CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

In the last chapter discussion on the theme of alienation has been concluded. A study of the theme of alienation in Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* has brought out many a significant detail about the modern mechanised America characterized by irrational passions, divided consciousness emotional impoverishment, poor communication, industrialization, search for psychological security, possible threat to individual liberty and externalization of virtue. For Whitman alienation implies loveliness, helplessness, meaninglessness or social isolation, purposelessness, cultural estrangement and implicit rejection of social norms and values. It also signifies rootlessness, instrumentalization, de-spiritualization, dehumanization and separatedness.

Whitman finds the human spirit subject to terrible agonies, frustrations and predicaments. There is a confrontation between simple cultures and complex technological civilizations. There is a collision between the values of tradition and modernity. An acute sense of resentment has made man believe in the philosophy of denial. Man who has been discussing the dynamics and fluctuations of his temporal
development has failed to provide an understanding and diagnosis of the contemporary crisis.

Whitman finds that loosening of social and moral bonds has triggered off a process of alienated thinking. The intense individualism consists in the intensification of nervous stimulation. The modern mind has, therefore, become more calculating, precise and regimented. The same factors that lead to a regimentation of the mind lead also to a withdrawal from the outer world. From the same pressure comes the individual's protective reserve, which is also a means of withdrawal from excitements too frequent and too intense to support appropriate response to each and every one.

Whitman's poems show that a system of society dedicated ostensibly to the individual ends in diminishing his stature and latitude. The individual is overwhelemd by the conflicting streams of opposing ideologies. Whitman re-examines "philosophies and religions" and comes to the conclusion that they "may prove well in lecture-rooms" and "yet not prove at all under the spacious clouds and along the landscape

1. Whitman, Walt, Leaves of Grass, p.120
2. Ibid.
and flowing currents" 1. Moreover "Wisdom is not finally tested in schools" 2 and that "Wisdom cannot be passed from one having it to another not having it" 3. On the contrary "Wisdom is of the soul" 4 and that it is "its own proof" 5.

Thus the study of Leaves of Grass deepens our insight into one of the baffling problems of our time - a sense of alienation that is eating into the vitals of human mind. It brightens our understanding of the nature of man, his search for spiritual experience, his relationship to the world around and his intense desire to live a life of creative endeavours, purposefulness, joy and freedom because "realization" 6 comes to man only when "he realizes here what he has in him" 7.

1. Whitman, Walt, Leaves of Grass, p. 120
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.