Approaching Manhattan up by the long-stretching island,

Looking in at the shop windows of Broadway the whole forenoon,
Wandering the same afternoon with my face turn'd up to the clouds, or down a lane or along the beach,

Voyaging to every port to dicker and adventure,
Hurrying with the modern crowd as eager and fickle as any,

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,
Speeding with the tail'd meteors, throwing
fire-balls like the rest,
I tread day and night such roads.

I visit the orchards of spheres and look at the
product,
I fly those flights of a fluid and swallowing soul,
My course runs below the soundings of plummets.
I anchor my ship for a little while only.

(33.726-804.61-65)

In some sections of "Song of Myself," the poet seems to
pause in his visionary flight in order to linger over, to
examine, to delineate closely, and to participate in a
single activity. For example, Whitman devotes an entire
section of eighteen lines to the episode of the twenty-eight
young men who "bathe by the shore" and who are secretly
observed by a woman (18.198-216.38-39). Section 34 is
devoted entirely to a battle that occurred in Texas. Sec-
tions 35 and 36 are devoted to "an old time sea-flight"
(35.897.69). The sections containing the long catalogs
yield a general and panoramic effect, because many vignettes
and activities are described within the section, but entire
sections devoted to a description of one episode or activity
yield a specific and narrowly focused effect.

The sights described by the "I" as he seems to careen
over the world are not merely recorded evidence of the
diversity of the world or evidence of the peculiar visionary
abilities of the cosmic "I," because the poet also indicates
that, while he sometimes seems to observe as if from a dis-
tance, there is actually no distance at all between himself
and what he observes. The poet frequently and paradoxically reiterates explicitly and implicitly that he is both an observer and a participant. For example, at the end of Section 15, the "I" emphasizes his identity with the things and people he has observed:

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.

(15.327-329.44)

As suggested in the above lines, the poet defines and identifies himself as one who both creates and infuses a new life into the universe he observes, and the universe in turn creates and infuses in him a new life and awareness. In short, the poet attempts to give testimony to the fact that he has achieved what Emerson called "an original relation with the universe." A large part of the dramatic effectiveness of the poet's testimony to his own achievement is due to his use of the present tense and of the images of journeying and voyaging.

II

Of the 52 sections that comprise "Song of Myself," the first 43 sections are the most dramatic in the sense that, for the most part, the "I" records the sights he has observed and the experiences in which he has participated

as he has wandered over the world as a real, earthbound individual or as a cosmic traveller. Although these first 43 sections often contain bardic and cosmic pronouncements, the general impression is that the "I" from the beginning of the poem through Section 43 is presenting a dramatic record of how he achieved a new and totally cosmic or spiritual understanding of himself and of his identity with all things. Then, from about Section 44 until the conclusion of the poem, the tone of the "I" is more consistently prophetic and didactic than it had been previously. From about Section 44 until the conclusion, the "I" speaks not as a wandering participant in or observer of passing human activity, but rather as a completely confident poet-prophet. As the "I" indicates at the end of Section 44, he himself is a complete being:

All forces have been steadily employ'd
to complete and delight me,
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.

(44.1168-1169.81)

While the tone of the concluding sections is generally more didactic than the previous ones, many of the poet's utterances about spiritual reality and destiny are given emphasis and drama by the poet's use of images involving journeys and voyages. For example, in Section 44, the "I," speaking as if he were Emerson's Oversoul or Brahma, says:

What is known I strip away,
I launch all men and women forward with me into the Unknown.

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I am encloser of things to be.

(44.1135-1148.80)
In succeeding passages, the "I" continues to speak as a confident, cosmic spirit who celebrates a constant and beneficent evolutionary process in which all material phenomena, including man, participate. For example, in Section 45, the "I" assures his listeners that

There is no stoppage and never can be stoppage,
If I, you, and the worlds, and all beneath or upon their surfaces, were this moment reduced back to a pallid float, it would not avail in the long run,
We should surely bring up again where we now stand,
And surely go as much farther, and then farther and farther.

(45.1190-1194.82)

To dramatize his faith in a beneficent evolution, the "I" speaks of his own spiritual destiny as if he were on a journey or voyage into eternity:

My rendezvous is appointed, it is certain,
The Lord will be there and wait till I come on perfect terms,
The great Camerado, the lover true for whom I pine will be there.

(45.1198-1200.83)

Then, after likening his continuing spiritual progress to "a perpetual journey" (46.1202.83), the poet uses the imagery of journeys and voyages to urge his listeners to have faith in the fact that they, too, can participate on a kind of "perpetual journey" over a "public road" (46.1209.83) that winds through the time and space of the real world and continues into eternity; but, the poet says:

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.

Shoulder your duds dear son, and I will mine,
and let us hasten forth,
Wonderful cities and free nations we shall fetch as we go.

(46.1210-1216.83)

The reason for the warning contained in the first two lines of the above passage is that the individual to whom the poet-prophet speaks cannot have the Emersonian "original relation" to the universe if he is dependent upon anyone or any creed from the past or present. The poet of "Song of Myself," as noted previously, has to withdraw from the world and its people to a place of solitude that will allow him to journey into himself and to experience by intuition his understandings of the true nature of himself. Before he can become at one with the external universe, he has to unify his own body and soul.

As in many previous sections of "Song of Myself," the concluding didactic sections are presented in an effective dramatic framework that is created by the poet's use of the first person pronoun, by the direct address to the present reader, and by the metaphor that likens both the poet's and the reader's material and spiritual life to a "Perpetual journey" through and beyond time and space. The philosophy upon which Whitman bases his optimism may be wanting, but the means by which he renders or objectifies that philosophic vision is more often than not dramatically and poetically effective. As Charles Feidelson, Jr. has stated, "Whitman is less concerned with exploration of emotion than with
exploration as a mode of existence. Similarly, his poems not only are about voyaging but also enact the voyage, so that their content (the image of the metaphysical journey) is primarily a reflection of their literary method, in which the writer and his subject become part of the stream of language."11

11Feidelson, p. 27.
CHAPTER IV

"CHILDREN OF ADAM" AND "CALAMUS"

I

In "Nature," Emerson said: "He [any individual] cannot be a naturalist until he satisfies the demands of the spirit. Love is as much its demand as perception."¹

Whitman's "Children of Adam" and "Calamus," the two clusters of poems following "Song of Myself," record the quest-like experiments and subsequent results of an individual endeavoring to satisfy the demand for love of his spirit.²

In "Children of Adam," for example, the spirit makes its demands for love known by causing the "I" to feel a resistless yearning" ("From Pent-up Aching Rivers," 7.91). The poems which follow "From Pent-up Aching Rivers" suggest and celebrate ways in which the "resistless yearning" can be fulfilled and satisfied. Similarly in "Calamus," the "I" is made aware of the demand for love of his spirit by the secret yearnings of "nights and days" ("In Paths


²See, e.g., Elizabeth Wells, "The Structure of Whitman's 1860 Leaves of Grass," WWR, 15 (September, 1969), 156-157: "The painful ache of love... unsatisfied is very much present in 'Enfans d'Adam' [the original title of "Children of Adam]."... But the burden of 'Calamus' is unsatisfied longing."
Untrodden," 17.113) and by the hints offered by the "scented herbage" of his breast ("Scented Herbage of My Breast," 1.113-114). In "Children of Adam," the love sought, celebrated and idealized, is heterosexual and procreative.

In "Calamus," on the other hand, Whitman idealizes and celebrates "types of athletic love" and "the need of comrades" ("In Paths Untrodden," 14-18.113). The journey and voyage motif often provides several individual poems in each cluster with a metaphorical vocabulary that establishes a thematic and a fictive framework which dramatizes the quest-like nature required of the one who attempts to respond to the urgings and the demands for love of the spirit.

II

In the "Children of Adam" cluster the journey and voyage motif functions to emphasize the quest-like and wandering nature of a newly resurrected Adam-like persona, who appears as the primary dramatic voice in several significantly placed poems throughout the cluster.³ For example, in the first poem of the cluster, "To the Garden the World," the "I" identifies himself as a new Adam who is anticipating an excursion through the modern world, which to Whitman is

³See R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), esp. pp. 41-53. Lewis maintains that the Adamic myth is not only central to "Children of Adam," but also to the entire Leaves of Grass. Lewis says that in Whitman's poetry, the poet "makes us feel what it / the beginning of the world and mankind / might have been like; and he succeeds at last in presenting the dream of the new Adam--along with his sorrows!" (p. 42).
the new Eden:

To the garden the world anew ascending,
Potent mates, daughters, sons, preluding,
The love, the life of their bodies, meaning and being,
Curious here behold my resurrection after slumber.

(1-4.90)

That the persona in the above poem is to be identified as a new Adam rather than as some other mythic figure is obvious not only because of the garden imagery introduced in the first line, but also because of the two concluding lines, in which there is a direct reference to Eve:

By my side or back of me Eve following,
Or in front, and I following her just the same.

(10-11.90)

In the eighth and nearly central poem of the cluster, "Ages and Ages Returning at Intervals," an Adamic "I" indicates that he wanders in order to bestow himself and his truths upon the world:

Ages and ages returning at intervals,
Undestroy'd, wandering immortal,
Lusty, phallic, with the potent original loins,
perfectly sweet,
I, chanter of Adamic songs,
Through the new garden the West, the great cities calling,
Deliriate, thus prelude what is generated,
offering these, offering myself,
Bathing myself, bathing my songs in Sex,
Offspring of my loins.

(1-8.107)

The last and sixteenth poem, "As Adam Early in the Morning," presents the new Adam on the verge of a journey similar in nature to the journey anticipated in the first poem:
As Adam early in the morning,
Walking forth from the bower refresh'd with sleep,
Behold me where I pass, hear my voice, approach,
Touch me, touch the palm of your hand to my body
as I pass,
Be not afraid of my body.

(1-5.111)

Finally, there is one other poem in the cluster in
which the poet refers specifically to the Adamic myth. In
"Spontaneous Me" the "I" says: "The oath of procreation I
have sworn, my Adamic and fresh daughters" (41.105). There-
fore, there are a total of four poems in the cluster of six-
teen in which the voice of the "I" is to be identified as
the voice of Adam or of an Adam-like figure. Moreover, in
three of the four poems, the ones placed at the beginning,
middle, and end of the cluster, the Adamic "I" is described
as if he were on a journey over the world. Although the "I"
is not specifically identified in the remaining twelve poems,
one can infer, because of the framing effect of the specifi-
cally Adamic poems, that the voice in all the remaining poems
is that of a questing Adam.  

In addition to underscoring the questing nature of the
new Adam in those four poems which seem to be spoken by the
new Adam, the journey and voyage motif also appears in other
poems of the cluster as an image suggesting that the speaking
voice, the new Adam, of the poem is either a personal, lonely

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"The first, eighth, and last of the sixteen poems [in "Children of Adam"] are given over entirely
to . . . the Adam myth, and it permeates and gives heightened significance to all the other poems."

4See James E. Miller, Jr., A Critical Guide to Leaves of Grass, Phoenix Books (Chicago: University of Chicago
wanderer or a wandering cosmic lover of all with whom he comes in contact. For example, in Section 2 of "I Sing the Body Electric," in order to express his feeling of identity with and love for those he encounters as he traverses through town and country, the poet speaks in the present tense as if he were recording his thoughts while on a walk, and those he encounters, too, are usually in a state of motion and activity:

The sprawl and fulness of babes, the bosoms and heads of women, the folds of their dress, their style as we pass in the street, . . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Such-like I love—I loosen myself, pass freely, am at the mother's breast with the little child,

Swim with the swimmers, wrestle with wrestlers, march in line with the firemen, and pause, listen, count.

(2.18-32.94-95)

As its title suggests, the poet at the beginning of "A Woman Waits for Me" appears to be anticipating an assignation with a particular woman. However, the speaker changes his tone after the opening lines. He no longer anticipates an encounter with a particular woman; rather, he anticipates journeying to be with all women who have desires similar to his own:

Now I will dismiss myself from impassive women, I will go stay with her who waits for me, and with those women that are warm-blooded and sufficient for me.

(11-12.102)

In "We Two, How Long We Were Fool'd," the poet presents a dramatization of the type of love that can exist between two people. In this particular poem, the journey and voyage motif functions to emphasize the transcendent
nature of the idealized love sought and celebrated in "Children of Adam." The lovers are described as if they are in a constant state of motion and cosmic flight as they "escape" from and soar beyond that which has "fool'd" them or kept them in check:

We two, how long we were fool'd,
Now transmuted, we swiftly escape as Nature escapes,
We are Nature.

(1-3.107)

Then, as if to offer dramatic proof of how the perfect love allows lovers to be at one with themselves and the natural and spiritual world, the poet describes in the first person plural various ways in which the lovers participate in and move with "Nature":

We are two fishes swimming in the sea together,
We are two predatory hawks, we soar above and look down,
We are two resplendent suns, we it is who balance ourselves orbic and stellar, we are as two comets,
We have circled and circled till we have arrived home again, we two,
We have voided all but freedom and all but our own joy.

(8-19.108)

In "Once I Pass'd through a Populous City" the poet, as the title of the poem suggests, expresses a remembered love by framing the poem in terms of wandering and feeling apart from most of what he observes on his walk or journey through the city. The love he had in the past was restorative, for now, in the present, he says of the city and of the women he met: "I remember only a woman I casually met
there who detain'd me for love of me" (2.110). This poem evokes a sense of poignancy because the encounter he had with the woman in the "populous city" was impermanent and the poet can only remember the affair as he continues his lonely journeys in the present:

I remember I say only that woman who passionately clung to me,
Again we wander, we love, we separate again,
Again in his memories only she holds me by the hand, I must not go,
I see her close beside me with silent lips sad and tremulous.

(4-7.110)

Thus, the journey motif pervades not only those poems which are specifically Adamic in "Children of Adam" but also those poems which are not.

As suggested in "From Pent-up Aching Rivers," the Adamic "I" is impelled to wander the world with two objectives in mind: he is trying to satisfy his own spirit's demand for love, and he wishes to announce his newly acquired truths so that the demands of the spirits of others for love will be satisfied or shown the way toward satisfaction.  

5 At least two other critics have noted the two objectives that inform the "Children of Adam" poems as well as other poems in Leaves of Grass. Richard D. McGhee, "Leaves of Grass and Cultural Development," WWR, 16 (March, 1970), 7, says that in "Children of Adam" and "Calamus" Whitman, after he rescues himself, "is now prepared to 'put it /his vision/ to work' by redeeming human nature, by rescuing the fullness of life for other human beings." Stephen A. Black, "Whitman and the Failure of Mysticism: Identity and Identification in 'Song of Myself,'" WWR, 15 (December, 1969), 226, says: "Whatever introspection this separation /when the "I" retreats from the world/ may enable, it can finally lead only to further isolation— an isolation which is at
From pent-up aching rivers,
From that of myself without which I were nothing,
From what I am determin'd to make illustrious,
even if I stand sole among men,
From my own voice resonant, singing the phallus,
Singing the song of procreation,
Singing the need of superb children and therein
superb grown people,
Singing the muscular urge and the blending,
Singing the bedfellow's song, (O resistless
yearning!
O for any and each the body correlative
attracting!
O for you whoever you are your correlative body!
O it, more than all else, you delighting!) (1-10.91)

The Adamic "I" records his attempts to achieve his prophetic
mission in poems such as "I Sing the Body Electric" and
"Spontaneous Me." More dramatically and lyrically interest­
ing than the essentially prophetic poems, however, are those
poems in which the persona records his quests for a personal
"something yet unfound though . . . He has diligently
sought it many a long year" ("From Pent-up Aching Rivers," 12.91). This "something yet unfound" is never defined, but
several poems in the cluster, such as "I Sing the Body Elec­
tric," indicate clearly that it is associated with a type of
guiltless and shameless heterosexual love. This type of
love should satisfy the "resistless yearning" and "the soul
fitful at random" referred to by the "I" in "From Pent-up

odds with (among many other things) the wish to communicate
through poetry. Such isolation profoundly denies the possi­
ability for love which the narrator seems to feel is the most
important thing in life, and to emphasize what a number of
critics have called 'Tiresian' detachment. So it is almost
predictable that when standing apart has carried the nar­
rator as far into himself as he then wants to go, there must
be a general reversal which takes the form of . . . {the/identifications" celebrated in "Song of Myself," "Children
of Adam," "Calamus," and other poems.}
Aching Rivers." Nevertheless, the penultimate poem of the cluster, "Facing West from California's Shores," indicates that the Adamic "I" has not yet found what he has sought:

Facing west from California's shores,
Inquiring tireless, seeking what is yet unfound,
Now I face home again, very pleas'd and joyous,
(But where is what I started for so long ago? And why is it yet unfound?)

Although the new Adam has not been able to fulfill his personal quest for the "something yet unfound," he has paused in his poetic wanderings and explorations to assume the pose and voice of a bardic cosmic lover who is prophetically confident of his abilities to console and to bestow a new knowledge upon others. For example, in "I Sing the Body Electric," the cosmic lover and consoler says:

I sing the body electric,
The armies of those I love engirth me and I engirth them,
They will not let me off till I go with them, respond to them,
And discorrupt them, and charge them full with the charge of the soul.

The Adamic voice, however, is not always as confident as it is in "I Sing the Body Electric" and other similar prophetic poems within the cluster. For example, in "A Woman Waits for Me," the new Adam does say with cosmic confidence:

It is I, you women, I make my way,
I am stern, acrid, large, undissuadable, but I love you,
I do not hurt you any more than is necessary for you,
I pour the stuff to start sons and daughters
fit for these States, I press with slow rude muscle, I brace myself effectually, I listen to no entreaties, I dare not withdraw till I deposit what has so long accumulated within me.

(25-30.102-103)

But as in a later poem, "O Hymen! O Hymenee!," the new Adam is less confident, less assertive and evidently filled with some personal doubt about his quest and his program for a new way of receiving and understanding experience:

O hymen! O hymenee! why do you tantalize me thus? O why sting me for a swift moment only? Why can you not continue? O why do you now cease? Is it because if you continued beyond the swift moment you would soon certainly kill me?

(1-4.108)

The doubts and questions expressed in the above poem suggest that the source of the optimistically assertive poems in the cluster is desperate loneliness. "One Hour to Madness and Joy," for example, expresses an intense unfulfilled personal desire rather than any kind of prophetic and cosmic certainty:

One hour to madness and joy! O furious! O confine me not! (What is this that frees me so in storms? What do my shouts amid lightnings and raging winds mean?)

O to drink the mystic deliria deeper than any other man! O savage and tender achings! (I bequeath them to you my children, I tell them to you, for reasons, O bridegroom and bride.)

O to be yielded to you whoever you are, and you to be yielded to me in defiance of the world! O to return to Paradise! O bashful and feminine! O to draw you to me, to plant on you for the first time the lips of a determin'd man.

(1-9.105-106)
Thus, the confidence in the assertive poems seems to be an attitude or a desperate pose, for the poet often indicates, as in the eleventh poem of the cluster, that he still "aches with amorous love" ("I Am He That Aches with Love," 1.109). Prophetic assertions and imagined encounters with a particular woman or with all women in general, then, have not been sufficient to drain the "pent-up aching rivers," which initiated the imaginary quest and poetic excursions in the first place. At the end of the cluster, the new Adam is alone and still seeking that person or persons upon whom he can bestow himself and his love:

Behold me where I pass, hear my voice, approach, Touch me, touch the palm of your hand to my body as I pass, Be not afraid of my body.

("As Adam Early in the Morning," 3-5.111)

The personal demand of the spirit for love has not yet been fulfilled. The conclusion of the "Children of Adam" cluster suggests that the wandering and lonely quest is a continuing one. James E. Miller, Jr. says,

The place "started for so long ago" which remains unfound is the garden, Adam's "home," the "house of maternity." The "new garden of the West" remains but a promise, a poet's dream. But the final question posed ("And why is it yet unfound?"") implies the eternal yearning for and determination to find the long-lost paradise. "As Adam Early in the Morning," concluding the section, suggests the poet's continuation of the search for modern man's Garden of Eden.6

In the next cluster, "Calamus," the poet continues the search by concentrating upon a kind of love that is quite different

from and not as metaphorically restrictive as the sexual love that is celebrated in "Children of Adam."

III

In the "Calamus" cluster, as in "Children of Adam," the journey and voyage motif frequently serves as an image to emphasize the quest-like and wandering nature of an individual who is attempting to satisfy the urgings and demands of the spirit for love within himself and to celebrate and announce to others that which would satisfy the urging and demands of their spirits for love. The unidentified "I" of the "Calamus" cluster indicates in the initial poem, "In Paths Untrodden," that he became aware of what would satisfy his spirit when he had retreated or escaped from "the life that exhibits itself" (3.112) and "the clank of the world" (8.112). The retreat or escape, which is a journey in reverse, because it is a move away from rather than towards something, to the solitude of the "paths untrodden/ In the growth by margins of pond-waters" (1-2.112) restores the "I" by allowing him to feel "no longer abash'd, (for in this secluded spot . . . I can respond as . . . I would not dare elsewhere" (10.113). The solitude of the "pond-waters"

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7E. H. Miller, Walt Whitman's Poetry: A Psychological Journey, Riverside Studies in Literature (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), p. 19, sees these retreats to solitude as types of journeys: "Whitman meditates on the nature of the isolated self in the nineteenth-century world. These meditations, originating in deep personal dissatisfactions and cultural inhibitions, take the form of literal or symbolic journeys in search of a unifying principle that will simplify and harmonize the disparities of life. Disguised or undisguised, these journeys are regressive in nature, as
and the "tongues aromatic" (i.e., the growth around the waters) not only restore the "I," but also allow the "I" to feel that as poet and prophet he can restore the spirits of others. 8

Strong upon me the life that does not exhibit itself, yet contains all the rest,
Resolv'd to sing no songs to-day but those of manly attachment,
Projecting them along that substantial life,
Bequeathing hence types of athletic love,
Afternoon this delicious Ninth-month in my forty-first year,
I proceed for all who are or have been young men,
To tell the secret of my nights and days,
To celebrate the need of comrades.

(11-18.113)

The second poem of the cluster, "Scented Herbage of My Breast," presents an expanded and more precise statement than the first poem of what the "I" learned during his mystical self-contemplative moments in retreat and solitude. He learned by intuition and self-contemplation that death and love "are folded inseparably together" (29.115). As in the

indeed they must be, and constitute a return to the peace and security of an earlier existence—"in short, a return to a womblike state."

8 Howard J. Waskow, Whitman: Explorations in Form (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 96, says that "the birth of ... didacticism [In the "Calamus" poems] is a complicated matter, the product of contradictory emotions that lie within the Calamus vision. A shy and lonely individual, seeking the roots of his being in the 'ethereal sense,' becomes a comrade when the search turns outward and becomes a search for the constant love of another individual. The teacher or prophet appears when the quest for permanence is pressed yet further. The individual newly conscious of the frivolousness and perils of spontaneity, suddenly aware that he must control his actions and his singing, moves forth more vigorously than in his search for a comrade, and imposes control upon his readers."
first poem, the intuitive knowledge gained in solitude restores the "I" and motivates him to reconfront the world in order to announce to others what he has learned.9

I will sound myself and comrades only, I will never again utter a call only their call, I will raise with it immortal reverberations through the States, I will give an example to lovers to take permanent shape and will through the States, Through me shall the words be said to make death exhilarating.

(24-27.114-115)

The majority of the poems which follow the first two introductory poems present the different attempts of the "I" to "give an example to lovers" of the type of relationship that can obtain between human beings who accept the mystical truths intuited by the "I" during his solitude. There are three main groups of poems in which the "I" gives "an example to lovers."10 First, there are several poems in which the "I" speaks as if he were a lonely or solitary wanderer who is seeking and anticipating an encounter with an individual who will satisfy the personal spiritual demands for love felt by the "I" of the poem. For example, the poet's private yearnings are evident in "Not Heat Flames Up and Consumes":

Not heat flames up and consumes,
Not sea-waves hurry in and out,
Not the air delicious and dry, the air of ripe

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9See note 5, McGhee.

10According to Elizabeth Wells, in "The Structure of Whitman's 1860 Leaves of Grass," WWR, 15 (September, 1969), 140, the entire Leaves of Grass is Whitman's attempt to "set the example...; he can do little more."
summer, bears lightly along white down-balls of myriads of seeds, Wafted, sailing gracefully, to drop where they may; Not these, O none of these more than the flames of me, consuming, burning for his love whom I love, O none more than I hurrying in and out; Does the tide hurry, seeking something, and never give up? O I the same, O nor down-balls nor perfumes, nor the high rain-emitting clouds, are borne through the open air, Any more than my soul is borne through the open air, Wafted in all directions O love, for friendship, for you. (1-10.124-125)

Also, although the poet identifies himself with the solitary "live-oak," in "I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing," he gives expression to his own personal loneliness and to his need for companionship as he wonders how the oak "could utter joyous leaves all its life without a friend a lover near" (12.127). The poet admires the way the tree seems to endure its loneliness but knows "very well" (13.127) that he could not endure his own solitude. Hence, the poem implies that the poet's questing, personal journey must continue.

The poet's own personal desire and quest for the love and companionship of a particular individual is also expressed in "To a Stranger" and in "When I Peruse the Conquer'd Fame." In "To a Stranger," the poet expresses his personal quest for love as he anticipates an eventual personal encounter that will satisfy his yearnings:

Passing stranger! you do not know how longingly I look upon you, You must be he I was seeking, or she I was seeking, (it comes to me as of a dream,) I have somewhere surely lived a life of joy with you,
All is recall'd as we flit by each other, fluid, affectionate, chaste, matured,

I am not to speak to you, I am to think of you when I sit alone or wake at night alone,
I am to wait, I do not doubt I am to meet you again,
I am to see to it that I do not lose you.

(1-9.127)

In "When I Peruse the Conquer'd Fame," the poet is anguished and melancholy because he is not participating in "the brotherhood of lovers" of which he has heard:

But when I hear of the brotherhood of lovers, how it was with them,
How together through life, through dangers, odium, unchanging, long and long,
Through youth and through middle and old age, unfaltering, how affectionate and faithful they were,
Then I am pensive--I hastily walk away fill'd with the bitterest envy.

(3-6.129-130)

Common to all of the above poems in the first group is the poet's expression of an apparent personal yearning and feeling of loneliness. These poems "give an example to lovers" by the way in which they allow the reader to identify his feelings with those of the speaking voice. The poet in the above poems does not speak cosmically or prophetically; he speaks, instead, personally as a lonely wanderer who is seeking an experience or encounter with an individual who will satisfy personal needs and desires for love.

In a second group of poems occurring throughout the "Calamus" cluster, the "I" gives "an example to lovers" by celebrating apparent past and present encounters and experiences that involve the "I" of the poem and a particular individual. The poet indicates that the encounters celebrated
are or have been personally restorative because they satisfy or have satisfied desires and doubts which discomfited the poet's mind and spirit prior to the encounters. For example, at the beginning of "Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances," the poet testifies to his doubt and confusion about the nature of reality and death; however, eventually the poet is reconciled and consoled by an experience that involves a personal love and friendship:

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, I cannot answer the question of appearances or that of identity beyond the grave, But I walk or sit indifferent, I am satisfied, He ahold of my hand has completely satisfied me.

(10-16.120)

Similarly, in "When I Heard at the Close of Day," the poet testifies to the restorative powers of the love and friendship received from a particular individual:

When I heard at the close of the day how my name had been receiv'd with plaudits in the capital, still it was not a happy night for me that follow'd, And else when I carous'd, or when my plans were accomplish'd, still I was not happy,

[But] When I wander'd alone over the beach, and undressing bathed, laughing with the cool waters, and saw the sun rise, And when I thought how my dear friend my lover was on his way coming, O then I was happy, O then each breath tasted sweeter, and all that day my food nourish'd me more, and the beautiful day pass'd well, And the next came with equal joy, and with the
next at evening came my friend,
And that night while all was still I heard the
waters roll slowly continually up the shores,

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
In the stillness in the autumn moonbeams his face
was inclined toward me,
And his arm lay lightly around my breast--and that
night I was happy.

(1-13.122-123)

In "We Two Boys Together Clinging," the poet gives "an
example to lovers" by placing himself in a vignette that
seems to typify the relationship sought by one who seeks to
satisfy the demands of his spirit:

We two boys together clinging,
One the other never leaving,
Up and down the roads going, North and South
excursions making,
Power enjoying, elbows stretching, fingers
clutching,
Arm'ed and fearless, eating, drinking, sleeping,
loving,
No law less than ourselves owning, sailing,
soldiering, thieving, threatening,
Misers, menials, priests alarming, air
breathing, water drinking, on the turf of
the sea-beach dancing,
Cities wrenching, ease scorning, statutes
mocking, feebleness chasing,
Fulfilling our foray.

(1-9.130)

Also, the poem "A Glimpse" gives "an example to lovers" by
presenting a vignette that involves the "I" and a particu-
lar individual:

A glimpse through an interstice caught,
Of a crowd of workmen and drivers in a bar-room
around the stove late of a winter night,
and I unremark'd seated in a corner,
Of a youth who loves me and whom I love,
silently approaching and seating himself
near, that he may hold me by the hand,
A long while amid the noises of coming and going,
of drinking and oath and smutty jest,
There we two, content, happy in being together,
speaking little, perhaps not a word.

(1-5.131-132)
Thus, the poems of this second group give "an example to lovers" by celebrating the "manly attachment" and "athletic love" announced in the first poem of the cluster, "In Paths Untrodden."

Finally, there is a third group of poems in the "Calamus" cluster in which the "I" speaks as an extremely self-confident poet-prophet who, in the dramatic context of several poems, seems to wander over the world to bestow himself, his book, and his knowledge upon others who may be seeking ways to satisfy the urgings and demands for love of their spirits. In "These I Singing in Spring," for example, words such as "traverse," "sauntering," "wander" establish the image of an omniscient, god-like poet-prophet, companion and consoler:

These I singing in spring collect for lovers,
(For who but I should understand lovers and all their sorrow and Joy?)
Collecting I traverse the garden the world, but soon I pass the gates,

Far, far in the forest, or sauntering later in summer, before I think where I go,
Solitary, smelling the earthy smell, stopping now and then in the silence,
Alone I had thought, yet soon a troop gathers around me,
Some walk by my side and some behind, and some embrace my arms or neck,
They the spirits of dear friends dead or alive, thicker they come, a great crowd, and I in the middle,
Collecting, dispensing, singing, there I wander with them.

(1-13.118)

The attitude and tone of the speaking voice in this third group is one of cosmic and prophetic confidence; this voice
says, for example, in "A Promise to California":

A promise to California,
Or inland to the great pastoral Plains, and on
to Puget Sound and Oregon;
Sojourning east a while longer, soon I travel
toward you, to remain, to teach robust
American love,
For I know very well that I and robust love
belong among you, inland, and along the
Western sea;
For these States tend inland and toward the
Western sea, and I will also.
(1-5.130-131)

Also, in "For You O Democracy," the confident, wandering

cosmic "I" says to a general audience:

Come, I will make the continent indissoluble,
I will make the most splendid race the sun ever
shone upon,
I will make divine magnetic lands,
   With the love of comrades,
   With the life-long love of comrades.
(1-5.117)

This third group of poems is also characterized by a speak-
ing voice that frequently warns its audience that a knowledge
of the true nature and identity of the persona of the poems
is not what it may appear to be in some of the other poems
of the cluster. For example, after the two introductory
poems, "In Paths Untrodden" and "Scented Herbage of My
Breast," the poet, speaking for his book, assumes a pose of
guarded cosmic aloofness in "Whoever You Are Holding Me Now
in Hand":

Whoever you are holding me now in hand,
Without one thing all will be useless,
I give you fair warning before you attempt me
   further,
I am not what you supposed, but far different.
   . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
But these leaves conning you con at peril,
For these leaves and me you will not understand,
They will elude you at first and still more afterward, I will certainly elude you, Even while you should think you had unquestionably caught me, behold! Already you see I have escaped from you.

(1-31.115-116)

The voice in "Are you the New Person Drawn Toward Me?"

speaks in a similar cautionary manner:

Are you the new person drawn toward me? To begin with take warning, I am surely far different from what you suppose.

.......

Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground toward a real heroic man? Have you no thought O dreamer that it may be all maya, illusion?

(1-9.123)

And in "To a Western Boy," which is brief enough to be quoted in full, the reader is warned again:

Many things to absorb I teach to help you become eleve of mine; Yet if blood like mine circle not in your veins, If you be not silently selected by lovers and do not silently select lovers, Of what use is it that you seek to become eleve of mine?

(1-4.134)

The exact nature of that which will satisfy the spirit's demand for love is never clearly defined in the "Calamus" cluster, and, in fact, is rendered extremely ambiguous by the warnings in the third group of poems. Whitman, however, does label the type of love he is idealizing: he calls the "Calamus" love "adhesiveness." In "Not Heaving from my Ribb'd Breast Only," Whitman defines in a negative way what his ideal love is not, and he concludes by saying:

Not in any or all of them \(\text{\(\overline{A}\)}\text{.e., the ordinary reactions to physical love}\) 0 adhesiveness! 0 pulse of my life!
Need I that you exist and show yourself any
more than in these songs.
(16-17.119)
"Adhesiveness" is not defined, but evidently it is not to
be identified as having the attributes or qualities of
ordinary physical love, either heterosexual or homosexual,
as might be inferred from the second group of poems. In
"Fast Anchor'd Eternal O Love!," for example, the words
"disembodied" and "ethereal" further suggest that the nature
of the love idealized and sought by the persona is not an
ordinary heterosexual or homosexual love:

Fast-anchor'd eternal O love! O woman I love!
O bride! O wife! more resistless than I can tell
the thought of you!
Then separate, as disembodied or another born,
Ethereal, the last athletic reality, my consolation,
I ascend, I float in the regions of your love O man,
O sharer of my roving life.
(1-6.135)

Also, there are several instances within the "Calamus" poems
where Whitman suggests that the nature of the love sought
and idealized is similar to the type of love celebrated by
religious and philosophical idealists of the past. In "The
Base of All Metaphysics," for example, the "Calamus" love
is likened to what is often called "brotherly love":

... underneath Socrates clearly see,
and underneath Christ the divine I see,
The dear love of man for his comrade, the
attraction of friend to friend,
Of the well-married husband and wife, of children
and parents,
Of city for city and land for land.
(12-15.121)

In "This Moment Yearning and Thoughtful," the poet envisions
men in other countries who are as "yearning and thoughtful"
as he, and he concludes by saying:

And it seems to me if I could know those men I should become attached to them as I do to men in my own lands,
0 I know we should be brethren and lovers,
I know I should be happy with them.

(5-7.128)

Also, in "To the East and to the West," the poet says with optimistic confidence:

I believe the main purport of these States is to found a superb friendship, exaltè, previously unknown,
Because I perceive it waits, and has been always waiting, latent in all men.

(5-6.134)

Those poems of the third group which either warn, philosophize, or announce an idealized and democratic "brotherly love" occur throughout the "Calamus" cluster. These poems function to direct the reader's attention to the metaphoric and philosophic implications and purposes of poems in which the "I" speaks in a personal and non-cosmic, perhaps even autobiographical, voice. The dramatic stance or pose of the "I" often shifts from poem to poem, and sometimes shifts within the same poem. As a result, the dramatic identity of the "I" is ambiguous. James E. Miller, Jr., for example, justifies the apparent evasiveness and ambiguity of the "Calamus" cluster in the following manner:

Throughout "Calamus" ambiguity is used to create drama. Doubtless, Whitman has introduced the physical image [i.e., the calamus plant as well as several homosexual images] into his poem in such a way as to multiply his meanings or to blur it. . . . If . . . the reader understands that the suggestive or symbolic image is, in Whitman's belief, the essence of poetry and that only the physical (what is knowable through the senses) can be imagined, he may then realize that the tokens of amative love [i.e. the seemingly
homosexual passages in "Calamus" are but metaphors, a poetic attempt to associate with the spiritual love the intensity and personal passion of traditional romantic attachment.  

In the dramatic context of the entire cluster and in spite of the ambiguities and shifts in the posture and confidence of the "I" throughout the cluster, the last poem of the cluster, "Full of Life Now" suggests that the quest of the "I" for spiritual satisfaction will continue:

Full of life now, compact, visible,
I, forty years old the eighty-third year of the States,
To one a century hence or any number of centuries hence, To you yet unborn these, seeking you.

When you read these I that was visible am become invisible,
Now it is you, compact, visible, realizing my poems, seeking me,
Fancying how happy you were if I could be with you and become your comrade;
Be it as if I were with you. (Be not too certain but I am now with you.)

(1-8.136)

Finally, one has to grant that the "Calamus" cluster cannot be read as any kind of straightforward narrative. As noted, the dramatic stance or pose of the speaking voice frequently shifts from poem to poem. Sometimes the "I" speaks of a personal anguish or of a personally restorative experience; frequently the "I" speaks cosmically and prophetically or speaks as a self-conscious poet. The cluster seems to be arbitrarily structured. Nevertheless, the journey and voyage motif, particularly the journey motif, contributes to the effectiveness, drama, and unity of the

cluster by the appearance of verbs (usually present tense) and phrases, such as "travels," "walk," "going," and "fulfilling our foray," all of which have "I" or "we" as the subject. The poet usually speaks as if there were absolutely no time or distance between the poem's composition and the experience or thought recorded. If a poem is presented as a reminiscence, such as "When I Heard at the Close of Day," the poet recalls the past wanderings or saunterings that accompanied the event remembered. The point here is that those poems in which the poet writes with verbs and phrases suggesting motion or travel are dramatically and lyrically concrete even though the philosophic or metaphysical implications of a particular poem are extremely abstract.

R. W. B. Lewis, referring to Leaves of Grass as a whole, says that to read Whitman is to encounter the experiences of one who "is always going forth." If the reader is aware of a persona who is "always going forth," either artistically or thematically, in "Children of Adam" and "Calamus," the journey and voyage motif as image and metaphor is primarily responsible for the evocation of the reader's awareness.

CHAPTER V

ELEVEN SONGS

I

Following the "Calamus" cluster, there is a group of eleven individual poems (not counting the brief, four-line poem, "Youth, Day, Old Age, and Night"), which are not subsumed under any cluster or group title. Although originally written at various times between 1855 and 1874, the poems share the structural characteristic of being longer than the majority of poems that appear within a cluster, and they share the thematic characteristic of expressing an affirming faith and joy in a variety of realities and abstract beliefs, such as America, its people and spirit, the poet's self, democracy, liberty, and evolution. In short, this group of poems celebrates and announces themes and urges the acceptance of beliefs that appear throughout Leaves of Grass.

As elsewhere in Leaves of Grass, the journey and voyage motif frequently appears in the eleven poems as an image used to give identity to the speaking voice by placing that

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1 Miller, A Critical Guide, p. 202, subsumes these eleven poems under the heading, "The Self's Engagement with the World." This heading is Miller's, not Whitman's.

voice into some kind of dramatic situation in daily American experience either as an aloof but sympathetic observer or as a mystic participant in specific activities. Also, the journey and voyage motif often appears as a metaphor to help the poet celebrate and to make concrete certain abstract concepts and beliefs, such as the evolution and the positive spiritual destiny of mankind and the spirits of American democracy and liberty. Finally, the appearance of the journey or voyage motif in certain sections of a particular poem often tends to temper the non-poetic and didactic (even sententious) or the excessively abstract quality of a total context.

II

In "Salut Au Monde!," the first poem of the eleven, the primary speaking voice of the poem replies to invitations and questions addressed to him by the voice of an ambiguously personified, disembodied spirit who may be either the poet's soul or an external cosmic spirit similar to Emerson's Oversoul. The first section (of a total of thirteen) contains the invitation and questions of the external spirit:

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

What widens within you Walt Whitman?  
What waves and soils exuding?  
What climes? what persons and cities are here?  
(1.1-6.137)
The primary narrator, "Walt Whitman," begins his reply in the second section:

Within me latitude widens, longitude lengthens, Asia, Africa, Europe, are to the east---
America is provided for in the west.

(2.14-15.137)

The imaginary framework in the first two sections and several succeeding sections is that of two disembodied spirits (i.e., a cosmic spirit and the poet's individual spirit or soul) who are flying over the world observing all activities, past and present. However, the voice that initiated the cosmic journey over the world eventually disappears from the poem, but not before it asks its poet-companion to respond to what he hears and sees.

What do you hear Walt Whitman?

(3.22-138)

What do you see Walt Whitman?
Who are they you salute, and that one after another salute you?

(4.41-42.139)

Except for occasional significant variations, Sections 3 through 10 record and celebrate the sounds of worldly activity and the sights of human activity and of natural geography as if the past and present world were passing beneath a detached cosmic observer. The long catalogs in these sections help to evoke the sense that the observer is detached and soaring over wide areas. For example, after the external spirit asks the primary narrator what he hears, the poet responds for several lines in the following manner:

I hear the workman singing and the farmer's wife singing,
I hear in the distance the sounds of children and of animals early in the day,
I hear emulous shouts of Australians pursuing the wild horse,
I hear the Spanish dance with castanets in the chestnut shade, to the rebeck and guitar.

(3.23-26.138)

This kind of catalog continues for several lines in the same manner as in the above excerpt. The poet juxtaposes the sounds of the activities of widely diverse countries (such as Australia and Spain in the above excerpt), and thereby creates the impression that the speaking voice is either careening above and around the world or in a fixed place as the world spins past him. Also, these catalogs are, as in other poems, made dramatic because the poet speaks in the first person, present tense.

In the next seven sections (4 through 10), the poet records sights rather than sounds from his cosmic vantage. After the external spirit (who appears in the poem as a speaking voice for the last time) asks the primary narrator what he sees, the responses are again in the form of long catalogs which record the various sights of human activity and the geographic divisions of the world:

I see a great round wonder rolling through space,
I see diminate farms, hamlets, ruins, graveyards, jails, factories, palaces, hovels, huts of barbarians, tents or nomads upon the surface,
I see the shaded part on one side where the sleepers are sleeping, and the sunlit part on the other side,

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

I see plenteous waters,
I see mountain peaks, I see the sierras of Andes where they range,
I see plainly the Himalayas, Chian Shahs, Altays, Ghauts.

(4.43-50.139)
The catalogs of things seen continue in the same manner as the above example for several lines and continue for six more sections. And, again, by juxtaposing the sights of widely diverse countries and activities, the poet creates the impression that the speaking voice is careening above and around the world as a cosmic journeyer.\(^3\)

There are, however, some interesting and dramatically significant variations within the catalogs of sights observed and recorded by the cosmic "I." First, the "I" not only records the sights of his present world, but also he eventually records sights of the past world as if he were actually flying over and observing the past world. For example, in the first part of Section 6, the "I" records what he sees as he seems to soar over historic sites. These sites remind him of the events that took place in the past. He says, for example:

I see the site of the old empire of Assyria, and that of Persia, and that of India,
I see the falling of the Ganges over the high rim of Saukara.

\(^3\)See Gay Wilson Allen and Charles T. Davis, editors, Walt Whitman's Poems: Selections with Critical Aids (New York: New York University Press, 1955), p. 8. Allen and Davis maintain, in their discussion of Whitman's poetic structure, that the poet "discovered the exhilarating sense of freedom that he could gain by casting off the ballast of time and letting his image-recalling faculty roam at will through space. This gave him the sensation of possessing all geography for his intellectual demesne. As a poet he was to make a conscious practice of imagining (or imaging) himself high up over the revolving globe, peering down with telescopic sight at the topography, animate nature, and occupations of men and women. Thus the so-called 'catalogue' technique became a basic feature of his structural technique."
I see the place of the idea of the Deity incarnated by avatars in human forms, I see the spots of the successions of priests on the earth, oracles, sacrificers, brahmins, sabians, llamas, monks, muftis, exhorters, I see where druids walk'd the groves of Mona, .....

(6.91-95.141-142)

Soon, however, and within the same section, the time between past and present is obliterated, for the poet records sights of the past world as if he were in that world and not as one who is reminded of the past by its geographic remnants. In other words, the poet does not say, "I see the place where something happened long ago," but rather, "I see something happening now." He says, for example:

I see Christ eating the bread of his last supper in the midst of youths and old persons, ...
I see Kneph, blooming, drest in blue, with the crown of feathers on his head,
I see Hermes, unsuspected, dying, well-belov'd, ..

(6.97-101.142)

The second significant variation in the long catalogs of the sights seen by the cosmic observer is that the observer eventually loses his detached perspective and begins to merge and to identify with the individuals and

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4 Allen and Davis, editors, Walt Whitman's Poems, p. 9, label this characteristic of Whitman's "time-binding," which suggests that while "standing firmly on present reality, the poet receives into his mind and character the accumulated wisdom, heroism, and grandeur of past generations. By mystic sympathy and intuition, he makes these his own, and then through his art he brings them to bear upon the present and future, so that he himself becomes a link between past and future."
activities he sees. For example, in Section 9, the "I" catalogs the peoples with whom he identifies:

I see the cities of the earth and make myself at random a part of them,
I am a real Parisian,
I am a inhabit of Vienna, St. Petersburg, Berlin, Constantinople,
I am of Adelaide, Sidney, Melbourne,
I descend upon all those cities, and rise from them again.

(1.130-137.144)

In Sections 11 and 12, the "I" turns his attention from recording the various sounds and sights of the world to prophesying and to offering consolation and advice to all the peoples of the world. For example, Section 11 begins:

You whoever you are!
You daughter or son of England!
You of the mighty Slavic tribes and empires!
you Russ in Russia!
You dim-descender, black, divine-soul'd African,
    large, fine-headed, nobly-form'd,
    superbly destin'd, on equal terms with me!
(11.163-166.145)

The poet's message to mankind is that

Each of us inevitable,
Each of us limitless--each of us with his or her right upon the earth,
Each of us allow'd the eternal purparts of the earth,
Each of us here as divinely as any is here.
(11.195-198.147)

5Alvin Rosenfeld, "The Poem as Dialogical Process: A New Reading of 'Salut Au Monde,'" WWR, 10 (June, 1964), 38, notes that in "Salut Au Monde," "there is a movement towards greater particularization as the abstract symbols of the unconscious--rivers, seas, mountains, etc.--find embodiment in a more precise language--the Amazon, the China Sea, the Syrian Alps. Most important is a transformation of the metaphorical self: from 'within me' (Section 1) to 'I' (Section 2). It is this 'I' that poem wants to create. It does so through the meeting with the newly created, external universe."
Sections 11 and 12 are didactic, but the previous sections in which the "I" had recorded and celebrated the sights and sounds of worldly activity lend a certain dramatic credibility to the prophetic utterances. The reader should be expecting something more than a mere catalog of things seen and heard from the cosmic personality. After reading about the visions of the world from a cosmic vantage, the reader should be expecting the soaring cosmic personality to attempt to draw conclusions, to sum up, and to point some moral. The widely diverse areas of the world the poet names and celebrates as a first person, present-tense, ever-in-motion narrator in the catalog sections lend authority and identity to the prophetic voice of the concluding sections.

At the beginning of Section 13, the last section, the poet summarizes his cosmic experiences and journeys:

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.

(13.212-214.148)

After his summary, the poet not only offers his "Salut" but he also indicates that he will continue to journey over the world as a disembodied spirit:

I have taken my stand on the bases of peninsulas and on the high embedded rocks, to cry thence:

Salut au monde!
What cities the light or warmth penetrates I penetrate those cities myself,
All islands to which birds wing their way I wing my way myself.

(13.219-222.148)
At the beginning of the poem, an external spirit initiates and urges the cosmic journeys of the primary speaking voice. As noted earlier, this external motivating voice disappears from the poem. However, the didactic and prophetic confidence of the primary voice, "Walt Whitman," in the last three sections suggests that the primary voice has merged with the initiating voice of the first section. Hence, the voice that invited the poet to join hands for a journey that would yield "gliding wonders" does not truly disappear; instead of speaking to the poet, "Walt Whitman," it now speaks to the world through the poet. At the beginning of the poem, a cosmic spirit extends a hand and beckons to the poet to follow on a wide-ranging journey; in the last lines of the poem, the poet, fused now with the cosmic spirit, greets and beckons the reader and the world to follow:

Toward you all, in America's name,
I raise high the perpendicular hand,
I make the signal,
To remain after me in sight forever,
For all the haunts and homes of men.
(13.223-226.148)

III

Howard J. Waskow has stated that Whitman's "poems enact a metaphysical journey."7 "Song of the Open Road,"

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6Rosenfeld, "The Poem as Dialogical Process," p. 34, says that "the movement in this poem 'Salut Au Monde!' is from internalization of reality to a reality that moves away from the poem's "I" and comes to exist relationally between the "I" and the universe that is external to it."

7Waskow, Whitman Explorations in Form, p. 10.
the poem following "Salut Au Monde!," perhaps more than any other poem by Whitman, makes concrete the metaphysical journey enacted throughout *Leaves of Grass*. The poem and its major symbol, the open road, have aided many critics in their attempts to come to terms with Whitman's poetic vision. For example, D. H. Lawrence, in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, says:

Whitman's essential message was the Open Road. The leaving of the soul free unto herself, the leaving of his fate to her and to the loom of the open road. Which is the bravest doctrine man has ever proposed to himself.  

Richard Chase formulates the following generalization about Whitman's poetry by referring to Lawrence's comments:

Whitman . . . in some unexplained, inadvertent way became the elegist of the self and . . . opened out a healthy future for mankind by finally delivering the soul from the decadent Christian requirement of salvation and teaching that "the soul is neither 'above' nor 'within' but 'a wayfarer down the open road.'"  

Alvin Rosenfeld says that "the poet as journeyer through the universe is a recurring figure in *Leaves of Grass*. . . . [and] the poem that most explicitly defines him is, of course, 'Song of the Open Road.'"  

Hyatt A. Waggoner maintains that the source for Whitman's idea of poet as journeyer is to be found in Emerson's writings: "The Idea of the poet as *homo viator*, man on the road, is, of course, all through

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Emerson; it is one of the chief ways, he thought, in which the poet represents us. Thus, insofar as this study is concerned, "Song of the Open Road" is a most central poem in any attempt to examine the journey and voyage motif as it appears in Leaves of Grass, because, as the title of the poem suggests, the motif appears in the imagery and symbolic content throughout the poem. Moreover, Whitman uses the motif to establish the dramatic framework of the entire poem.

In the first eight sections of the poem, the "I" records his experiences on the "open road" of life and his subsequent knowledge and understandings, gained while on the road, about his self and about his relationships with the world and with the entire cosmic and spiritual process. In the remaining six sections (9-15), the "I," spurred by his experiences and newly acquired cosmic understandings, urges his readers to join him on a continuing journey over mystic roads that pass through the world and lead the way into the eternal spiritual realms. The central metaphoric content

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The ultimate destination of the "mystical journey" and the journey itself have been described by the critics in varying and, sometimes, contradictory ways. For example, Feldelson, in Symbolism and American Literature, pp. 17-18, says: "Whitman's 'perpetual journey' is not analogous to a sight-seeing trip, though his catalogues might give that impression; the mind and the material world into which it ventures are not ultimately different in kind. Instead, what seems at first a penetration of nature by the mind is actually a process by which the known world comes into being... The true voyage is the endless becoming of
of the poem compares life with a journey through the world and death with debarkation from one vehicle of transit and embarkation upon another. This metaphor may indeed be stale, but Whitman revitalizes it by placing the "I" of the poem into a present-tense, dramatic framework. Throughout the

reality." George Bowering, "The Solitary Everything," WWR, 15 (March, 1969), 26, says of Whitman's poetry in general: "One thing that remains through constant change is 'personal identity,' which travels through life, seeing change, but remaining the traveler and the self. That travel is eventually travel of the soul, in the direction of perfection, which would be a total realization, simultaneously, of solitary self and total unity." Frederich W. Conner, Cosmic Optimism (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1949), p. 122, says: "The goal (of Whitman's journeys and voyages) is an activity rather than a final resting place, and, in the paradox of the Romantic dialectic, is to be achieved only by continual pursuit of something ever out of reach." Chase, Walt Whitman Reconsidered, p. 105, says that the persona in "Song of the Open Road" "urges separations as well as 'mergings' and it locates death elsewhere than at the end of the road for the road is endless and the journey is eternal." Finally, E. H. Miller, Walt Whitman's Poetry: A Psychological Journey, sees Whitman's poetry as a "journey to understanding the enigmatic self" (p. 13), but, contrary to the critics quoted above, who all more or less see the journey and its mystical destination as progressive, E. H. Miller sees the journeys as "regressive in nature" and the destination as "a return to the peace and security of earlier existence—in short, a return to a womblike state" (p. 19). My reading of Leaves of Grass and of the journeys enacted therein lead me to the conclusion that E. H. Miller's interpretation is right up to a point. Whitman's poems do occasionally enact or suggest a return to the womb, but the poet does not remain there. Instead, a bursting out of the womb in a renewed or restored state takes place after the womb-like and temporary retreat. See, for example, my discussion of the "Children of Adam" cluster.

Karl Shapiro, "The First White Aboriginal," WWR, 5 (September, 1959), 51, says of Whitman's use of the stale metaphor: "The open road is a commonplace symbol, but it is a deliberate symbol, standing for an actuality. That actuality is America as Whitman sees America in himself."
entire poem, whether the "I" is announcing his newly acquired understandings about the cosmic processes or urging his readers to accept these understandings, the "I" seems to be in motion on the road. For example, the dramatic framework is established in the opening lines of the poem in the following manner:

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

Strong and content I travel the open road.
(1.1-7.149)

And at the conclusion of the poem, the poet is urging the reader to join him on the same road:

Camerado, I give you my hand!
I give you my love more precious than money,
I give you myself before preaching or law;
Will you give me yourself? will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?
(15.220-224.159)

14 Chase, Walt Whitman Reconsidered, p. 105, maintains that "the central metaphor [in 'Song of the Open Road'] is of the self in motion through a miraculous but sparsely populated universe."

15 Thomas Le Clair's comment, in "Prufrock and the Open Road," WWR, 17 (December, 1971), 124, regarding T. S. Eliot's Prufrock and the last lines of Whitman's "Song of the Open Road" is offered here as another theory regarding the metaphoric or symbolic destination of Whitman's journeys: "Prufrock—if he ever had the primal faith in self so clearly suggested in Whitman's passage [in the last lines of 'Song of the Open Road']—has lost it, perhaps intentionally, to society or time when he begins his monologue. Both Whitman's divided men and Prufrock live in the present of their poems, but Whitman's present turns toward the future, Eliot's toward the past."
However, before the "I" can extend himself and attempt to bestow upon others his understandings about the cosmic processes, as he does throughout Sections 9 to 15, he presents a dramatic present tense and personal account of what he learned and of how he was personally restored while on the road. This personal experience is the subject matter and drama of Sections 1 through 8.

Immediately after he sets foot upon the surface of the open road, the "I" begins to absorb the mystic meanings of the road itself and of that which he encounters on the road. For example, in Section 2, the road itself becomes more than a mere device for the "I" to travel upon in order to record the vignettes observed by a man travelling on a cross-country tour; the road, in fact, becomes a symbol of the world and life itself and the poet addresses it as such:\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{quote}
You road I enter upon and look around,
I believe you are not all that is here,
I believe that much unseen is also here.

Here the profound lesson of reception, nor preference nor denial,
The black with his woolly head, the felon,
the diseas'ed, the illiterate person,
are not denied.

\textsuperscript{(2.16-19.149-150)}
\end{quote}

The "I" continues to record the abstract and concrete\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{16}Waskow, Whitman: Explorations in Form, p. 192, notes the changing or expanding symbolism of the "road"; in the course of the poem, Whitman shakes "loose of . . . the road as a limited symbol, the road that has particular objects and a particular meaning. . . . He is working out, in various shapes, the principle of the road. . . . In expanding the road he of course expands himself; the road expresses him better than he can express himself, but only because he grows in order to express the road."
impressions he receives of worldly activity while on the road, and he juxtaposes pleasurable activity with activities of suffering and death, but as the road seems to absorb and to accept (as if it were a palpable, spiritual entity) all the permutations of the world, so too does the poet absorb, accept and learn from what he encounters on the road. For example, at the end of Section 2, the poet says of the humanity he meets on the road:

They pass, I also pass, any thing passes, 
none can be interdicted, 
None but are accepted, none but shall be dear to me.

(2.23-24.150)

In Section 3, the poet names and celebrates a variety of surfaces and types of roads upon which past and present generations of humanity have trod, and he concludes by identifying himself with all those who have travelled over the "impassive surfaces" of the world:

From all that has touch'd you I believe 
you have imparted to yourselves, and 
now would impart the same secretly to me, 
From the living and the dead you have peopled 
your impassive surfaces, and the spirits thereof would be evident and amicable with me.

(3.37-38.150)

In Section 4, the poet continues to extol the pleasures and the significant meanings that flow into him as he travels the open road. So ecstatic is the experience of journeying on the road that the "I" imagines that the road itself or its spirit may be addressing and beckoning the poet to remain on the road:
O highway I travel, do you say to me Do not leave me?
Do you say Venture not—if you leave me you are lost?
Do you say I am already prepared, I am well-beaten and undenied, adhere to me?

(4.43-45.151)

After the mystic urging and calling of the personification of the voice of the road itself, the "I" commits himself entirely to the road and its mystic meanings:

O public road, I say back I am not afraid to leave you, yet I love you,
You express me better than I can express myself,
You shall be more to me than my poem.

I think whatever I shall meet on the road I shall like, and whoever beholds me shall like me,
I think whoever I see must be happy.

(4.46-52.151)

At the beginning of the poem, the "I" entered the "open road" to escape from "indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms" (l.6.149). Immediately after he commits himself to the road and to the mystic meanings that accrue to him on the road, he finds himself mystically transformed and restored. As the "I" indicates in Section 5, not only has he been personally liberated and spiritually enlarged by his travels on and by his commitment to the mystic road of life, but also he has obtained a new perspective and a new sense of obligation toward all of humanity:

17Waskow, Whitman: Explorations in Form, p. 193, says that "Whitman achieves, in Section 5, not only a discovery of the road and of himself, but also a discovery of readers."
From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits
and imaginary lines,
Going where I list, my own master total and
absolute,
Listening to others, considering well what
they say,
Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating,
Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting
myself of the holds that would hold me.

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 out so much goodness.

All seems beautiful to me,
I can repeat over to men and women You have done
such good to me I would do the same to you,
I will recruit for myself and you as I go,
I will scatter myself among men and women as
I go,
I will toss a new gladness and roughness among
them,
Whoever denies me it shall not trouble me,
Whoever accepts me he or she shall be blessed
and shall bless me.

(5.53-68.151-152)

In Sections 6 through 8, which follow after his mystic
transformation, the "I" begins to catalog the mystic knowl-
edge and understandings he now possesses. He no longer
speaks as an escapee seeking fulfillment, but rather his
tone is one of prophetic confidence and wisdom. In fact, so
mystically fused has he become with the road and its unseen
mysteries that he speaks as if he were the voice of the mys-
tic road itself. Earlier in the poem, he spoke as a trav-
elling observer and as one who was being infused by the
spirit of the road; now, after his mystic transformation, he
speaks for the road. For example, Sections 6 through 8 are
punctuated by a series of definitions of what can be found
by one who enters upon and embraces the "open road" in the
same manner as the "I" of the poem:

Here on the road a great personal deed has room,

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Here is the test of wisdom,

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Here is realization,
Here is a man tallied—he realizes here what he has in him,
The past, the future, majesty, love—if they are vacant of you, you are vacant of them.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Here is adhesiveness,

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Here is the efflux of the soul,

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
The efflux of the soul is happiness, here is happiness,

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Here rises the fluid and attaching character.

(6-8.73-108.152-154)

Then, armed with his new sense of self-discovery and his new understandings of the cosmic processes, he can turn to his readers directly, as he finally does in Section 9, to urge with great confidence that they too can share his cosmic knowledge by embarking upon and committing themselves to their own journeys on the "open road":

Allons! whoever you are come travel with me!
Traveling with me you find what never tires.

(9.114-115.154)

After his initial invitation for his readers to join him on the road, the "I" continues to speak directly to the readers until the conclusion of the poem. In Sections 9 through 15, the "I" urges and challenges the reader to join him on the road, by warning of the rigors of the journey and by offering promises of what they will discover on the journey. For example, the "I" warns and suggests in Section 9 that a
journey on the road leads to more than an encounter and reconciliation with the material world:

Allons! we must not stop here,
However sweet these laid-up stores, however convenient this dwelling we cannot remain here,
However shelter'd this port and however calm these waters we must not anchor here,
However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us we are permitted to receive it but a little while.

(9.120-123.154)

In Section 10, the "I" outlines the special requirements needed by the individual who would take to the road in order to attain the knowledge and understandings possessed by the "I":

Allons! yet take warning!
He traveling with me needs the best blood, thews, endurance,
None may come to the trial till he or she brings courage and health,
Come not here if you have already spent the best of yourself,
Only those may come who come in sweet and determin'd bodies,
No diseas'd person, no rum-drinker or venereal taint is permitted here.

(10.132-137.155)

There are qualifications and warnings in the invitation because the rewards of the journey are spiritual rather than materialistic. Furthermore, and as Section 13 indicates, there is no final goal or resting place at the end of the journey, because the journey becomes part of the constant flux of the universe and with the spirits and souls of all past, present, and future generations of humanity:

Allons! to that which is endless as it was beginningless,
To undergo much, tramps of days, rests of nights,
To merge all in the travel they tend to, and
the days and nights they tend to,
Again to merge them in the start of superior journeys,
To see nothing anywhere but what you may reach it and pass it,
To conceive no time, however distant, but what you may reach it and pass it,
To see no being, not God's or any, but you also go thither,
To see no possession but you may possess it, enjoying all without labor or purchase, abstracting the feast yet not abstracting one particle of it,
To know the universe itself as a road, as many roads for traveling souls.

All parts away for the progress of souls,
All religion, all solid things, arts, governments—all that was or is apparent upon this globe or any globe, falls into niches and corners before the procession of souls along the grand roads of the universe.

As implied in the above excerpt and elsewhere, the souls of all individuals are already participating in the journey of the universal soul; it remains for the "I" or the self of each individual to reunite itself with and to commit itself to the soul's journey as the "I" of the poem claims he has done in the first eight sections of the poem. The authority and confidence of the "I" manifested in his urgings to his readers to join him on the road was attained and presented to the readers during the process of attainment recorded in the first eight sections.18

18 Waskow, Whitman: Explorations in Form, p. 201, says of the poet's invitation to join him on the road: "Didacticism, Whitman's call to action, at the last moment of the poem shows its other face. . . . The challenge--'Will you give me yourself? will you come travel with me?'--is also a plea: the reader, suddenly is not being urged into his
The poet says in a parenthetical aside, "I and mine do not convince by arguments, similes, rhymes, /We convince by our presence" (10.137-138.155). The drama of the entire poem resides in the fact that Whitman created a "presence" that demands attention, whether that "presence" speaks as if he himself were attempting to discover himself as in the first eight sections, or, after claiming that he has attained a new identity and new sense of wholeness with himself and the universe, it urges the readers to join and to embark upon their own psychic journeys toward wholeness.19

IV

James E. Miller, Jr. in A Critical Guide to"Leaves of Grass," maintains that the eleven poems or songs discussed in this chapter have a structurally progressive and own path but is being asked to remain as companion—to travel, but to travel with Whitman." This pleading tone does exist as Waskow points out, and it gives the poem tension, poignancy, and drama that goes beyond the didactic confidence expressed in the poem. As Waskow says of Whitman's plea: "We realize, eventually, that the final turn toward pleading is not really a turn—that Whitman has been saying this by implication all along" (p. 201).

19Roy Harvey Pearce, The Continuity of American Poetry (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 71, says of Whitman's poetic technique in general: "If this modern equivalent /Leaves of Grass/ of the epic is to join the reality (that is, the realia) of the world to the souls which inhabit it, it cannot teach by example, as did the traditional epic, which had set up super-human models whose mythical presence would reinforce and refine its readers' (and auditors') sense of themselves living fully and freely in their own world. Rather, this new poem must teach by action, by calling forth and giving form to the possibility for the heroic in its readers."
developing unity. \textsuperscript{20} With regard to "Salut Au Monde," "Song of the Open Road" (both of which were discussed in the preceding two sections of this chapter), and "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" (the subject of this section), Miller says:

After the greeting of "Salut Au Monde," two poems filled with imagery of dynamic movement appear: "Song of the Open Road" and "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry." The first suggests the launching of a journey by land, the second a voyage by sea. In both instances, the trip is symbolic; the exploration of the newly greeted earth, either on land or on water, is to result not in material but spiritual discoveries. As the "long brown path" leads on about the world endlessly, so the cyclic ferry never ceases (at least in the poetic imagination) to cross and recross the ever flowing water. In both these poems the constant and never ending onward rush of life, the reader assumes a leading role. \textsuperscript{21}

The following discussion examines closely the nature of the symbolic voyaging suggested in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry."

There are two kinds of voyages celebrated in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry." The first is the realistic voyage on a 19th century Brooklyn ferry that motivates the speaking voice of the poem to express his thoughts about his feelings of identity with the past, present and future generations of mankind. The "I" gives expression to his thoughts as he stands passively "on the rail" (3.25.161) of the ferry in transit, observing his fellow passengers, the currents below, the gull-filled sky above, and the variety of activity and motion surrounding him in the nearby and distant landscapes and seascapes. The second journey dramatized in the poem is

\textsuperscript{20} Miller, \textit{A Critical Guide}, pp. 201-209.

\textsuperscript{21} Miller, \textit{A Critical Guide}, p. 204.
more imaginative and metaphoric than the first. In this second journey, the persona seems to journey toward the future to become the crusading companion of his future readers. "Closer yet I approach you" (7.86.163), the poet says at one point to the reader who may be reading the poem twenty, fifty, or any number of years after the "I" of the poem made the realistic crossing that initiated the poet's reflections in the first place.

The title of the poem and the opening lines of Section 1 establish the fictive and realistic framework of the poem. Whitman places the speaking voice of the poem on a ferry in transit between Manhattan and Brooklyn shortly before sunset:

Flood-tide below me! I see you face to face!  
Clouds of the west—sun there half an hour high—I see you also face to face.  
(1.1-2.159)

In the next and last three lines of Section 1, the "I" claims an unusual or "curious" interest in his fellow passengers, in the passengers who cross on other ferry-boats, and in the passengers who will cross in the future:

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how curious you are to me!  
On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning home, are more curious to me than you suppose,  
And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more to me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose.  
(1.3-5.159-160)

Established in the above lines and made more operative in succeeding sections is the central metaphoric and symbolic significance of the ferry-boat itself and its motion across the waters. The ferry-boat is the realistic and historic
one that carried the poet "many and many a time" (3.27.161) between Brooklyn and Manhattan. Metaphorically, however, the poet likens the time spent on a ferry-boat to that part of one's existence between birth and death. In the metaphoric context of the poem, the home or port to which the passengers return is "the float forever held in solution" (5.62.162) from which the poet claims he and, by implication, all other passengers were originally "struck" (5.62.162) and thereby "receiv'd identity" (5.63.162) or material substance.

In Section 2, the "I," addressing no one in particular, contemplates his own crossing on the ferry and how he is only one of many who makes the crossing. But instead of feeling isolated and alienated from others, the poet feels "ties" (2.11.160) between himself and other future voyagers. All the pleasures that accrue to his senses as he observes from the rail will also accrue to other passengers, and his realization of this fact eventually leads him to announce to his future readers in Section 3 that he is at one with rather than isolated from all generations of mankind:

> 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,
> Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the
> river and the bright flow, I was refresh'd.
> (3.20-24.160)

Section 3 also contains a long, detailed catalog of the things observed by the "I" as he crosses the ferry. Nearly
I too many and many a time cross'd the river of old,
Watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls, saw them high in the air floating with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,
Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies and left the rest in strong shadow,
Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual edging toward the south,

Look'd on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet,
Look'd toward the lower bay to notice the vessels arriving,
Saw their approach, ... 
Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, ... 
The sailors at work in the rigging or out astride the spars,
The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls,
The large and small steamers in motion,
The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl of the wheels.

(3.27-42.161)

The catalog of Section 3, of which only an excerpt is quoted above, with its detailed and varied descriptive vignettes, lends verisimilitude to the dramatic framework of the poem; that is the "I" speaks as he is travelling on the Brooklyn Ferry. But the catalog and its accumulated images of motion which Whitman could supremely render.

22Chase, Walt Whitman Reconsidered, p. 109, maintains that "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" benefits "by Whitman's peculiar affinity for images of motion, his capacity to capture the sensation he himself cherished in his rambles about Long Island, his observation of birds in flight, and of sail boats on the Sound, his inveterate ferry-boat and horse-car riding. 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,' allowing him to associate images of motion with sea and the river, called for exactly that kind of supple, indolent, flowing motion which Whitman could supremely render."
motion and activity also serve as an objectification of the "eternal float of solution" (9.107.164) from which all material phenomena and beings are "struck" and toward which all will eventually return after death. 23

Section 3 began with the poet's announcement that he is with the "generations hence" (3.21.160), and the catalog that follows in the same section is the poet's attempt to make the announcement "true" by establishing the realistic foothold that should allow his future readers to feel tied to him. 24 In Section 4 the poet assumes he has transcended the gap between the time from which he speaks and the time in which the reader peruses the poem. 25 Therefore, he can

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23 Chase, Walt Whitman Reconsidered, p. 107, notes that "the river /in 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry' /is the perfect symbol for the 'float forever held in solution' from which 'identities' are 'struck,' just as the objects visualized in 'mast-hemm'd Manhattan' and in Brooklyn, as well as the gulls and boats dropping downstream, are perfect symbols of 'identity."

24 F. O. Mathiessen, American Renaissance (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 568, says: "The key-attitude that made Whitman a lyrical poet rather than an orator caused him to choose such a theme as that of crossing Brooklyn Ferry, and to celebrate the passage rather than the arrival. . . . His poem of the crossing might almost seem intended as an illustration of Coleridge's belief that the reader of poetry 'should be carried forward, not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, or a restless desire to arrive at the final solution; but by the pleasurable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself.' Indeed, taken literally what was for Coleridge only a metaphor, Whitman was so pleased with his journeys, and with exciting a similar attitude in his reader, that often he did not bother to write his poems but just left them heaps of materials."

25 Lester Goodson, "A Footnote on Whitman and Time," WWR, 17 (June, 1971), 55, says that in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" "poet and reader become one as they share this
continue to speak directly to the readers of the future as if the poet himself were in both the future and the past describing his experiences during the crossing in both present and past tense:

These and all else were to me the same as they are to you,
I loved well those cities, loved well the stately and rapid river,
The men and women I saw were all near to me,
Others the same—others who look back on me because I look'd forward to them,
(The time will come, though I stop here to-day and to-night.)

(4.49-53.162)

Up to Section 5, whenever the poet addressed his poem to an external audience, the context in which the pronoun "you" occurs suggests that the poet is speaking to a general or plural audience. But beginning with Section 5, the speaking voice strives for a much more intensified and intimate relation with the individual reader of the future. The impression created and emphasized in the last five sections is that the "I" has been as "disintegrated" (2.7.160) as he said he was earlier in the poem, and in his "disintegrated" (or disembodied) form he has voyaged into the future where he appears as a consoling companion to his readers. In Section 5, for example, the poet says in a direct address to his reader:

What is it then between us?
What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years between us?

(5.54-55.162)

experience at the rail while crossing on the ferry, as they transcend time and become aware of the eternal, the changeless."
He strives to gain the confidence of and acceptance from the reader by claiming that his doubts and questions in the past are the same as those felt by the present reader:

I too walk'd the streets of Manhattan island, and bathed in the waters around it, I too felt the curious abrupt questions stir within me.

(5.58-59.162)

In Section 6, the poet continues to impress his presence upon the reader by convincing him that he too had the same doubts, misgivings, and feelings close to despair that plague all men who do not possess the cosmic knowledge and peace obtained eventually by the poet himself:

Nor is it you alone who know what it is to be evil,
I am he who knew what it was to be evil,
I too knitted the old knot of contrariety.

(6.69-71.162-163)

The poet's use of the past tense in the above excerpt helps to evoke the impression that he is indeed with the reader in the future looking back on his own pre-liberated past.

Section 7 continues to evoke the intimate sense and feeling that the poet is a "disintegrated" figure who has journeyed from the past and who now hovers near to the reader:

Closer yet I approach you,
What thought you have of me now, I had as much of you--I laid in my stores in advance,
I consider'd long and seriously of you before you were born.

Who was to know what should come home to me?
Who knows but I am enjoying this?
Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as looking at you now, for all you cannot see me?

(7.86-91.163)
In Sections 8 and 9 the poet takes another rhetorical tack, for he now speaks as if he were completely confident of his acceptance by the reader. Accordingly, he uses the pronoun "we" in a confident, matter-of-fact way. For example, in Section 8 the poet concludes:

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?  
(8.98-100.164)

Then, in the concluding lines of the poem, in Section 9, after celebrating material substances as signs and symbols of spiritual facts, the poet can drop the rhetorical questioning that concluded Section 8 and use the pronoun "we" as he speaks both for himself and the reader in a tone suggesting that the poet has successfully merged with the readers of the future:

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb,  
beautiful ministers,  
We receive you with free sense at last, and  
are insatiate henceforward,  
Not you any more shall be able to foil us,  
or withhold yourselves from us,  
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,

26 Waskow, Whitman: Explorations in Form, p. 222, says of the conclusion of "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry": "The poem ends, in a sense, where it begins—in praise of the things of the eternal world. But there is a difference: at the end the speaker is saying We. A connection has been made between man and man as well as between man and Nature, and that 'crossing,' born of the speaker's concern and the reader's imaginative faith, testifies as much as any sensory experience to the fullness and richness of life."
You furnish your parts toward eternity,
Great or small, you furnish your parts
 toward the soul.

(9.126-132.165)

As is typical of several of Whitman's longer poems
(for example, "Song of Myself" and "Song of the Open Road"),
"Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" demonstrates well how Whitman can
alternate and develop three modes of expression. First, at
the beginning of the poem, the reader is presented with the
interior monologue of a persona who is reflecting upon the
various sights and activities surrounding him as he stands
"on the rail" of a ferry-boat. In addition to the opening
two lines of the poem, Section 2 in its entirety represents
the mode of interior monologue, for the poet does not seem
to be addressing any one in particular or in general; he
merely gives voice to his reflections about his growing
sense of identity with future generations:

The impalpable sustenance of me from all
things at all hours of the day,
The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme,
myself disintegrated, every one
disintegrated yet part of the scheme,

The current rushing so swiftly and swimming
with me far away,
The others that are to follow me, the ties
between me and them,
The certainty of others, the life, love, sight,
hearing of others.

(2.6-12.160)

The second mode of expression appears in the poem when
the poet speaks directly to the reader as in the following
line: "I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or
ever so many generations hence" (3.21.160). This second
mode also appears in those passages wherein the poet directs
his address to the personified inanimate and non-human objects of the material world: 27

Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta! stand up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn!

... Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean idly, yet haste with the hasting current;

Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles high in the air;

... Thrive, cities--bring your freight, bring your shows, ample and sufficient rivers,

Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more spiritual,

Keep your places, objects than which none else is more lasting.

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful ministers.

(9.105-126, 164-165)

The third mode of expression appears when he speaks for the reader and himself rather than to the reader. As noted previously, toward the end of Sections 8 and 9, the poet introduces the pronoun "we," which suggests that the "I" is no longer the solitary person on a nineteenth-century ferry but rather a disintegrated and spiritually merged companion of all generations. Thus, the poet's psychic journey into the future that was initiated during a realistic crossing on a ferry-boat has been completed. 28 The "I" began his

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27 Chase, Walt Whitman Reconsidered, p. 108, says: "In alleging that these objects--the 'dumb beautiful ministers'--mediate between man and eternity, Whitman has made them mediate between uncompleted particulars of the poem and the fixed perfection of poetic form."

28 E. H. Miller, Walt Whitman's Poetry, p. 207, says of the ferry in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry": "The ferry, an ordinary boat used for transportation, is reminiscent of the journey to the classical underworld as well as of the
realistic journey in solitude, but at the end of the psychic journey into the future he is at one with the people of the future and with the unseen evolutionary powers and forces of the universe.²⁹ During the course of the poem, the "I" crosses between Manhattan and Brooklyn, and he crosses between past and future, traversing through time and space. The poet says in "Passage to India" (discussed at length in the next chapter) that he is actually celebrating a "passage to more than India" (9.224.420); so, too, in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" is the poet celebrating a personal and spiritual crossing to more than Brooklyn or Manhattan. And as critic John D. Magee claims, "reading the poem becomes a journey for the reader as he, too, crosses the river of old with the poet."³⁰

V

The eight lyric poems following "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" recovery to the recesses of the human personality." Here, again, E. H. Miller is arguing for his theory of the regressive nature of Whitman's journeys. (See my note 12 in this chapter.)

²⁹ Richard D. McGhee, "Leaves of Grass and Cultural Development," WWR, 16 (March, 1970), 6, says: "In 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry' Whitman explores the world of man-made objects and discovers that the self does not need to be isolated in the world within itself, nor does it need to depend on a world of nature as a source of value; in 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,' the poet discovers that the objects which had been shaped from nature . . . may be appropriated to the self, may be absorbed into the world within the self."

Ferry" are not so dramatic as those discussed thus far. To be sure, there are many fine lyrical passages, but the basic purpose of the poems is to announce and to celebrate the wonders and mystical significance of democratic America and the role America and its people play in a fluctuating universe. On occasion, the poet does place himself into the action of the scenes he catalogs; however, usually the dramatic stance of the speaking voice is passive. The persona speaks with the voice of a confident and detached bardic and cosmic observer who wishes to bestow upon his readers the universal and mystical truths which he already possesses. Rarely does the "I" seem to undergo any personal and dramatic change or enlargement of spirit as he does in "Salut Au Monde," "Song of the Open Road," "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," and, of course, in the previously discussed "Song of Myself." The poet's own psychic journeys and personal dramatic involvement with America and the universe have taken place prior to the opening lines of the eight poems to be discussed in this section. Nevertheless, the journey and voyage motif does appear as part of the imagery and metaphoric content of the eight poems. As the poet urges others to understand, to accept, and to be consoled by the cosmic journey on which all human beings travel toward some undefined but certain spiritual goal, images and metaphors involving journeying or voyaging often help to make concrete and dramatic that which is abstract.

In "Song of the Answerer," for example, Whitman
attempts to define and to celebrate the exact nature of the unseen power of the Brahma-like "Answerer," who both transcends and exists within all material phenomena. In order to give this spirit some kind of palpable identity, Whitman personifies the spirit and its omniscient presence by using images and metaphors that liken it to a person who saunters or wanders about the world:

He walks with perfect ease in the capitol,
He walks among the Congress, and one Representative says to another, Here is our equal appearing and new.

Whoever he looks at in the traveler's coffee-house claims him.

(1.37-47.168)

In the second section of the poem, Whitman sees the Answerer as "the maker of true poems" (2.73.170). As Whitman attempts to expand the relationship existing between the Answerer, poetry, and poets, the journey and voyage motif appears to emphasize the peculiar vitality and function of "true poems" (2.67.169), which have the ability to "launch" readers into the realm of complete awareness of their part in the flux of the seen and unseen universe.

The words of the true poems give you more than poems,

They prepare for death, yet are they not the finish, but rather the outset,
They bring none to his or her terminus or to be content and full,
Whom they take they take into space to behold
the birth of stars, to learn one of the meanings,  
To launch off with absolute faith, to sweep through the ceaseless rings and never be quiet again.

(2.73-8.170)

In "Our Old Feuillage," Whitman attempts to evoke and to celebrate the diverse character of the landscape and the activities of America. Essentially, the poem is a long catalog of short vignettes of the American landscape with little narrative action. However, the poem is interesting and significant because Whitman defines both explicitly and by demonstration his concept of the function of the poet and of poetic technique. The poet suggests that he is competent to celebrate America because he has wandered over the country "gathering" (14.172) in the sights and sounds that confront him. He puts these sights and sounds "at random" (68.175) into his songs, and he becomes "a part" (68.175) of that which he has gathered and celebrated. Thus,

31 Miller, A Critical Guide, p. 202, catalogs both "Song of the Answerer" and "Our Old Feuillage" under the sub-heading "the poet and his material (the world)."

32 Blodgett and Bradley, eds., Comprehensive Reader's Edition, pp. 170-171 m., reprint Whitman's letter of January 7, 1860, to Harper's Magazine, in which the poet himself interpreted "Our Old Feuillage": "The theory of 'A Chant of National Feuillage' is to bring in, (devoting a line, or two or three lines to each,) a comprehensive collection of touches, locales, incidents, idiomatic scenes, from every section, South, West, North, East, Kanada, Texas, Maine, Virginia, the Mississippi Valley, etc., etc., etc.—all intensely fused to the urgency of compact America, 'America always'—all in a vein of graphic, short, clear, hastening along—as having a huge bouquet to collect, and quickly taking and binding in every characteristic subject that offers itself—making a compact, the-whole-surrounding, National Poem, after its sort, after my own style."
he can eventually portray himself as more than an observer and a recorder. For example, after he announces his poetic technique, he can say:

Southward there, I screaming, with wings slow flapping, with the myriads of gulls wintering along the coasts of Florida, Otherways there atwixt the banks of the Arkansaw, the Rio Grande, the Nueces, the Brazos, the Tombigbee, the Red River, the Saskatchewan or the Osage, I with the spring waters laughing and skipping and running.

(69-70.175)

The poet continues in this manner for several lines, and then finally turns to the readers and urges them to achieve for themselves that which he has given witness to:

These affording, in all their particulars, the old feuillage to me and to America, how can I do less than pass the clew of the union of them, to afford the like to you? Whoever you are! how can I but offer you divine leaves, that you also be eligible as I am? How can I but as here chanting, invite you for yourself to collect bouquets of the incomparable feuillage of these States?

(80-82.176)

Thus, the poet urges the readers to set out on their own journey to observe and to absorb America as he has done. Then they, like the poet, will begin to feel part of that which is observed and of the mystic "union" that binds the American landscape to the American individual.

"A Song of Joys" is an exhuberant celebration of life and of the joy felt by one who is spiritually confident about death and at one with the world and the fluctuating cosmic design. The journey and voyage motif appears in the imagery and metaphors of the poem to emphasize the vitality and vigor with which the poet embraces and accepts the world
and the beneficent spiritual destiny toward which he and everything about him tends. Nearly everything selected by the poet to be celebrated is described in terms of its motion and vitality. For example, after a brief introduction in which the poet announces that he desires "to make the most jubilant song" (1.176), there follows a catalog of worldly activity that gives the poet both spiritual and sensual pleasure:

O for the voices of animals--O for the swiftness and balance of fishes!
O for the dropping of raindrops in a song!
O for the sunshine and motion of waves in a song!

O the joy of my spirit--it is uncaged--it darts like lightning!

O the engineer's joys! to go with a locomotive!
To hear the hiss of steam, the merry shriek, the steam-whistle, the laughing locomotive!
To push with resistless way and speed off in the distance.

(4-12.176-177)

The poet continues to catalog a variety of life's activities; so ecstatic does he become while celebrating these activities that he begins to describe himself as if he were participating in the activities he himself has summoned up in his poetic imagination. For example, after admiring engineers, locomotives and horsemen, he says:

O the fireman's joys!
I hear the alarm at dead of night,
I hear bells, shouts! I pass the crowd, I run!
The sight of the flames maddens me with pleasure.

(18-21.177)

In several succeeding passages, the poet celebrates and speaks as if he were actively participating in the vigorous daily activities of laboring American men. In the vignettes
that follow, the poet describes himself as one participating on walks along the shore in search of eels and clams or as one working on a lobster boat.

I go to all the places one after another, and then row back to the shore. There in a huge kettle of boiling water the lobsters shall be boiled till their color becomes scarlet.

(46-47.179)

Although the poet celebrates various activities which occur on both the land and the sea, by the conclusion of the poem the sea and anticipated voyages upon it become the central symbols and metaphors for the confidence felt by the poet with regard to death. Toward the end of the poem, after a long celebration of life and its joys, he says that he has met "life as a powerful conqueror" (135.182). The poet finds that when one meets life in this manner, not only will one appreciate the joys of life, but also one will understand and look forward to "the joy of death" (139.182). He concludes with a final ecstatic and confident celebration of a voyage upon the symbol of eternal spirituality, the sea:

O to sail to sea in a ship! To leave this steady unendurable land, To leave the tiresome sameness of the streets, the sidewalks and the houses, To leave you O you solid motionless land, and entering a ship, To sail and sail and sail and sail!

O to have life henceforth a poem of new joys! To dance, clap hands, exult, shout, skip, leap, roll on, float on! To be a sailor of the world bound for all ports, A ship itself, (see indeed these sails I spread to the sun and air,) A swift and swelling ship full of rich words, full of joys.

(152-161.183)
In "Song of the Broad-Axe" Whitman celebrates a dynamic and vital America. The unifying symbol of the poem is the axe, the main tool used by the expanding and westward-moving American population. As the pioneers moved westward, the wilderness gave way to clearings and to buildings. In the poem the axe symbolizes the constantly developing character of America and its people. After "the axe leaps" (9.186.192) to clear forests, Whitman celebrates its role in creating the shapes that characterize the material identity of America. For example:

The axe leaps!
The solid forest gives fluid utterances,
They tumble forth, they rise and form,
Hut, tent, landing, survey,
.................................
The shapes arise!
Shapes of factories, arsenals, foundries, markets.
(9.186-208.192-193)

The material shapes (i.e., the factories, arsenals, etc.) and the labor spent to build those shapes give identity, unity, and meaning to the more abstract shape and essential character of America.

The main shapes arise!
Shapes of Democracy total, result of centuries,
Shapes ever projecting other shapes,
Shapes of turbulent manly cities,
Shapes of the friends and home-givers of the whole earth,
Shapes bracing the earth and braced with the whole earth.
(12.249-254.195)

"Song of the Broad-Axe" is not a dramatic poem in so far as the "I" is a participating and developing persona within the poem. The "I" speaks in a bardic voice to announce and to celebrate the spiritual and material
greatness of America and the vigor of the people who worked together to clear and to build upon the land. Whitman uses the first-person "I" only in Section 8 and in a brief parenthetical aside in the first two lines of Section 9. In Section 8 the poet speaks as a disembodied and cosmic figure who seems to hover and to careen over the world while peering into the past and present in order to affirm the greatness of present-day America:

I see the European headsman,
He stands mask'd, clothed in red, with huge legs and strong naked arms,
And leans on a ponderous axe.

I see the clear sunset of martyrs,
I see from the scaffolds the descending ghosts,
I see those who in any land have died for the good cause,
I see the blood wash'd entirely away from the axe,
I see the headsman withdraw and become useless,
I see the scaffold untrodden and mouldy, I see no longer any axe upon it,
I see the mighty and friendly emblem of the power of my own race, the newest, largest race.

(8.166-183.191-192)

The above passage is the total extent of the poet's own metaphoric journeying and voyaging. However, the journey and voyage motif does appear as an image in Section 3 as Whitman, in a few, short vignettes, evokes and celebrates

33 McGhee, "Leaves of Grass and Cultural Development," p. 6, discusses "Song of the Broad-Axe" as a poem in which the poet presents an "exploration of the natural world." Miller, A Critical Guide, p. 202, places the poem under the general heading "The Self's Engagement with the World" and under the sub-heading with those poems that Miller sees as "bouquets of divine leaves."
the journeys of settlers from across the Atlantic to New England and on into the far west:

The log at the wood-pile, the axe supported by it,
The sylvan hut, the vine over the doorway, the space clear'd for a garden,

The wailing and moaning at intervals, the thought of the sea,
The thought of ships struck in the storm and put on their beam ends, and the cutting away of masts,
The sentiment of the huge timbers of old-fashion'd houses and barns,
The remember'd print or narrative, the voyage at a venture of men, families, goods,
The disembarkation, the founding of a new city,
The voyage of those who sought a New England and found it, the outset anywhere,
The settlements of the Arkansas, Colorado, Ottawa, Willamette,
The slow progress, the scant fare, the axe, rifle, saddle-bags.

(3.24-35.185)

The fact that the journey and voyage motif is not as dramatically and as pervasively present in "Song of the Broad-Axe" as in many other poems does not mean the poem is less effective than others. As noted previously, the poem is controlled and unified throughout by the axe and its value as a symbol of the "muscle and pluck" (4.94.188) shown by those pioneers who moved across America, leaving behind, first, settlements and, then, the great cities.\(^\text{34}\) As Whitman says in Section 4,

\(^{34}\) Blodgett and Bradley, eds., Comprehensive Reader's Edition, pp. 184-185 n., say: "To WW the broad-axe is an emblem--the emblem of a long varied train which is the poem itself, powerfully setting forth the attributes and shapes which the great instrument, both builder and destroyer, symbolizes--the creative strength of man deriving from the confident, independent masculinity and femininity which the poem celebrates."
even the great cities are only the symbols and manifestations of the great people who built them:

What do you think endures?
Do you think a great city endures?

Away! these are not to be cherish'd for themselves,
They fill their hour, the dancers dance, the musicians play for them,
The show passes, all does well enough of course,
All does very well till one flash of defiance.

A great city is that which has the greatest men and women,
If it be a few ragged huts it is still the greatest city in the whole world.

(4.100-108.188-189)

"Song of the Broad-Axe," then, celebrates both the temporal and the eternal voyage and journey of man's spirit across America.

In "Song of the Exposition," Whitman celebrates the journey of the eternally existing spirit of liberty and democracy from the old world, where it had lain dormant, to America, where it received a revitalized identity. Referring to this eternally existing spirit, later to be identified and personified as "Columbia" (4.61.198), and to the new world as the place where it can thrive, Whitman says in Section 1:

After all not to create only, or found only,
But to bring perhaps from afar what is already founded,
To give it our own identity, average, limitless, free,
To fill the gross the torpid bulk with vital religious fire,
Not to repel or destroy so much as accept, fuse, rehabilitate,
To obey as well as command, to follow more than to lead,
These also are the lessons of our New World;
While how little the New after all, how much
the Old, Old World!  (1.4-11.195-196)

In Section 2, the journey and voyage motif appears as an image in the poet's invocation to the Muse to invite her to "migrate from Greece and Ionia" (2.15.196) in order to enable him, the American poet, to announce and to celebrate the arrival of "Columbia" in the New World.

Although the poem as a whole is marred by Whitman's strident and self-conscious bardic tone, the journey and voyage motif appears as an image to personify and to make concrete the abstract notion that "Columbia" has crossed the Atlantic. For example, toward the end of Section 3, the poet says:

I say I see, my friends, if you do not, the illustrious emigré, (having it is true in her day, although the same, changed, journey'd considerable,)
Making directly for this rendezvous,
vigorously clearing a path for herself,
striding through the confusion,
By thud of machinery and shrill steam-whistle undismay'd,
Bluff'd not a bit by drain-pipe, gasometers, artificial fertilizers,
Smiling and pleas'd with palpable intent to stay,
She's here, install'd amid the kitchen ware!
(3.54-59.198)

The remainder of the poem is devoted to an ecstatic and sometimes strident celebration of the social and material progress that results from "Columbia" finding a home in the new world. As the guide for the newly arrived

35Blodgett and Bradley, eds., Comprehensive Reader's Edition, p. 196 n., claim that "Song of the Exposition" remains one of WW's comparative failures because it does not surmount its own rhetoric."
"Columbia," Whitman catalogs the people and the activities that characterize the unique qualities of America; occasionally, the poet uses images that suggest the great vitality and motion of present and future America. For example, in Section 5, as the poet attempts to "scan and prophesy" the "manifold ensemble" (5.81-82.199) that results from American labor inspired by "Columbia's" banner, "Freedom" (5.88.200), he says:

Here ![In America!] shall you trace in flowing operation,  
In every state of practical, busy movement,  
the rills of civilization.  
(5.95-96.200)

Following the above excerpt is a catalog and a celebration of specific types of activity associated with agricultural and industrial labor, such as cotton-picking, flour making, mining and printing.

In the final section the jingoism that pervades the poem is tempered somewhat by a parenthetical aside in which the poet, while not repudiating the material greatness and uniqueness of America, suggests as in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" that America does not represent the end of the evolutionary journey of mankind and its labors:

Now here and these and hence in peace,  
all thine O Flag!  
And here and hence for thee, O universal Muse!  
and thou for them!  
And here and hence O Union, all the work and workmen thine!  
None separate from thee--henceforth One only,  
we and thou,  
(For the blood of the children, what is it,  
only the blood maternal?  
And lives and works, what are they all at last,  
extcept the roads to faith and death?)  
(9.228-233.205)
In "Song of the Redwood-Tree," as in the previous poems, Whitman continues to celebrate the expanding material and spiritual progress of mankind in the new world. In the dramatic framework of the poem, the poet hears the "voice of a mighty dying tree in the redwood forest" (1.5.206) along the coast of California. Although the tree is "chanting" its own death, the poet learns that the death-chant of the tree is actually an ecstatic chant of self-sacrifice to the "unseen moral essence of all the vast materials of America" (1.58.208) and to "the vistas of coming humanity" (1.61.209). When the chant ceases, the poet has gained a new perspective of American expansion toward the west and sees that this expansion is but one step toward the fulfillment of an inevitable and beneficent evolutionary process:

Fresh come, to a new world indeed, yet long prepared,
I see the genius of the modern, child of the real and ideal,
Clearing the ground for broad humanity, the true America, heir of the past so grand,
To build a grander future. (3.102-105.210)

The journey and voyage motif appears, as in "Song of the Broad-Axe," in Section 2 as an image to evoke the activity of the settlers as they move across America to the west and the subsequent shipping connections with the far east that ensue:

At last the New arriving, assuming, taking possession,
A swarming and busy race settling and organizing everywhere,
Ships coming in from the whole round world,
and going out to the whole world,
To India and China and Australia and the
thousand island paradises of the Pacific.
(2.89-92.209)

As developed more fully in "Passage to India," the poet indicates in the opening lines of Section 3 that the American expansion to the western shores and the activities launched by putting America in touch with the far east are but symbolic of greater material and spiritual events in the evolution of mankind:

But more in you than these, lands of the Western shore,
(These but the means, the implements, the standing-ground,)
I see in you, certain to come, the promise of thousands of years, till now deferr'd,
Promis'd to be fulfill'd, our common kind, the race.
(3.95-98.210)

Insofar as the journey and voyage motif is concerned, "A Song for Occupations," the poem following "Song of the Redwood-Tree," is not a particularly significant poem.

Although in many poems the motif contributes to the dramatic effectiveness of those poems in which the motif is either pervasive or significant, the absence of the motif does not necessarily detract from a poem in which it does not appear. Whitman can manipulate his images and dramatic poses in ways that preclude the appearance of the motif. "A Song for Occupations," for the most part, is one such poem. In this poem, the poet speaks as a disembodied, cosmic consoler who is in possession of the truths of the universe and who wishes to bestow these truths upon the reader.
At the beginning of the poem the poet asserts his god-like identity by claiming that he is "neither a servant nor a master" (1.10.211). In succeeding lines he tries to demonstrate his divine insight by announcing the "eternal meanings" (1.3.211) he has found "in the labor of engines and trades and the labor of fields" (1.2.211). The purpose of the seemingly egotistic assertions, however, is to convince the readers that they and their activities are divine also; and it is on this note that the poem reaches its conclusion in Section 6:

Will you seek afar off? you surely come back at last,
In things best known to you finding the best,
Or as good as the best,
In folks nearest to you finding the sweetest,
Strongest, lovingest,
Happiness, knowledge, not in another place but this place, not for another hour but this hour,

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
You workwomen and workmen of these States
Having your own divine and strong life,
And all else giving place to men and women like you.

(6.136-143.218)

Finally, in "A Song of the Rolling Earth," the last long poem of these eleven individual poems, the journey and voyage motif appears as a metaphor to aid the poet as he continues to urge his readers to find spiritual consolation in the flux and change they observe in themselves and in nature. As the title of the poem suggests, the unifying symbol of flux is the earth itself as it rolls through the universe as if it were on voyage on the seas of space and time:
Sunshine, storm, cold, heat, forever withstanding, passing, carrying, 
The soul's realization and determination still inheriting, 
The fluid vacuum around and ahead still entering and dividing, 
No balk retarding, no anchor anchoring, on no rock striking, 
Swift, glad, content, unbereav'd, nothing losing, 
Of all able and ready at any time to give strict account, 
The divine ship sails the divine sea. 
(1.65-72.222)

The poet urges his readers to see that the individual soul is part of a divine voyage:

To her children the words of the eloquent dumb great mother [i.e., the earth] never fail, 
The true words do not fail, for motion does not fail and reflection does not fail, 
Also the day and night do not fail, and the voyage we pursue does not fail. 
(1.41-43.221)

And, speaking directly to his readers, he announces in the opening lines of Section 2:

Whoever you are! motion and reflection are especially for you, 
The divine ship sails the divine sea for you. 
(2.73-74.222)

With regard to the destination of the divine ship, Richard Chase says: "It is hard to know where the ship is bound for, except that it is transporting mankind toward a happy realm variously identified as eternity and universal democracy."36

36Chase, Walt Whitman Reconsidered, p. 146.
CHAPTER VI

REPRESENTATIVE POEMS

I

Thus far, this study has attempted to establish the pervasiveness and the significance of the journey and voyage motif as it appears from the beginning of Whitman's final arrangement of *Leaves of Grass* through the eleven individual poems following the "Calamus" cluster. The motif is as pervasive and often as poetically and dramatically functional in many of the remaining poems and clusters (see appendix) as it is in the poetry discussed thus far; however, since many of the poems are either similar or inferior to others, there is little need to explicate each one. Instead, the remainder of this study will attempt to isolate different but representative ways in which the journey and voyage motif appears in the remaining poems of *Leaves of Grass* and informs them.

II

Any reader of a well-edited final edition of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* soon realizes that the poems one encounters are not arranged according to the chronological order in which they were written. Even after Whitman committed himself to a final, general arrangement of his poems in the
1881 edition, he continued to omit, add and rearrange lines and whole poems until the final, or deathbed, edition of 1891-1892.\(^1\) To discuss and to isolate individual poems is to do a disservice to their author, because he obviously desired his poems to be read in the total context in which they appear. Several critics have attempted to demonstrate the structural unity of *Leaves of Grass* by presenting reasons why certain clusters and individual poems are placed where Whitman chose to place them.\(^2\) While it may be avoiding the problem of structural unity completely, one way to deal with Whitman's poetry, at least insofar as the journey and voyage motif is concerned, is to categorize the types of poems encountered in *Leaves of Grass*.\(^3\)

In general, there are four types of poems. First,

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\(^3\)Waskow, *Whitman Explorations in Form*, categorizes Whitman's poetry in terms of the poet's mode of speaking and the degree to which a poem is didactic or non-didactic; see esp. chapter IV: "Direction and Non-Direction: Didacticism and Imagism," pp. 73-113. Miller, *A Critical Guide*, categorizes Whitman's poems according to themes, see esp. chart on p. 186. V. K. Chari, "Structure and Poetic Growth in *Leaves of Grass,*" *WWR*, 9 (September, 1963), 58-63, categorizes, like Waskow, according to the modes of the speaking voice; also, Chari takes heavily into account the time when a particular poem was written. Chari's article is especially good in summarizing other attempts to categorize the types of poems to be found in *Leaves of Grass.*
there are poems such as "Song of Myself" and "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" which, when considered in their entirety, record and celebrate the awakening of a new and personal consciousness and faith. The initial tone of this type of poem is usually meditative and private. The speaking voice during the course of the poem struggles to understand himself or to reconcile himself to his relationship with other people and with the fluctuating universe. Often these poems conclude in a mode of rhetoric that characterizes the second group of poems. In this second group of poems, which contains "I Sing the Body Electric" and "Passage to India," the poet announces new ameliorative truths rather than creating the personal experiences, mystical or realistic, that led him to a new awareness as in the first group. The general tone of this second group is bardic, public, and exuberantly confident about the destiny of the poet himself and others. In the third group of poems the poet presents descriptive vignettes. These poems are usually short and part of clusters such as "Drum-Taps" or "Autumn Rivulets." These vignettes are usually suggestively symbolic or allegorical, especially in the context of the cluster in which they appear or in the context of the entire Leaves of Grass. The poems in this third group, such as "Cavalry Crossing a Ford" in "Drum-Taps" and "Patrolling Barnegat" in "Sea-Drift," are often objective and impersonal.

⁴Chari, "Structure and Poetic Growth in Leaves of Grass, p. 61, calls the poems of this group "expansive poems."
The "I" of the poem, if he appears at all, seems to be a passive and detached observer, and the experiences or sights recorded seem to have little emotional effect on the speaker other than motivating him to capture those experiences or sights in words. In the fourth group of poems, which also tend to be short poems (sometimes only one or two lines) scattered through clusters such as "Whispers of Heavenly Death" and "Songs of Parting," the speaking voice expresses his generally optimistic anticipation of the continuing voyage of his own soul after death.

The difficulty involved in establishing the above four categories is that the characteristics of each can often be found in several of the long individual poems, such as "Song of Myself." Nevertheless, the categories are a convenient way to isolate certain poems for discussion. Insofar as this study is concerned, the journey and voyage motif appears as image or symbol in and contributes to representative poems of each category.

III

In those poems of the first group which record and celebrate the awakening of a new and personal consciousness, the journey and voyage motif often appears as an image that emphasizes the solitude and introspective musings of the speaking voice. Representative poems of this category are "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life," "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," "Prayer of Columbus," "Sleepers," and several shorter lyrics.
"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" appears in a cluster of poems entitled "Sea-Drift." As the cluster title implies, the imagery of the individual poems contained therein evokes the sights and sounds of the sea and the seashore. The journey and voyage motif appears as an image that helps the reader to place the speaking voice into a personal, realistic and dramatic situation. For example, the mystical awareness arrived at by the boy in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" occurred during a solitary walk on the beach: "Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving his bed wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot" (4.246). Thus, while the experience recorded in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" is mystical and while the boy is a relatively passive observer and listener to the "he-bird" (50.248) who laments a lost mate, Whitman seems to take care to root the remembered experience in a realistic and personal dramatic situation that involves a boy wandering alone on the edge of the sea.

Similarly, and more explicitly, the awareness arrived at in "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life," the poem which follows "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," comes to the speaking voice as he wanders along the sea-shore. This poem, for example, begins:

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5Blodgett and Bradley, eds., Comprehensive Reader's Edition, p. 246n., say that the "Sea-Drift" cluster "is one of the poet's most consonent arrangements, held together by the impression, deep in childhood memory of the sea and the beach, an influence which is at the heart of his acceptance of the tragic in life."
As I ebb'd with the ocean of life,
As I wended the shores I know,
As I walk'd where the ripples continually
wash you Paumanok.

(1.1-3.253)

The first section of the poem contains a lyrical description
of what the persona sees during his solitary walk along the
known sea-shore, and the last lines of the section reiterate
and re-establish the dramatic and fictive framework that
motivates the philosophic and mystical musings to follow in
succeeding sections:

Miles walking, the sound of breaking waves
the other side of me,
Paumanok there and then as I thought the
old thought of likenesses,
These you presented to me you fish-shaped
island,
As I wended the shores I know,
As I walk'd with that electric self-seeking
types.

(1.13-17.254)

The sounds and sights of the sea and the sea-shore soon lead
the speaking voice to realize that his realistic wanderings
on the sea-shore are analogous to the mystical journey upon
which he is already embarked. However, the meaning and des-
tination of this journey are shrouded in mystery. In Sec-
tion 2 the poet begins to contemplate this journey:

As I wend the shores I know not,
As I list to the dirge, the voice of men and
women wreck'd,
As I inhale the impalpable breezes that set
in upon me,
As the ocean so mysterious rolls toward me
closer and closer,
I too but signify at the utmost a little
wash'd-up drift,
A few sands and dead leaves to gather,
Gather, and merge myself as part of the
sands and drift.

(2.18-24.254)
Unlike the transformation that takes place in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," the poet of "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life" does not resolve his despair and sense of alienation from the mystery of the universe. Except for his emerging sense of identity with other human souls, the poet becomes fully aware of an ironic social and cosmic indifference to him:

O baffled, balk'd, bent to the very earth,
Oppress'd with myself that I have dared to open my mouth,
Aware now that amid all that blab whose echoes recoil upon me I have not once had the least idea who or what I am,
But that before all my arrogant poems the real Me stands yet untouch'd, untold, altogether unreach'd,
Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock-congratulatory signs and bows,
With peals of distant ironical laughter at every word I have written,
Pointing in silence to these songs, and then to the sand beneath.

(2.25-31.254)

The poem concludes in the form of a fervent and desperate prayer addressed to the sea, the symbol of the ultimate mystery from which the poet feels alienated:

Ebb, ocean of life, (the flow will return,)
Cease not your moaning you fierce old mother,
Endlessly cry for your castaways, but fear not, deny not me,
Rustle not up so hoarse and angry against my feet as I touch you or gather from you.

(4.51-54.255)

And in the final lines the poet speaks his prayer on behalf of other human beings as well as himself:

Just as much for us that sobbing dirge of Nature,
Just as much whence we come that blare of the cloud-trumpets,
We, capricious, brought hither we know not whence, spread out before you, You up there walking or sitting, Whoever you are, we too lie in drifts at your feet.

(4.67-71.256)

In "Prayer of Columbus" the speaking voice, Columbus, also muses about the meaning and purpose of his life as he wanders along the sea-shore:

A battered, wrecked old man, Thrown on this savage shore, far, far from home, Pent by the sea and dark rebellious brows, twelve dreary months, Sore, stiff with many toils, sickened and nigh to death, I take my way along the island's edge, Venting a heavy heart.

(1-6.421)

Like "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life," "Prayer of Columbus" is also a dejection poem. The speaker's solitary walk on the beach raises questions and doubts in his mind rather than soothing or comforting him; however, in the course of his meditations he does begin to sense that he has been more than a worldly voyager. He takes some solace in the fact that, while his voyages and explorations have yielded no worldly fame or reward, they have drawn him closer to understanding God:

My terminus near, The clouds already closing in upon me, The voyage balked, the course disputed, lost, I yield my ship to Thee.

My hands, my limbs grow nerveless, My brain feels rack'd, bewildered, Let the old timbers part, I will not part, I will cling fast to Thee, 0 God, though the waves buffet me, Thee, Thee at least I know.

(47-55.423)
That the awarenesses arrived at by the speaking voice in the above three poems come while journeying or wandering along the edge of the sea is symbolically as well as dramatically significant. The land's edge serves as an excellent symbol of the line separating worldly and spiritual knowledge. The sea and its mysterious beckoning and unknown nature is analogous to the mysterious spiritual universe. And, of course, the land and its inhabitants would be analogous to what is known and finite. At the edge of the land, human beings can look back over past journeys, but they can only contemplate the nature of the journey or voyage into the spiritual realm after death. The shore, then symbolizes the limit of a man's journey through life, and a voyage on the sea beyond and certain knowledge of the nature and destination of that voyage can only take place after death. The literal sea in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" and in other poems in *Leaves of Grass* brings these thoughts to the poet:

Where to answering, the sea,  
Delaying not, hurrying not,  
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,

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6 Miller, *A Critical Guide*, p. 109, says the following with regard to the symbolic value of the shore in Whitman's poetry: "The sea 'loves' the land as the spirit is attracted to the body, gains its identity through the body, finds its fulfillment only through the physical. With the land and sea established as symbols of the material and spiritual (they have been established in earlier sections of *Leaves of Grass*), the point of contact, the shore, inevitably develops special significance. It is symbolic of death itself, that point where the material life ends and the spiritual begins."
Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word
death,
And again death, death, death, death.
(165-169.252)

In "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," a representative poem of the first group because it, too, like "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," records an experience that involves a changed or awakened consciousness, the initial grief of the speaking voice is tempered as a result of what he heard while on an imagined journey "Down to the shores of the water" (14.124.334). After the poet hears and "tallies," or records, the song of the "gray-brown bird" (14.127.334), the poet envisions a mystic journey over America over which he soars like a disembodied cosmic spirit. On this imagined flight the poet's attention focuses on the deaths resulting from war. But the "carol" of the bird has left him with the awareness that it is not the dead but rather the living who suffer:

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
I saw the debris and debris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
But I saw they were not as was thought,
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not,
The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd,
And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffer'd,
And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.
(15.177-184.336)

Thus, in the last section, the poet has transcended the despair he felt at the beginning of the poem when he mourned the "powerful western fallen star" (2.7.329):
I cease from my song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting
the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.
(16.195-197.337)

This reconciled or changed attitude toward the "fallen star"
was a result of experiences encountered while on visionary
journeys.7

In "The Sleepers" the speaking voice of the poem under-
goes a changed awareness as a result of what he experiences
on a mystic journey through the night. The opening lines
establish the dramatic context because the "I" speaks in the
present tense at the beginning of his disembodied mystic
journey:

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.
(1.1-3.424)

This journey, however, is like a journey through purgatory,
for the "I" indicates in the next few lines that he is not
at all content with himself or with that which he envisions
of other people.

Wandering and confused, lost to myself, ill-
assorted, contradictory,
Pausing, gazing, bending, and stopping.

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7 In addition to the visionary journeys of the poet in
"Lilacs," there is, of course, the journey of Lincoln's cof-
fin described in the poem. Edward Butscher, "Whitman's
Attitudes Toward Death: The Essential Paradox," WWR, 17
(March, 1971), 18, notes that in "Lilacs" Whitman's descrip-
tions are muted where they should be, and the flow, the typi-
cal Whitmanesque expansion comes, at last, in the right
place, at the right time, during the journey of Lincoln's
coffin accross the continent."
The wretched features of ennuyés, the white features of corpses, the livid faces of drunkards, the sick-gray faces of onanists, the gash'd bodies on battle-fields, the insane in their strong-door'd rooms, the sacred idiots, the new-born emerging from gates, and the dying emerging from gates, the night pervades them and infolds them. (1.4-10.424)

But the mystic journey through the night is eventually restorative, not because of the sights and activities observed, many of which are indeed horrible, but rather because of the ability of the speaking voice to identify with everyone he encounters in his vision. His great sympathy for others has restored him and driven away his initial despair to such an extent that, by the end of the poem, he emerges from his visionary journey self-confident and reconciled:

I too pass from the night,
I stay a while away O night, but I return to you again and I love you.

Why should I be afraid to trust myself to you?
I am not afraid, I have been well brought forward by you,
I love the rich running day, but I do not desert her in whom I lay so long,
I know not how I came of you and I know not where I go with you, but I know I came well and shall go well.

I will stop only a time with the night, and rise betimes,
I will duly pass the day O my mother, and duly return to you. (8.177-184.433)

In the context of "The Sleepers" the night through which the "I" journeys emerges as a symbol of the spiritual realm from which everyone comes and to which all must go after death. The night, then, is another symbol for "the float forever
held in solution," referred to in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" (5.62.162),\(^8\) from which the "I" and all other human beings have been "struck" to form a material identity and to which all will eventually return. The sleepers the "I" observes on his journey through the night are all beautiful to him because in their sleep they appear to have transcended their individual identities and anxieties. The sleepers prefigure the eventual merging of all souls after death. Hence, by the conclusion of the poem, as quoted above, the speaking voice is no longer as "confused," "lost," "ill-assorted," and "contradictory" as he was prior to his visionary journey through the night (1.1-5.424). His journey through the night has been restorative because it has yielded him intimations of the beneficent nature of the identity and ultimate destiny of mankind.\(^9\)

There are several short lyrics throughout *Leaves of Grass* in which the poet expresses his reflections in an explicit, present-tense dramatic context that strives to suggest that the reflections and insights occur to him as he

\(^8\)See Chapter V of this study.

\(^9\)Sister Eva Mary, O.S.F., "Shades of Darkness in 'The Sleepers,'" *WWR*, 15 (September, 1969), 189, says that the poet's vision in "The Sleepers" "enables the poet to see darkness and night as symbolizing the fulfillment of the journey of life--the return home." Also, Joyce Kornblatt, "Whitman's Vision of the Past in 'The Sleepers,'" *WWR*, 16 (September, 1970), 89, notes that "the vision in "The Sleepers" is not fragmented; it is whole, inclusive, extensive. For Whitman, all elements of the past fuse with all elements of the present--as body with spirit, as good with evil, as life with death. Time becomes organic."
wanders. For example, the description of the mating eagles in "The Dalliance of the Eagles" occurs during an afternoon walk:

   Skirting the river road, (my forenoon walk, my rest,"
   Skyward in air a sudden muffled sound, the
dalliance of the eagles. 

   (1-2.273)

In "A March in the Ranks Hard-Prest, and the Road Unknown" the poet places himself among the marching souls:

   A march in the ranks hard-prest, and the
   road unknown,
   ... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
   We come to an open space in the woods, and
   halt by the dimlighted building.

   (1-5.305)

What follows the opening lines of this poem is a description of the disarray and horror in the camp of a retreating army. The description, as in other poems, is made dramatic because of the personal, present-tense involvement of the speaking voice. At the conclusion of the poem the camp breaks, and orders are given to resume marching; however, before the conclusion, the road to be marched upon and the march itself have become suggestively symbolic of the journey through life and into eternity:

   . . . I bend to the dying lad, his eyes open,
a half-smile gives he me,
Then the eyes close, calmly close, and I speed
forth to the darkness,
Resuming, marching, ever in darkness marching,
on in the ranks,
The unknown road still marching.

   (22-25.306)

Similarly, in "As Toilsome I Wander'd Virginia's Woods" the poet describes a soldier's grave and its epithet
encountered while on a walk through the woods (1.307). In
"The City Dead-House" the poet's reflections on lifeless
bodies occur during a walk through the city:

By the city dead-house by the gate,
As idly sauntering wending my way from the
clangor,
I curious pause, . . .

(1-3.367)

In "Song of Prudence" the poet begins his reflections
"On Time, Space, Reality" (2.373) by placing the "I" in an
explicit dramatic context which suggests that the thoughts
expressed in the poem occur while he is wandering over the
streets of Manhattan:

Manhattan's streets I saunter'd pondering,
On Time, Space, Reality--on such as these,
and abreast with them Prudence.

(1-2.373)

What follows these opening lines, however, is a long
abstract philosophic rambling that makes little point other
than to express the idea that all actions have direct as
well as indirect consequences. Thus, the attempt in the
opening lines to establish some kind of present tense dra-
matic spontaneity is quickly abandoned and the poem for the
most part is dramatically ineffective.

The poet is generally quite successful, however, in
the short poems in which he merely describes an external
scene that he would have his readers believe he is encounter-
ing on a walk or realistic journey. Such a poem is the
previously referred to "The Dalliance of the Eagles," in
which, after the poet establishes the present tense walk
upon which the "I" is supposedly engaged, he describes the
sight of the two mating eagles. The poet draws no morals, nor does he indicate in any explicit way that there is any symbolic or metaphysical significance to be drawn from the description. He merely but quite effectively evokes the gyrating and clashing bodies of the two birds:

The rushing amorous contact high in space together, The clinching interlocking claws, a living, fierce, gyration wheel, Four beating wings, two beaks, a swirling mass tight grappling, In tumbling, turning clustering loops, straight downward falling, Till o'er the river pois'd, the twain yet one, a moment's lull, A motionless still balance in the air, then parting, talons loosing, Upward again on slow-firm pinions slanting, their separate diverse flight, She hers, he his, pursuing.

In the context of other similar descriptive poems and of the entire *Leaves of Grass*, the above poem does indeed have symbolic or allegorical significance, but the point here is that part of the dramatic effectiveness of the poem is due not only to the vivid description of the eagles but also to the device the poet uses at the beginning of the poem of placing the "I" as a present tense, wandering observer of the scene described. In fact, the title of the cluster in which the above poem occurs, "By the Roadside," suggests a group of poems that celebrate and describe scenes encountered by one who wanders or journeys over a road. The editors of the *Comprehensive Reader's Edition*, for example, say the following about the cluster and the poems contained therein:
The title "By the Roadside" suggests no especial assignment of theme whatever unless the poet meant to evoke the notion of "wayside" topics as they strike the mind during one's passage through life. What we have here seems at first to be simply poetic miscellany, of idealistic vision, of announcement, of descriptive intent. The group is truly a melange held together by the common bond of the poet's experience as roadside observer—passive, but alert and continually recording.¹⁰

IV

In those poems of the second group (characterized by a speaking voice whose primary purpose is to announce, to prophesy, or to celebrate rather than, as in the first group, to evoke a personal dramatic experience that led to the knowledge and understandings announced), the journey and voyage motif most frequently functions as an image or metaphor to make concrete that which the poet sees in the real world as intimations of the spiritual world and to give a cosmic dimension and movement to the identity of the speaking voice. Representative examples of this group are "To You," "By Blue Ontario's Shore," "O Star of France," and "Passage to India." As mentioned previously, the general tone of voice of these poems is bardic, public, and exuberantly confident, unlike those poems of the first group in which the pervading tone is meditative and private. In the first group of poems the speaking voice often struggles to unite the demands of his body and the demands of the soul. In this second group of poems, however, the speaking voice

is self-confident because he has reunited himself with himself and with the material and spiritual reality in which he and all others are participating. In short, he perceives and understands cosmic meanings correctly; hence, he consoles, announces and prophesies to others who have not yet perceived the cosmic meanings correctly or who have not yet understood the relationship between their material individuality and their spiritual identity with all the souls of the universe.

In the poem "To You," for example, the "I" speaks as if he were a disembodied, consoling poet-god speaking to a confused and aimlessly wandering reader:11

Whoever you are, I fear you are walking the walks of dreams,

Whoever you are, now I place my hand upon you, that you be my poem,
I whisper with my lips close to your ear,
I have loved many women and men, but I love none better than you.

(1-8.233)

Similarly, in "By Blue Ontario's Shore," the speaking voice assumes the pose of the wandering, cosmic and self-confident American bard. For example, he says in Section 4:

I am he who tauntingly compels men, women, nations,

11 Waskow, Whitman: Explorations in Form, p. 101, says of the tone of "To You": "Here the tone is right. Whitman goes a long way toward justifying the necessary distinction between himself and his reader by giving his sureness a personal reason for being. His manner, he suggests, is the fruit of his own self-discovery: only a moment ago, he was like the reader, 'walking the walks of dreams'; he should have been a teacher 'long ago.'"
Crying, Leap from your seats and contend for your lives!

I am he who walks the States with a barb'd tongue, questioning every one I meet.

(4.34-36.342)

In the same poem, Whitman frequently uses images and metaphors suggesting journeying and voyaging as a means to urge his readers to adopt a dynamic, self-reliant attitude toward life. For example, in Section 15, he says:

I swear I begin to see the meaning of these things,
It is not the earth, it is not America who is so great,
It is I who am great or to be great, it is You up there, or any one,
It is to walk rapidly through civilizations, governments, theories,
Through poems, pageants, shows, to form individuals.

(15.250-254.352)

And in the same poem, as he does elsewhere in *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman describes his poetry as entities which journey outward from his pen.

O my rapt verse, my call, mock me not!
Not for the bards of the past, not to invoke them have I launch'd you forth.

(20.323-324.355)

In "O Star of France: 1870-71," Whitman uses the rather traditional metaphor that compares a nation to a ship in order to bemoan the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War and to celebrate the fact that in spite of the loss, the spirit of revolutionary France will voyage on into eternity as a sailing, inspiring ship. For example,

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the poem begins as the poet laments the apparently wrecked voyage of the star-ship, France:

O star of France,
The brightness of thy hope and strength and fame,
Like some proud ship that led the fleet so long,
Beseems to-day a wreck driven by the gale,
a mastless hulk,
And 'mid its teeming madden'd half-drown'd crowds,
Nor helm nor helmsman.

This rather artificial elegy is resolved in the traditional elegiac manner as the poet tempers his mourning by realizing that the ship of state, while materially dead, has been elevated to the heavens where it shall sail and "beam immortal" (39.397):

O star! O ship of France, beat back and baffled long!
Bear up O smitten orb! O ship continue on!
Sure as the ship of all, the Earth itself,
Product of deathly fire and turbulent chaos,
Forth from its spasms of fury and its poisons,
Issuing at last in perfect power and beauty,
Onward beneath the sun following its course,
So thee O ship of France!

"O Star of France: 1870-71" is an overly inflated poem, but it contains Whitman's optimism with regard to the spiritual and symbolical significance of great endeavors that seem to have failed when measured in material terms, and it contains Whitman's attempt to explain the extremely abstract notion of the destiny of man's inherent desires to exercise the spiritual and worldly liberty and freedom toward which the mystically enlightened one, such as the poet claims to be,
In "Passage to India" the journey and voyage motif appears again as an image that helps to create the cosmic presence of the speaking voice and to make concrete the abstract notion of life as a journey and of beneficent evolutionary progress. After the initial announcement of the immediate occasion of the poem in Sections 1 and 2, the poet addresses his soul as if they were both disembodied cosmic soarers over the past and present world. For example, in Section 3 the poet, speaking in the present tense, presents a catalog of various sights and sounds as if he were swiftly soaring above the world.

Passage to India!
Lo soul for thee of tableaux twain,
I see in one the Suez canal initiated, open'd,
I see the procession of steamships, the Empress Eugenie's leading the van,
I mark from on deck the strange landscape, the pure sky, the level sand in the distance,
I pass swiftly the picturesque groups, the workmen gather'd,
The gigantic dredging machines.

(3.41-47.413)

13 Harold M. Hurwitz, "Whitman, Tagore, and 'Passage to India,'" WWR, 13 (June, 1967), 56-57, says: "Whitman's view of life as a voyage, the main symbol of the poem, is reflected in many of the Gitanjali by Tagore, a twentieth century Indian poet, 1912 pieces. This similarity is probably due to the fact that both viewed life as a search for reality, and a journey was an accurate representation of this. Also, Whitman implies that the voyage is necessary because if we are to find truth, we must abandon our concern with the mundane and dive deep into the uncharted regions of the common psyche."

14 See my discussion of "Salut Au Monde" in Chapter V of this study.
In the following lines of the same section he shifts his focus away from the Suez Canal, and he seems to soar over the American continent; he then describes the many sights and sounds he observes while journeying above the land:

I see over my own continent the Pacific railroad . . .
I hear the locomotives rushing and roaring . . .
I hear the echoes . . .
I cross the Laramie plains . . .
I see the plentiful larkspur . . .

(3.49-54.413)

In Section 4 the poet and his soul journey back in time to observe and to celebrate the journeyers, voyagers, and explorers of the past:

Passage to India!
Struggles of many a captain, tales of many a sailor dead,
Over my mood stealing and spreading they come,
Like clouds and cloudlets in the unreach'd sky.

Along all history, down the slopes,
As a rivulet running, sinking now, and now again to the surface rising,
A ceaseless thought, a varied train—lo, soul,
to thee, thy sight, they rise,
The plans, the voyages again, the expeditions.

(4.68-75.414)

Ultimately the poet's mystic journeying back into the past allows him to announce that it is the poet, as the "true son of God" (5.111.415), who will celebrate and justify the courage and exploratory spirit that characterizes all generations of mankind.

In the last two sections of "Passage to India," the poet ceases celebrating the achievements and explorations of the past. The past and its progressive evolution, as viewed in the poet's retrospective mystic journey through time and
space, has given the poet personal assurance about the nature of what to expect after death. Hence, in Section 8 the poet expresses an ecstatic invocation to his soul as he eagerly anticipates his participation in the eternal flux of the cosmos.

O we can wait no longer,
We too take ship O soul,
Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas,
Fearless for unknown shores on waves of ecstasy to sail,
Amid the wafting winds, (thou pressing me to thee, I thee to me, O soul,)
Caroling free, singing our song of God,
Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.

(8.175-181.418)

As he does throughout Leaves of Grass, Whitman uses the imagery of a sea voyage to help express his realizations about his destiny in the context of eternity after he has departed from the limited context of time and space.

At the beginning of "Passage to India" the poet was ostensibly celebrating the linking of far corners of the material world because of the opening of the Suez Canal, the American trans-continental railroad, and the trans-Atlantic cable, but the conclusion of the poem celebrates the poet's awareness of the link between the material and the spiritual worlds. In the concluding lines of the poem in Section 9 the poet looks forward to embarking upon a voyage that will

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15Frederich W. Conner, Cosmic Optimism, p. 122, also notes that "though the point of departure in the poem is the geographical 'passage' made possible by the newly completed Suez Canal and Union Pacific Railroad, it is evident from the beginning that the fourth dimension of time is to count more than the other three—that the journey in space is but a symbol for the journey of history, past and to come."
allow him to make "Passage to more than India" (9.224.420):

Passage, immediate passage! the blood burns in my veins!
Away O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!

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 my brave soul!
O farther farther sail!
O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of God?
O farther, farther, farther sail!

The voyage imagery that appears in the above excerpt pervades many of the individual poems that appear in the clusters following "Passage to India" in the final edition of _Leaves of Grass_. Several of these poems, which comprise a fourth group of poems, will be discussed in succeeding pages.

V

In a third category of poems, that is those poems which can be categorized as descriptive or impressionistic vignettes, the journey and voyage motif usually appears as an image to evoke a sense of movement and dramatic reality to that which is being described or, on occasion, a sense of personal involvement on the part of the speaking voice. Usually, however, the speaking voice is a passive observer. As mentioned previously, these vignettes are also usually symbolic or allegorical in the context of the cluster in which they occur or in the context of the entire _Leaves of Grass_. Some representative poems of the group in which the

In the "Sea-Drift" cluster there are three relatively short vignettes ostensibly describing either a ship sailing on a turbulent sea or the turbulent sea-scape itself. Except for the concluding lines of the first of these three poems, "Aboard at a Ship's Helm," each poem is objectively descriptive. In "Aboard at a Ship's Helm," the poet focuses the reader's attention on a "young steersman" (2.258) on a fog-bound sea:

Aboard at a ship's helm,
A young steersman steering with care.

Through fog on a sea-coast dolefully ringing,
An ocean-bell--0 a warning bell, rock'd by the waves.

O you give good notice indeed, you bell by the sea-reefs ringing,
Ringing, ringing, to warn the ship from its wreck-place.

For as on the alert O steersman, you mind the loud admonition,
The bows turn, the freighted ship tacking speeds away under her gray sails,
The beautiful and noble ship with all her precious wealth speeds away gayly and safe.

(1-9.258)

Up to this point, the poet evokes quite well the movement of a fog-bound ship to safety. But in the concluding two lines of the poem he makes clear the reason why sailing ships and turbulent or dangerous seas fascinate him:
But O the ship, the immortal ship! O ship
aboard the ship!
Ship of the body, ship of the soul,
voyaging, voyaging, voyaging.
(10-11.258)

As an objective, lyric celebration of a sailing ship, "Aboard at a Ship's Helm" is perhaps mèrred for some readers by the last two lines because the poet seems to be trying too hard to make the reader see the symbolic or anagogic value of the ship. More successful as objective and as suggestively (as opposed to explicitly) symbolic poems are "Patrolling Barnegat" and "After the Sea-Ship," the last two of the eleven poems in the "Sea-Drift" cluster. "Patrolling Barnegat," for example, presents a vivid description of some wanderers on a storm-tossed winter seashore as seen by a detached observer:

Wild, wild the storm, and the sea high running,
Steady the roar of the gale, with incessant undertone muttering,
Shouts of demoniac laughter fitfully piercing and pealing,
Waves, air, midnight, their savagest trinity lashing,
Out in the shadows there milk-white combs careering,

16 Douglas A. Noverr, "'Aboard at a Ship's Helm': A Minor Sea Drama, the Poet, and the Soul," WWR, 17 (March, 1971), 25, says that in this poem "the poet imaginatively and emotionally displaces his own soul to become the 'ship aboard the ship' and part of the process of voyaging, which is the movement away from death to eternality. But this comes as a result of his involvement and his perception of situation, and the resolution of this then opens his vision and sense of connection of meaning. A sense of this and its importance enables one to see the movement of the poem, to feel the emotional response of the speaker, and to displace oneself, as the poet does, into a consideration of the deathless, immortal, and voyaging soul."
On beachy slush and sand spirts of snow fierce slanting,
Where through the murk the easterly death-wind breasting,
Through cutting swirl and spray watchful and firm advancing,
(That in the distance! is that a wreck? is the red signal flaring?)
Slush and sand of the beach tireless till daylight wending,
Steadily, slowly, through hoarse roar never remitting,
Along the midnight edge by those milk-white combs careering,
A group of dim, weird forms, struggling, the night confronting,
That savage trinity warily watching.

(1-14.262-263)

The above quoted poem can certainly stand apart from the cluster in which it appears as an evocative picture of several men, the "weird forms," braving the elements at the sea-shore. The poet seems to celebrate the endurance and pluck of the sea-shore wanderers. But, in the context of the "Sea-Drift" cluster and Leaves of Grass as a whole, the poem is more symbolically suggestive than might be apparent when read apart from its context. In the total context of Whitman's poetry, "Patrolling Barnegat" presents a symbolic picture of man's material condition and limitations. The "weird forms" who wander the sea-shore represent all human beings who both fear and strive for knowledge of the nature of the spiritual world. The sea again represents that spiritual realm over which one can only truly voyage and understand after death. Hence, the sea is foreboding and discomfiting because it threatens one's material identity. In the poem, the poet seems to admire the "weird forms, struggling" because they confront the sea's threat rather than retreat
In "After the Sea-Ship" Whitman describes the wake of a ship. For anyone who has stood at the stern of a ship, the poem evokes quite well the "undulating waves" (6.263) of the water that has been disturbed by the ship's passage:

After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,
After the white-gray sails taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad myriad waves hastening,
lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship,
Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling,
blithely prying,
Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven emulous waves,
Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant, with curves,
Where the great vessel sailing and tacking displaced the surface,
Larger and smaller waves in the spread of the ocean yearnfully flowing,
The wake of the sea-ship after she passes,
flushing and frolicsome under the sun,
A motley procession with many a fleck of foam and many fragments,
Following the stately and rapid ship, in the wake following.

(1.12.263)

As with many of Whitman's short lyrics, the above poem out of context may yield little explicit symbolical meaning to the reader. But in the total context of Whitman's poetry the poem seems to celebrate his concept of the relationship between the individual soul and the oversoul toward which all souls tend because they were originally and individually "struck" ("Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," 5.62.162) from it. In "After the Sea-Ship" the "great vessel" (8.263) that makes the waves emerges as a symbol for that mysterious
oversoul; the "motley procession" (11.263), then, is comprised of those individual souls who have received identity through birth but who strive to be reunited with their pre-existing spiritual origin. In short, Whitman presents in twelve lines an effective symbolic picture of his understanding of the cosmos and of the source of the tension existing between man's self-protective individuality and his pre-existing and ultimate identity with others.

Much shorter than the three vignettes discussed in the above paragraphs is the poem "The Runner," which appears in the "By the Roadside" cluster. Out of the context of the cluster in which it appears, the poem evokes quite effectively the sight, as seen by an objective and passive observer, of a "well-train'd runner" (1.275):

On a flat road runs the well-train'd runner,
He is lean and sinewy with muscular legs,
He is thinly clothed, he leans forward as he runs,
With lightly closed fists and arms partially rais'd.

(1-4.275)

Here, as in the other poems of this group, the journey and voyage motif appears as an image to suggest movement and transit to an undefined destination. What seems to fascinate the poet in this poem is the athletic prowess and endurance of the runner or journeyer. In the context of Leaves of Grass, as well as in the cluster in which the poem appears, the suggested symbolism that emerges involves the motion forward that seems to typify the pattern Whitman observes in endeavors of mankind of the past and present.
Thus, the poem exists as a symbolic representation of evolution itself and of the sureness rather than the chaotic nature of that evolution.

The journey and voyage motif also appears in several of the descriptive poems in the "Drum-Taps" cluster. In "Cavalry Crossing a Ford," "Bivouac on a Mountain Side," "An Army Corps on the March," and "By the Bivouac's Fitful Flame," the speaking voice speaks as if it were in a passive rather than a participating position. It does not point to the symbolic or literal meaning of the scenes described; yet it is able to evoke a sense of the movement and flux that seems to flow around or in front of the poet. Contributing to this ability to evoke movement is the journey and voyage motif in the form of military marching and processional imagery. For example, in "Cavalry Crossing a Ford," the narrator describes, as if from a distance, the sight of an army on the march crossing a stream or river:  

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17Allen and Davis, Walt Whitman's Poems, pp. 38-40, maintain that Whitman, through his poetic diction, "brought a veritable religious dedication to the description of the physical scene, because every aspect of it had latent spiritual meaning. This accuracy was not a matter simply of photographic realism; the details are true enough, but they are 'charg'd,' in the Whitman idiom, with an inherent vitality which is not realistic. . . . The 'charge' comes from the reference to movement. . . . The constant discovery of flux wherever Whitman's eye glanced encouraged his use of the '-ing' words (present participle and gerund), which give a sense of immediacy and change."

18Richard Allen Davison, "Mixed Tone in 'Cavalry Crossing a Ford,'" WWR, 16 (December, 1970), 116, notes in this poem that Whitman uses a "zoom lens technique
A line in long array where they wind betwixt
green islands,
They take a serpentine course, their arms
flash in the sun--hark to the musical
clink,
Behold the silvery river, in it the splashing
horses loitering stop to drink,
Behold the brown-faced men, each group, each
person a picture, the negligent rest on
the saddles,
Some emerge on the opposite bank, others are
just entering the ford--while,
Scarlet and blue and snowy white,
The guidon flags flutter gayly in the wind.

(1-7.300)

In the "Bivouac on a Mountain Side," the subject mat-
ter, as the title suggests, is an army at rest, but the
descriptions of the various scenes surrounding the bivouac­ed
army progress in a journey-like manner from the nearby vistas
to the far distance and, by suggestion, to the emblematic
heavens.

I see before me now a traveling army halting,
Below a fertile valley spread, with barns and
the orchards of summer,
Behind, the terraced sides of a mountain,
abrupt, in places rising high,
Broken, with rocks, with clinging cedars,
with tall shapes dingily seen,
The numerous camp-fires scatter'd near and
far, some away up on the mountain,
The shadowy forms of men and horses, looming,
large-sized, flickering,
And over all the sky--the sky! far, far out
of reach, studded, breaking out, the
eternal stars.

(1-7.300)

In the above poem the reader is presented a passive scene,
but the imagery of the poem guides the reader on a journey
away from the literal to the symbolic, or from the material

... that reinforces ... the movement (in the poem)
from the fuzzily romantic to the detailed realistic."
present and its literal vistas to the timeless and symbolic heavens. The poet's reflections may be initiated by an observed material sight, but he soon transcends and journeys in his imagination beyond the present because of his ability to find spiritual meaning in everything that he observes.

In "An Army Corps on the March," the poet presents still another objective view of a moving army. As in "Cavalry Crossing a Ford and as in other poems of Leaves of Grass, the reader is again reminded that it is the movement and activity which the poet feels are extremely efficacious and symbolic of the mystic and beneficent evolution of all material phenomena:

With its cloud of skirmishers in advance,  
With now the sound of a single shot snapping like a whip, and now an irregular volley,  
The swarming ranks press on and on, the dense brigades press on,  
Glittering dimly, toiling under the sun—the dust-cover'd men,  
In columns rise and fall to the undulations of the ground,  
With artillery interspers'd—the wheels rumble, the horses sweat,  
As the army corps advances.  

(173.01)

In the following poem, "By Bivouac's Fitful Flame," the poet, as in "Bivouac on a Mountain Side," begins to describe a scene of inactivity, that is a bivouaced rather than a marching army; but, even though the speaking voice speaks as if he were at rest with the army, his reflections carry him on a journey into the past:

By the bivouac's fitful flame,  
A procession winding around me, solemn and sweet and slow—but first I note,
The tents of the sleeping army, the fields' and woods' dim outline,
The darkness lit by spots of kindled fire, the silence,
Like a phantom far or near an occasional figure moving,
The shrubs and trees, (as I lift my eyes they seem to be stealthily watching me,)
While wind in procession thoughts, O tender and wondrous thoughts,
Of life and death, of home and the past and loved, and of those that are far away;
A solemn and slow procession there as I sit on the ground,
By the bivouac's fitful flame.

(1-10.301)

In "The Torch," a vignette of four lines appearing in the cluster entitled "Autumn Rivulets," the speaking voice is again a passive observer, but the journey and voyage motif, particularly the voyage motif, appears as an image to evoke the movement of that which is described. Like many of the short vignettes in Leaves of Grass, "The Torch" stands by itself out of its context as an excellently evocative description of a night scene involving a man ashore watching something afloat on the darkened sea:

On my Northwest coast in the midst of the night a fishermen's group stands watching, Out on the lake that expands before them, others are spearing salmon, The canoe, a dim shadowy thing, moves across the black water, Bearing a torch ablaze at the prow.

(1-4.395)

Considering the emerging symbolic value of the shore and the sea in the contexts of other poems, such as in the previously discussed "After the Sea-Ship," the above poem, too, exists as more than an effective vignette of a literal occurrence. The torch-bearing canoe on the black water serves as a
symbol for the beckoning guide to the spiritual realms toward which men can only voyage after death. The canoe voyages on a symbolic sea and urges others to make a similar voyage by fascinating them in the same manner that a moth is attracted to the flame.

VI

Many of the poems of still a fourth and final category appear with more frequency in the concluding sections and clusters of the final edition of *Leaves of Grass* than in previous sections and clusters. The editors of the *Comprehensive Reader's Edition* and James E. Miller, Jr. in *A Critical Guide to "Leaves of Grass"* note that the poems and clusters following the "Autumn Rivulets" cluster are thematically different from those which precede. For example, the editors of the *Comprehensive Reader's Edition* claim that "'Proud music of the storm' announces a new phrase in which, as noted in both the 1872 and 1876 prefaces WW turns to the sphere of 'Spiritual Law.'"19 James E. Miller, Jr. claims that all the poems between "Proud Music of the Storm" and "Pensive and Faltering," the last poem in the cluster entitled "Whispers of Heavenly Death," comprise the third of a basic three part thematic and structural division to be found in *Leaves of Grass*. Miller says that in these poems "the focus moves . . . from 'this Time and Land' to the

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domain of spirituality, beyond both time and land." In many of these poems of the concluding sections and clusters of the final *Leaves of Grass*, the journey and voyage motif appears as an image and metaphor to help the poet express his reflections about his past, his present way of meeting life, and his and his soul's spiritual destiny. In general, the journey motif appears in these reflections concerning the past and present, while the voyage motif appears in those poems in which the poet anticipates the entry into and passage through the spiritual realm after death. For example, toward the end of "To Think of Time" the journey motif appears in the poet's optimistic faith in the meaningfulness of his existence:

And I have dream'd that the purpose and essence of the known life, the transient, is to form and decide identity for the unknown life, the permanent.

If all came but to ashes of dung,
If maggots and rats ended us, then Alarum! for we are betray'd,
Then indeed suspicion of death.

Do you suspect death? if I were to suspect death I should die now,
Do you think I could walk pleasantly and well-suited toward annihilation?

Pleasantly and well-suited I walk,
Whither I walk I cannot define, but I know it is good,
The whole universe indicates that it is good,
The past and the present indicate that it is good. (8.101-111.439)

When the poet does attempt to "define" or to anticipate the nature of his soul's voyage and destination after death, he
most frequently uses metaphors involving sailing. In the
circle "Whispers of Heavenly Death," the voyage motif
appears as a metaphor in two poems in which the speaking
voice anguishes about the destiny of the human soul after
death. In "Yet, Yet, Ye Downcast Hours," for example, the
speaking voice feels helpless with regard to the cries of
those who fear death:

Despairing cries float ceaselessly toward me,
The call of my nearest lover, putting forth,
alarm'd, uncertain,
The sea I am quickly to sail, come tell me,
Come tell me where I am speeding, tell me my
destination.

(5-8.446)

Unlike his optimistic conclusion in the previously quoted
poem, the poet here responds to the "despairing cries" by
saying: "I understand your anguish, but I cannot help you"
(9.446). Similarly, in "Thought," which appears in the same
cluster, the poet considers the notion that the voyage of
the soul after death may be truly the last voyage for both
body and soul. As in the previously quoted poem the voyage
motif functions as a metaphor to make concrete a metaphysical
reflection about the existence of the soul after death:

As I sit with others at a great feast,
suddenly while the music is playing,
To my mind, (whence it comes I know not,)
spectral in mist of a wreck at sea,
Of certain ships, how they sail from port
with flying streamers and wafted kisses,
and that is the last of them,
Of the solemn and murky mystery about the fate
of the President,
Of the flower of the marine science of fifty
generations founder'd off the Northeast
coast and going down--of the steamship
Arctic going down,
Of the veil'd tableau--women gather'd together
on deck, pale, heroic, waiting the moment
that draws so close--0 the moment!
A huge sob--a few bubbles--the white foam
spiriting up--and then the women gone,
Sinking there while the passionless wet flows
on--and I now pondering, Are those women
indeed gone?
Are souls drown'd and destroy'd so?
Is only matter triumphant?

(1-10.453)

The majority of the poems in which the poet contemplates or anticipates death are not nearly as despairing as the last two quoted. As a matter of fact, in several poems of the last cluster of *Leaves of Grass*, "Songs of Parting" and in the "Second Annex: Good-Bye My Fancy," the voyage motif appears as a metaphor to make concrete the poet's optimistic faith in the continuing voyage of his soul into eternity. In the cluster "Songs of Parting," for example, the poet's optimistic anticipation of the voyage after death is expressed in "Joy, Shipmate, Joy!" and "Now Finalè to the Shore," both of which are brief enough to be quoted in full:

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

(1-7.501-502)

Now finalè to the shore,
Now land and life finalè and farewell,
Now Voyager depart, (much, much for thee is yet in store,)
Often enough hast thou adventur'd o'er the seas,
Cautiously cruising, studying the charts,
Duly again to port and hawser's tie returning;
But now obey thy cherish'd secret wish,
Embrace thy friends, leave all in order,
To port and hawser's tie no more returning,
Depart upon thy endless cruise old Sailor.
(1-11.502-503)

Similarly, in the cluster "Second Annex: Good-Bye My Fancy," the voyage motif appears as a metaphor to help the poet express an exhuberant anticipation and faith in the eternal existence of his soul. For example, in the first poem of the cluster, "Sail Out for Good, Eidólon Yacht!," the speaking voice confidently anticipates death in the following metaphoric manner:

Heave the anchor short!
Raise main-sail and jib--steer forth,
O little white-hull'd sloop, now speed on really deep waters,
(I will not call it our concluding voyage,
But outset and sure entrance to the truest, best, maturest;)
Depart, depart from solid earth--no more returning to these shores,
Now on for aye our infinite free venture wending,
Spurning all yet tried ports, seas, hawsers, densities, gravitation,
Sail out for good, eidólon yacht of me!
(1-9.539)

And in the same cluster, the voyage motif as a metaphor for what follows after death appears in "Old Age's Ship & Crafty Death's":

From east and west across the horizon's edge,
Two mighty masterful vessels sailers steal upon us;
But we'll make race a-time upon the seas--a battle-contest yet! bear lively there!
(Our joys of strife and derring-do to the last!) Put on the old ship all her power to-day!
Crowd top-sail, top-gallant and royal studding--sails,
Out challenge and defiance--flags and flaunting pennants added,
As we take to the open--take to the deepest, freest waters.
(1-8.543)
With regard to the voyage as a metaphor for what lies beyond death, as in the above poem, Richard Chase notes how the metaphor became more pervasive after a certain point in Whitman's own life:

Whitman's great meditative poems had led him, by the time he came to write his Lincoln elegy, to state that death was a terminus, and a good in itself. He now set about denying this, and the characteristic assertion of his later poems is that after death the soul sails outward on its hopeful voyage to a blissful shore, just as, after the Civil War, America with its science, its expanding industry and railroads, its healthy progressive spirit also sets out on a hopeful voyage (or is reborn) by a divinely ordained parturition, as the poet is likely to say in a metaphor only less common than that of a ship.  

21 Chase, Walt Whitman Reconsidered, pp. 145-146.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

I

"Static" is not an adjective that could be applied to most of the poetry in Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. The persona of the poems is constantly wandering over beaches, roads, or city streets, or soaring like a huge cosmic bird over the past, present, and future world. The cosmic persona frequently pauses in his flights and swoops toward the earth to observe closely, to merge with, and to celebrate the activities of mankind. He refers to his escapes and retreats from circumstances and ways of thinking that cause him to feel alienated from the mystic meanings and spiritual realities of the universe. Often, he reconfronts the material world to bestow upon mankind the truths he has intuited during his mystic flights. His purpose in celebrating himself and his vigorous far-ranging journeys through time and space is not to set himself apart from others, for he constantly urges others to join him on the road or to see that they are indeed already embarked upon a journey but for one reason or another cannot see that they are already launched.

In addition to the constant hurtling forth of the speaking voice, much of that which is observed and recorded
is described in terms of vigorous movement and activity. As many of the preceding explications indicate, Whitman frequently described processions, parades, and military campaigns. The vignettes and catalogs of mankind's activities usually contain descriptions of scenes of vigorous physical labor or of people, including the poet himself, on the move through city streets, across the American continent, or upon rivers and oceans of the world.

Whitman's poetry as a whole celebrates flux, motion and change. The journey and voyage motif, appearing as it does in the images and metaphors of the poems, emphasizes Whitman's essential faith in the beneficent and progressively changing nature of the material world. As Whitman says in "Song of the Open Road":

All parts away for the progress of souls,
All religion, all solid things, arts, governments—all that was or is apparent upon this globe or any globe, falls into niches and corners before the procession of souls along the grand roads of the universe.

Of the progress of the souls of men and women along the grand roads of the universe, all other progress is the needed emblem and sustenance.

(13.181-183.157)

The poet's faith in the mystic meanings hinted at by observable motion and progress accounts for the many images and metaphors of journeying and voyaging to be found throughout Leaves of Grass. Indeed, the travelling persona of the poems and the motion described and celebrated throughout are symbolic objectifications of beneficent evolution.

Perhaps most important to readers of poetry, the
pervasive appearance, as purely poetic devices, of images and metaphors involving journeying and voyaging functions to help evoke extremely kinetic and dramatic imaginative responses in the mind of the reader. As James E. Miller, Jr. says: "Too frequently, Whitman's readers, disappointed in their search for some kind of philosophical progression and conclusion, have been blinded to the basic dramatic nature of his poems. Whitman was not stating philosophical truths so much as he was dramatizing himself and his life of the imagination."¹ The sense of movement and drama evoked in the mind of the reader is a result either of the realistic and cosmic journeys of the "I" of the poems or of the motion and activity described and celebrated by the "I."

II

Whether the reader turns to the first or any successive edition of Leaves of Grass, he will find that the journey and voyage motif as metaphor and symbol recurs throughout each edition. For example, the motif is as pervasive in the twelve untitled poems of the first edition (1855)² of Leaves of Grass as in the final edition. In the first edition the motif functions in the same ways as discussed in this study of the final edition; that is, the motif helps to make entire poems or passages dramatic by making concrete


the persona and the ideas contained in the poems. The original twelve poems, as well as the poems printed in the second through eighth editions of *Leaves of Grass*, were revised, and in one case omitted, prior to their appearance in the final, or ninth, edition, but the appearance and pervasiveness of the motif as an identifiable poetic device remain essentially unchanged from first to last edition. As a case in point, the image of the persona as a cosmic soarer in "Song of Myself" is as much a part of the poem in the first edition as in the last. For example, in the first edition Whitman writes:

My ties and ballasts leave me . . . .
I travel . . . . I sail . . . .
my elbows rest in the sea-gaps,
I skirt the sierras . . . . my palms cover the continents,
I am afoot with my vision.

In the last edition, the poet has omitted some words (to the detriment of the passage and its context, I believe), but the image and dramatic sense of the passage remain:

My ties and ballasts leave me, my elbows rest in sea-gaps,
I skirt sierras, my palms cover continents,
I am afoot with my vision.

(33.714-716.61)

The point here is that during the period between the 1855 edition and the 1891-92 edition, Whitman does not suddenly

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4 Walt Whitman, "Leaves of Grass" by Walt Whitman: A Facsimile of the First Edition, p. 35. The series of periods are not marks of elision; they appear in the original text.
shift to or begin to exploit the motif as a poetic device, for the motif was integral to his original work, and it did not become less or more so as he continued to expand his poetry and the vision expressed therein. Critic Lenny Emmanuel says Whitman "wrote the same poem . . . over and over." Whitman's poetry, however, does change in terms of the emphasis he places upon certain themes, but the use of the motif as metaphor, symbol, or image does not.

What also changes with regard to Whitman's use of the motif is the shift noted in Chapter VI of this study in the poet's increased use of the sea or voyage portion of the motif as opposed to the journey portion, although the journey as an image never disappears entirely. This shift to an increased usage of voyage metaphors is due to the final structural and thematic development of Leaves of Grass itself. As Miller and others have noted, there is a point in the final arrangement of Leaves of Grass where the poet turns his attention toward concentrated musing about what is to follow after death. As discussed previously in this study, it is symbolically logical that these musings should be expressed with images and metaphors involving the sea and voyages upon the sea. In poems of the three "Annexes" ("Sands at Seventy," "Good-Bye My Fancy," and "Old Age

5Lenny Emmanuel, "Whitman's Fusion of Science and Poetry," WWR, 12 (September, 1966), 77.

Echoes"), the majority of which were written during the last four years of the poet's life, the voyage motif appears throughout, particularly as the poet seems to be musing upon his own approaching death. In fact, the last poem that Whitman wrote, ten days before his death, "A Thought of Columbus," is informed, as its title indicates, by the myth of the voyages of Columbus.

The journey and voyage motif not only appears throughout all editions of Whitman's Leaves of Grass, but also in several of those poems he wrote prior to 1855, the date of the first edition of Leaves of Grass. Even though his pre-1855 poems are weak attempts at traditional poetry, the motif appears in some of the trite metaphors of these poems. For example, the final stanza of "The Love that is Hereafter," written in 1840, reads:

For vainly through this world below
We seek affection. Nought but wo
Is with our earthly journey wove;
And so the heart must look above,
Or die in dull despair.

Whitman's prose, too, early and late, is indebted to metaphors and images of journeying and voyaging. For

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7 The "Annexes" are reprinted in Blodgett and Bradley, eds., Comprehensive Reader's Edition, pp. 462-582.


example, in "Preface 1855--Leaves of Grass, First Edition," the poet says, "The elder encourages the younger and shows him how . . . they two shall launch off fearlessly together till the new world fits an orbit for itself and looks unabashed on the lesser orbits of the stars and sweeps through the ceaseless rings and shall never be quiet again." In "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads," written in 1888, the opening two paragraphs contain metaphors of motion, journeying, and voyaging:

Perhaps the best of songs heard, or of any and all true love, or life's fairest episodes, or sailors' trying scenes on land or sea, is the resume of them, or any of them, long afterwards, looking at the actualities away back past, with all their practical excitations gone. How the soul loves to float amid such reminiscences!

So here I sit gossipping in the early candlelight of old age—I and my book—casting backward glances over our travel'd road. After completing, as it were, the journey—a varied jaunt of years, with many halts and gaps of intervals—or some lengthen'd ship-voyage, wherein more than once the last hour had apparently arrived, and we seem'd certainly going down—yet reaching port in a sufficient way through all discomfitures at last).

While it is not the purpose of this study to present a detailed analysis of Whitman's prose, the above examples indicate that the journey and voyage motif appears in

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Whitman's images and metaphors over a long period of his creative life.

III

There are two ways to account for the frequent appearance of the journey and voyage motif in Whitman's metaphors and images. One way involves an examination of Whitman's possible literary influences and sources and the other an examination of the nature and character of the poet's life patterns.

First, there is a long tradition of world literature that is significantly informed by the appearance of the journey or voyage motif as image, metaphor, and allegory. For example, Georg Roppen and Richard Sommer, in Strangers and Pilgrims: An Essay on the Metaphor of Journey (1964), discuss the appearance of the journey, voyage, and pilgrimage motif by examining the works of such historically diverse writers as Homer, Virgil, Chaucer, Dante, Bunyan, Spenser, Fielding, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Arnold, Yeats, and Eliot.⁴

Roppen and Sommer maintain that the journey metaphor is a basic and inextricable form of the imaginative life of man. It welled up out of an ancient migratory restlessness, and will cease to exercise its primitive force only when men are satisfied, defeated or destroyed. We might have stated the problem of the metaphor as a single dilemma of literary criticism in a single sentence: the figure of the journey in literature tends to take the form of an extended metaphor (hence its frequent

association with allegory) depending on a prolonged series of equivalences between tenor and vehicle, and the difficulty facing the author is to arrange the series, which connects image and meaning, into an intelligible whole without sacrificing the truth to experience of the component images themselves.\textsuperscript{15}

Whitman, no doubt, is directly and indirectly indebted to the literary tradition discussed by Roppen and Sommer. Norman Foerster, for example, claims that "Whitman's idea of life as a pilgrimage . . . was indebted mainly to Bunyan and to Hawthorne \& 'The Celestial Railroad'\textsuperscript{16}." Gay Wilson Allen says that "Whitman's conception of his role as poet and prophet naturally involves . . . \& the 'Long Journey'\textsuperscript{7} motif. Indeed, it is prominent to some extent in nearly all romantic poetry, as witnessed by Goethe, Nietzsche, Chateaubriand, Mme. de Stael, Wordsworth, Shelley, and others, but none of these used the theme in so varied and significant a way as Whitman did."\textsuperscript{17} Alvin Rosenfeld maintains that Emerson is one of the most immediate literary sources for Whitman's use of the journey motif: "There are some passages in Emerson's essay 'The Poet' and also in his 'Montaigne; or The Skeptic' that . . . suggest themselves as possible influences \& on Whitman's use of the 'long journey motif'\textsuperscript{7}. It was in 'The Poet,' after all, that Emerson

\textsuperscript{15}Roppen and Sommer, Strangers and Pilgrims, p. 108.

\textsuperscript{16}Norman Foerster, American Criticism (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1928), p. 164n.

\textsuperscript{17}Gay Wilson Allen, Walt Whitman as Man, Poet, and Legend, p. 68.
promised the poet all the riches of the universe if he would only get out into it, away from the bad influences of towns, to 'walk the world over.'" With regard to the persona of Whitman's poems as a cosmic journeyer, which appears frequently in *Leaves of Grass* and has been identified and discussed throughout this study, Gay Wilson Allen claims there is a possible direct source. As a young man, in 1847, Whitman may have heard and read O. M. Mitchel, a lecturer and author of a book on astronomy. Allen says that Whitman wrote a long editorial on Mitchel, who, in one of his lectures, 'described 'the space annihilatory telescope' and invited his audience to take an imaginary trip with him into the heavens. In the future, Whitman's poetic fancy would often take such a flight, sometimes as an imaginary comet, advancing 'a moment only to wheel and hurry back in darkness'; sometimes as a disembodied consciousness, traveling with the speed of a meteor.' No doubt, there are other possible sources, particularly in the writings of the Eastern mystics and philosophers. Thus, although only briefly summarized in the above paragraph, critics have presented an ample number of suggestions regarding possible sources.

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direct or indirect literary influences and sources for
Whitman's use of the journey and voyage motif.

Second, in addition to literary sources and influences, there are certain biographical facts about Whitman's life patterns and preferences that would make it appear only natural for his poetry to be pervasively replete with and informed by images and metaphors of journeying and voyaging. Throughout his life, Whitman enjoyed walking and wandering about wherever he happened to be; he enjoyed travelling on land and upon rivers. Richard Chase says that as early as 1840 "one of Whitman's most famous characteristics began fully to manifest itself: his capacity, that is, for absorbing experience, for observing and reporting the mere myriad sights and sounds of things. In these years his 'passion for ferries' flowered, as well as his love for omnibus jaunts and drivers.' During his paralytic old age, he frequently bemoaned his inability to move around in the outdoors (as most people, of course, would). His letters during the

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23 Chase, Walt Whitman Reconsidered, p. 32.

24 See, esp., his letters as reprinted in the last volume of his correspondence, Edwin Haviland Miller, ed., The Correspondence of Walt Whitman: Volume V: 1890-1892 (New York: New York University Press, 1969). For example, in a letter to Edward Wilkins, on September 30, 1891, Whitman writes: "I still hold out here as an invalid in
last years of his life frequently refer to the pleasures he received whenever he could escape the confines of his room to take a walk.\textsuperscript{25} He took extreme pleasure from rides in a horse carriage given to him by some devoted friends.\textsuperscript{26} As the persona of the poems frequently is going forth, so, too, did Whitman throughout his life. The poet's own mental and actual ramblings, quests, and explorations became objectified in the words, images, and metaphors of his poetry. Finally, it is, of course, Whitman's imaginative use of the journey and voyage motif which makes it as significant as this study maintains.

Camden, but a peg dropping out lower every month, and before long will be dropt out for good--hardly get out at all in the wheel chair, or any other way--not once in a month" (letter \#2642, pp. 248-249).


\textsuperscript{26} Allen, \textit{The Solitary Singer}, p. 523.
APPENDIX

The following is a list of poems in the final edition of *Leaves of Grass* and in the "Annexes" ("Sands at Seventy," "Good-Bye My Fancy," and "Old Age Echoes"). Those poems in which the journey or voyage motif appears and which have been discussed in this study are marked by a hyphen (-) in front of the title; those poems in which the journey or voyage motif appears but which have not been discussed in this study are marked by an asterisk (*) in front of the title; the unmarked poems are not informed by the journey or voyage motif. More than one-half (265) of a total of 403 poems are informed by the motif.

**LEAVES OF GRASS**

* Come Said My Soul

**INSCRIPTIONS**

* One's-Self I Sing
* As I Ponder'd in Silence
  - In Cabin'd Ships at Sea
  To Foreign Lands
* To a Historian
* To Thee Old Cause
  - Eidolons
    For Him I Sing
* When I Read the Book
* Beginning My Studies
  Beginners
  To the States
  - On Journeys through the States
  To a Certain Cantatrice
* Me Imperturbe
* Savantism
- The Ship Starting
  I Hear America Singing
  What Place is Besieged?
  Still Though the One I Sing
  Shut Not your Doors
* Poets to Come
* To You
  Thou Reader

- STARTING FROM PAUMANOK

- SONG OF MYSELF

CHILDREN OF ADAM
- To the Garden the World
- From Pent-up Aching Rivers
- I Sing the Body Electric
- A Woman Waits for Me
- Spontaneous Me
- One Hour to Madness and Joy
* Out of the Rolling Ocean the Crowd
- Ages and Ages Returning at Intervals
* We Two, How Long We Were Fool'd
- O Hymen! O Hymenee!
- I Am He That Aches with Love
* Native Moments
* Once I Pass'd through a Populous City
* I Heard You Solemn-sweet Pipes of the Organ
- Facing West from California's Shores
- As Adam Early in the Morning

CALAMUS
- In Paths Untrodden
- Scented Herbage of My Breast
* Whoever You Are Holding Me Now in Hand
- For you O Democracy
- These I Singing in Spring
- Not Heaving from My Ribb'd Breast Only
- Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances
- The Base of All Metaphysics
* Recorders Ages Hence
- When I Heard at the Close of the Day
- Are You the New Person Drawn toward Me?
* Roots and Leaves Themselves Alone
- Not Heat Flames up and Consumes
  Trickle Drops
* City of Orgies
* Behold This Swarthy Face
- I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing
- To a Stranger
- This Moment Yearning and Thoughtful
  I Hear It Was Charged Against Me
* The Prairie-Grass Dividing
  - When I Peruse the Conquer'd Fame
  - We Two Boys Together Clinging
  - A Promise to California
  Here the Frailest Leaves of Me
* No Labor-Saving Machine
  - A Glimpse
* A Leaf for Hand in Hand
  Earth My Likeness
  I Dream'd in a Dream
* What Think You I Take My Pen in Hand?
  - To the East and to the West
  Sometimes with One I Love
  - To a Western Boy
  - Fast-Anchor'd Eternal O Love!
* Among the Multitude
* O You Whom I Often and Silently Come
* That Shadow My Likeness
  - Full of Life Now

- SALUT AU MONDE!
- SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD
- CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY
- SONG OF THE ANSWERER
- OUR OLD FEUILLAGE
- A SONG OF JOYS
- SONG OF THE BROAD-AXE
- SONG OF THE EXPOSITION
- SONG OF THE REDWOOD-TREE
- A SONG FOR OCCUPATIONS
- A SONG OF THE ROLLING EARTH

YOUTH, DAY, OLD AGE, AND NIGHT

BIRDS OF PASSAGE
- Song of the Universal
  * Pioneers! O Pioneers!
- To You
  * France the 18th Year of These States
  * Myself and Mine
  * Year of Meteors (1859-60)
  * With Antecedents
- A BROADWAY PAGEANT

SEA-DRIFT
- Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking
- As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life
* Tears
* To the Man-of-Wer-Bird
- Aboard at a Ship's Helm
   On the Beach at Night
* The World below the Brine
   On the Beach at Night Alone
* Song for All Seas, All Ships
- Patroling Barnegat
- After the Sea-Ship

BY THE ROADSIDE
- A Boston Ballad--1854
* Europe The 72nd and 73d Years of These States
   A Hand-Mirror
   Gods
   Germs
* Thoughts
* When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer
   Perfections
* O Me! O Life!
   To a President
   I Sit and Look Out
* To Rich Givers
- The Dalliance of the Eagles
* Roaming in Thought
   A Farm Picture
   A Child's Amaze
- The Runner
   Beautiful Women
   Mother and Babe
* Thought
  Visor'd
  Thought
- Gliding O'er All
  Hast Never Come to Thee an Hour
  Thought
* To Old Age
   Locations and Times
   Offerings
   To the States, To Identify the 16th, 17th or 18th Presidentiad

DRUM-TAPS
* First O Songs for a Prelude
* Eighteen Sixty-One
* Beat! Beat! Drums!
* From Paumanok Starting I Fly Like a Bird
* Song of the Banner at Daybreak
* Rise O Days from Your Fathomless Deeps
  Virginia--The West
* City of Ships
* The Centenarian's Story
  - Cavalry Crossing a Ford
  - Bivouac on a Mountain Side
  - An Army Corps on the March
  - By the Bivouac's Fitful Flame
    Come Up from the Fields Father
    Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field One Night
  - A March in the Ranks Hard-Prest
* A Sight in Camp in the Daybreak Gray and Dim
  - As Toilsome I Wander'd Virginia's Woods
* Not the Pilot
  Year That Trembled and Reel'd Beneath Me
* The Wound-Dresser
* Long, Too Long America
* Give Me The Splendid Silent Sun
* Dirge for Two Veterans
  Over the Carnage Rose Prophetic a Voice
* I Saw Old General at Bay
  The Artilleryman's Vision
  Ethiopia Saluting the Colors
  Not Youth Pertains to Me
* Race of Veterans
  World Take Good Notice
  O Tan-Faced Prairie-Boy
  Look Down Fair Moon
  Reconciliation
* How Solemn as One by One
  - As I Lay with My Head in Your Lap Camerado
    Delicate Cluster
    To a Certain Civilian
    Lo, Victress on the Peaks
* Spirit Whose Work is Done
* Adieu to a Soldier
* Turn O Libertad
  To the Leaven'd Soil They Trod

MEMORIES OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN
  - When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd
* O Captain! My Captain!
  Hush'd Be the Camps To-Day
  This Dust Was Once the Man

- BY BLUE ONTARIO'S SHORE

REVERSALS

AUTUMN RIVULETS
  * As Consequent
  * The Return of the Heroes
  * There Was a Child Went Forth
* Old Ireland
* The City Dead-House
  This Compost
* To a Foil'd European Revolutionaire
* Unnamed Lands
  - Song of Prudence
    The Singer in the Prison
* Warble for Lilac-Time
* Outlines for a Tomb
* Out from behind This Mask
* Vocalism
* To Him That Was Crucified
* You Felons on Trial in Courts
* Laws for Creations
* To a Common Prostitute
* I Was Looking a Long While
* Thought
* Miracles
* Sparkles from the Wheel
  To a Pupil
  Unfolded Out of the Folds
  What Am I After All
  Kosmos
  Others May Praise What They Like
* Who Learns My Lesson Complete?
  Tests
  - The Torch
  - O Star of France (1870-71)
    The Ox-Tamer
* An Old Man's Thought of School
* Wandering at Morn
  Italian Music in Dakota
  With All Thy Gifts
  My Picture-Gallery
  The Prairie States

* PROUD MUSIC OF THE STORM

- PASSAGE TO INDIA

- PRAYER OF COLUMBUS

- THE SLEEPERS

TRANSPOSITIONS

- TO THINK OF TIME

WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH
* Darest Thou Now O Soul
* Whispers of Heavenly Death
* Chanting The Square Deific
* Of Him I Love Day and Night
- Yet, Yet, Ye Downcast Hours
* As If a Phantom Caress'd Me
  Assurances
* Quicksand Years
* That Music Always Round Me
* What Ship Puzzled at Sea
* A Noiseless Patient Spider
* O Living Always, Always Dying
  To One Shortly to Die
* Night on the Prairies
- Thought
* The Last Invocation
  As I Watch'd the Ploughman Ploughing
  Pensive and Faltering

* THOU MOTHER WITH THY EQUAL BROOD

* A PAUMANOK PICTURE

FROM NOON TO STARRY NIGHT
* Thou Orb Aloft Full-Dazzling
* Faces
* The Mystic Trumpeter
* To a Locomotive in Winter
* O Magnet-South
  Mannahatta
* All Is Truth
* A Riddle Song
* Excelsior
* Ah Poverties, Wincings, and Sulky Retreats
  Thoughts
  Mediums
* Weave in, My Hardy Life
  Spain, 1873-74
  By Broad Potomac's Shore
  From Far Dakota's Canons (June 25, 1876)
* Old War-Dreams
* Thick-sprinkled Bunting
* What Best I See in Thee
  Spirit That Form'd This Scene
* As I Walk These Broad Majestic Days
* A Clear Midnight

SONGS OF PARTING
* As the Time Draws Nigh
* Years of the Modern
* Ashes of Soldiers
* Thoughts
* Song at Sunset
* As at Thy Portals Also Death
* My Legacy
* Pensive on Her Dead Gazing
* Camps of Green
The Sobbing of the Bells  
As They Draw to a Close  
- Joy, Shipmate, Joy!  
* The Untold Want  
* Portals  
* These Carols  
- Now Finale to the Shore  
* So Long!  

FIRST ANNEX: SANDS AT SEVENTY  
* Mannahatta  
Paumanok  
* From Montauk Point  
* To Those Who've Fail'd  
* A Carol Closing Sixty-Nine  
* The Bravest Soldiers  
A Font of Type  
As I Sit Writing Here  
Kv Canary Bird  
Queries to My Seventieth Year  
The Wallabout Martyrs  
The First Dandelion  
America  
* Memories  
* To-day and Thee  
After the Dazzle of Day  
Abraham Lincoln, Born Feb. 12, 1809  
Out of May's Shows Selected  
Halcyon Days  
Fancies at Navesink  
* - The Pilot in the Mist  
Had I the Choice  
* - You Tides with Ceaseless Swell  
* - Last of Ebb, and Daylight Waning  
And Yet Not You Alone  
- Proudly the Flood Comes In  
* - By That Long Scan of Waves  
Then Last of All  
* Election Day, November, 1884  
* With Husky-Haughty Lips, O Sea  
Death of General Grant  
Red Jacket (from Aloft)  
* Washington's Monument, February, 1885  
* Of That Blithe Throat of Thine  
* Broadway  
To Get the Final Lilt of Songs  
* Old Salt Kossabone  
The Dead Tenor  
Continuities  
* Yonndudio  
Life  
* "Going Somewhere"  
- Small the Theme of My Chant
* True Conquerors
  The United States to Old World Critics
  The Calming Thought of All
* Thanks in Old Age
  Life and Death
* The Voice of the Rain
  Soon Shall the Winter's Foil be Here
  While Not the Past Forgetting
* The Dying Veteran
  Stronger Lessons
  A Prairie Sunset
* Twenty Years
* Orange Buds by Mail from Florida
  Twilight
  You Lingering Sparse Leaves of Me
  Not Meagre, Latent Boughs Alone
* The Dead Emperor
* As the Greek's Signal Flame
* The Dismantled Ship
* Now Precedent Songs, Farewell
  An Evening Lull
  Old Age's Lambent Peaks
* After the Supper and Talk

SECOND ANNEX: GOOD-BYE MY FANCY
- Sail Out for Good, Eidolon Yacht
  Lingering Last Drops
  Good-Bye My Fancy
* On, on the Same, Ye Jocund Twain
* My 71st Year
  Apparitions
  The Pallid Wreath
  An Ended Day
- Old Age's Ship & Crafty Death's
  To the Pending Year
  Shakspeare-Bacon's Cipher
* Long, Long Hence
* Bravo, Paris Exposition
* Interpolation Sounds
  To the Sun-set Breeze
  Old Chants
  A Christmas Greeting
  Sounds of the Winter
* A Twilight Song
  When the Full-Grown Poet Came
  Osceola
* A Voice from Death
* A Persian Lesson
  The Commonplace
 "The Rounded Catalogue Divine Complete"
  Mirages
* L. of G.'s Purport
  The Unexpress'd
* Grand Is the Seen
* Unseen Buds
* Good-Bye My Fancy!

OLD AGE ECHOES
* To Soar in Freedom and in Fullness of Power
  Then Shall Perceive
  The Few Drops Known
* One Thought Ever at the Fore
* While Behind All Firm and Erect
* A Kiss to the Bride
* Nay, Tell Me Not To-day the Publish'd Shame
  Supplement Hours
  Of Many a Smutch'd Deed Reminiscent
  To Be At All
* Death's Valley
* On the Same Picture
* A Thought of Columbus
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The dissertation submitted by Donald Norman Schweda has been read and approved by members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

12/22/72

[Signature of Advisor]