CHAPTER-IV

BEAUTY

For Whitman beauty is an eternal verity. It points to a sense of omniscience, of surveying all life that we get only at the highest point of illumination. It brings about the moral and psychological transformations of man. It tells us that the evil, the violence and the tragedy are all parts of a providential design. In the light of this strife and fiction are allayed and everything is wrapped up in a serene air of celestial harmony. For Whitman beauty is "the unbounded sea" on the surface of which the ship of life starts its journey "spreading all sails, carrying even her moonsails,/The pennant is flying aloft as she speeds she speeds so stately-/below emulous waves press forward,/They surround the ship with shining curving motions and foam". Hence beauty is not confined to knowable fact, provable hypothesis or explicit formula alone. It belongs to spirit and can be realized.

1. Whitman, Walt, Leaves of Grass, p. 11.
2. Ibid., p. 11.
Only by a mature spiritual vision. It is the revelation of the life within life, the beauty within unreality and the soul within matter. Beauty is the light of the deathless spirit. It is some perception, some feeling, some indefinable experience. It is the "acme of things"\(^1\), in the light of which all else is seen. Whitman believes that in the realm of beauty doubt and despair are dispelled, tire and death do not leave behind their dark shadow and calm and placidness are the aspects of the impulse towards the pursuit of divine.

Beauty is the reflection of the supreme grace, the transcendental power that operates across this universe of time and space:

O thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth Universes, thou centre of them,
Thou mightier centre of the true, the good, the loving,
Thou moral, spiritual fountain...........\(^2\)

only by a mature spiritual vision. It is the revelation of the life within life, the beauty within unreality and the soul within matter. Beauty is the light of the deathless spirit. It is some perception, some feeling, some indefinable experience. It is the "acme of things"\(^1\), in the light of which all else is seen. Whitman believes that in the realm of beauty doubt and despair are dispelled, time and death do not leave behind their dark shadow and calm and placidity are the aspects of the impulse towards the pursuit of divine.

Beauty is the reflection of the supreme grace, the transcendental power that operates across this universe of time and space:

O thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth Universes, thou centre of them,
Thou mightier centre of the true, the good, the loving,
Thou moral, spiritual fountain........\(^2\)

\(^1\) Whitman, Walt, *Leaves of Grass*, p. 66.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 327.
I pass death with the dying, and birth with the new-washed babe,—... and am not contained between my hat and boots. Beauty leads to divine knowledge of the undivided one, the spirit.

Beauty is the divine spark which illumines the dark and gloomy corridors of human phyche. It leads to the spiritual enlightenment of man and makes him understand the joys and sorrows of life. This divine virtue makes him thoroughly involved in the procession of time, both caught by the past and free of the past, who makes his song of beauty out of the things around him and out of himself. Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking illustrates Whitman's concept of beauty. The speaker separates himself from the action by means of two structural devices. First, he defines himself in an envelope that surrounds the description: One side of the envelope ends with "A reminiscence Sing"¹, and the other begins with: "which I do not forget"²; Second, in the description itself he

¹ Whitman, Walt, Leaves of Grass, p. 203.
² Ibid., p. 208.
inserts reminders of his presence outside the action, stage-directions, as in the line "Demon or bird! said the boy's soul." The narrator is at times pulled back toward the action as he describes it. He occasionally addresses the bird instead of the reader, usually briefly; but once, in the passage beginning "O you singer solitary," he blends his voice with the child's for some eight lines. The line "'said the boy's soul' is especially indicative of Whitman's deep penetrating insight into the mysteries and immensities of the divinity. manifest in this phenomenal world. Even the "whispering" and rolling "sea-waves" seem to convey the idea that beauty is "superior to all, Subtle, sent up".

That controlling voice, we discover is actually the voice of Whitman in all his complexity:

I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he - bird, The solitary guest from Alabama.

1. whitman, Walt, Leaves of Grass, p. 207.
2. Ibid., p. 207.
3. Ibid., p. 207.
4. Ibid., p. 207.
5. Ibid., p. 207.
6. Ibid., p. 204.
He is related to the boy. Yet more than the boy; his
voice partakes of the voices of boy, bird, and sea, yet
is more than anyone of them and, since it includes his
own continuing voice, more than the fusion of them:

......(I) fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,
That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's
gray beach,
with the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves....

The story centers upon a boy's triple discovery
of love, of death, and of poetry, a new kind of life
radiating the glow of beauty. Yet in a larger sense the
story is about Whitman's familiar problems - for the
greatest significance of love, death, and poetry in ''cradle'','
is that they all concern separateness and involvement,
freedom and restraint. If ''death'' in the word stronger
and more delicious than any'' to this poet's
songs, it is because the confrontation of death restates

3. Ibid., p. 207.
the confrontation of beauty, and in giving a name to the problem, the sea allows the poet yet a further statement of it.

There are three main characters in the story—the bird, the boy, and the sea. The first two are agents of perception, explorers of beauty; the sea, more a steady representative of a truth about beauty. In one sense, the several attitudes toward love, death, and poetry expressed by these characters are all creations of the boy; he translates both the bird's song and the sea's, and can do so only when he has achieved certain states of awareness. But the bird and the sea are also allowed their own integrity. Both their existence and their melodies, if not their words, have beauty external to the boy's beauty. We see the bird learn, and we see the boy, discovering as well as creating, learn from the bird and then from the sea. Truths are revealed in a strange "colloquy,"¹ a chorus of assertion and response creation, and discovery, in which the bird sings to itself, the boy sings to himself, to the bird,

and to the sea, and the sea simply sings. The various attitudes toward death and life we will finally be able to place against the attitudes toward death and life of the man who has learned from all these characters, the man who sings the story. And the voices of the story, the tones and styles that, filtered through the boy's imagination, express these various attitudes.

The setting of the action is Paumanok in spring, an American Eden in which the "he-bird" and the "she-bird" live in blissful harmony, hovering brightly over new life. Outside this scene, observing it but not involved in it, "absorbing" it but not moved to action in it, is the boy-

I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating. 3

The song translated by the boy sounds very much like Whitman's exuberant song in the last movement of

2. Ibid., p. 203.
3. Ibid., p. 203.
Song of Myself. Its ecstatic exclamations, its brash, ordering of the sun, its carelessness of place, of day and night, of even the seasons - all recall the Whitman who sings his own concept of beauty:

Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great Sun!
While we bask, we two together.¹

The great difference, of course, is that Whitman sings "Myself", whereas the bird sings "two together". The bird is not really self-reliant, and he does not understand how vulnerable he is made by his attachment. When the blow does come - when the she-bird disappears, "May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate"² - the bird's exclamatory song is not quite so assured. Although he still is confident enough to order the winds to their work: "Blow! blow! blow!"³, his cry expresses need, of course, for the help of those winds. When the command

¹ Whitman, Walt, Leaves of Grass, p. 203.
² Ibid., p. 203.
³ Ibid., p. 204.
is not obeyed, assurance yields completely to uncertainty.
The bird's intense consciousness of the love in the
universe - his awareness of the waves "embracing and
lapping"¹ one another; of the moon hanging low, "heavy
with love"², of the mad embrace of the sea with the
land - is but the other face of his sense of beauty.
The disappearance of the she-bird is a bolt from the blue:
not only is she lost to the he-bird, but her disappearance
is the work of the unknown, carried out in unknown ways.
The resultant private uncertainty produces the pathetic
turn outwards in which the he-bird convinces himself
that there is love. It gives way to the terrible doubt
of appearances that lies behind it:

Land! Land! O Land!
whichever way I turn, O I think you could give
me my mate back again if you only would,
For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.³

1. whitman, Walt, Leaves of Grass, p. 204.
2. Ibid., p. 204.
3. Ibid., p. 205.
Somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me. 1

Finally uncertainly: "I am almost sure I see her dimly" becomes outright desperation. The bird is sure once more, but sure now that he is alone, that death is final, that love is past, that the past is all:

O darkness! O in vain!
O I am very sick and sorrowful.
O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!
O troubled reflection in the sea:
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.
O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields.
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!

We two together no more. 2

If the bird has learned about loss, its mourning has its own kind of innocence. In feeling alone, the bird achieves a true perception of beauty that the easily
confident bird never approaches; but that perception too
is limited, for it fails to see the whole context of
experience, in which the finality of loss is nevertheless
but part of the continuous process of life. The bird,
who at the start is something of a fool, is now at once
pathetic and comic-pathetic in that he has truly lost,
is alone, comic in that he is after all not finally alone,
just thinks he is alone. For his song is not "useless":
there is someone to hear it - the "boy ecstatic"\(^1\), whom
the bird's song makes "the outsetting bard"\(^2\). The boy,
an observer and "absorber" at the start, now is involved
and a creator - started toward the man's work of poetry:

Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul,)
Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me?

For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping,
now I have heard you,
Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
And already, a thousand singers, a thousand songs,
Clearer, louder and more sorrowful than yours,
A thousand warbling echoes have started to life
within me, never to die. 3

\( ^2 \) Ibid., p. 207.
\( ^3 \) Ibid., p. 207.
The boy has learned about loss and love from the bird, a lesson that the narrator, in his least detached moment, both recalls and relives:

O you singer solitary, Singing by yourself, Projecting me,
O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating you,
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what there in the night,
By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
the messenger there arous'd, the fire, the sweet hell within
The unknown want, the destiny of me. I

The two discoveries are inseparable; the boy loves the bird because the bird has lost his love. In coming to love the bird, the boy himself knows both the joy of connection and the pain of separation; he knows the "sweet hell within". The "love in the heart long pent" is now loosed, but at the same time the boy experiences the bird's loneliness, his separation from the bird. But the boy — perhaps because of his perspective outside the bird's drama, his

knowledge that the bird's song is heard - unlike the
bird does not retreat into despair. This is not to say
that the boy is full of joy; he is no longer the "peaceful
child". The simultaneous discovery of separation and
involvement, of loneliness and love, has branded in his
heart the truth of contradictions.

Out of that new sense of contradiction comes
utterance - but utterance showing us that although the
boy has learned something from the bird, he has not
learned everything. For although he feels that he is
now creator instead of mere observer; his cry is a cry
of confusion - a cry that is both ecstatic and fearful,
frenzied in two directions at once:

O give me some clue!
O if I am to have so much, let me have more! 1

Beauty and death are interlinked. In the same
poem the boy pushes forward to conquer the sense of
contradiction - to discover ultimate answers about love

and death. The answer he gets from the sea, which has been there "all the time",\(^1\) and "undertone",\(^2\), to the songs of the bird and boy. It is, in effect, the answer that love and death are one; the conception of death not as final, and painful to the living, but as "delicious",\(^3\), part of the everlasting love of the universe. The sea, "Delaying not, hurrying not",\(^4\), embodies the endless process of beauty. Its answer is in its "liquid rims and wet sands",\(^5\) — "that suggesting, dividing line, contact junction, the solid marrying the liquid — .... blending the real and the ideal, and each made portion of the other." The word the sea whispers is, in this sense, not only death but life; the sea bathes the boy in a loving ceremony of renewal: "creeping thence steadily up to my ears and loving me softly all over".\(^6\);

2. Ibid., p. 207.
4. Ibid., p. 207.
5. Ibid., p. 207.
6. Ibid., p. 207.
it is the cradle endlessly rocking. The sea sings, then, "neither like the bird nor like my arous'd child's heart". Its lulling song contrasts to the bird's song, first joyful, then desperate, and the boy's song, at once ecstatic and pained, just as its truth of endless process contrasts to the bird's notion of love and discovery of loss and boy's understanding of loss and love.

Yet, even though the boy learns from the bird and in learning comes to know more than the bird, and then learns still more from the sea, there is a truth that goes beyond even the sea's. If the bird does not push beyond the conception of death as final, the boy, whom we leave still listening to the sea's hypnotic song, does not seem to push beyond the sea's promise that death is lovely, part of the endless love of merging. The last voice in the poem is not the sea's, whispering, "Death, death, death, death, death", but the narrator's, incorporating all the truths - the bird's, the boy's the sea's. If the sea's word is a relation to the boy of the soft beauty

2. Ibid., p. 208.
of blending, to the narrator it is a "key"\(^1\) in a different way - a restatement of the old problems. For the narrator, removed from the boy just as the boy is removed from the bird, knows something about the sea that the boy does not know; that the sea's voice, while melodious, is also a hiss; that the sea is a mother, but a "savage old mother"\(^2\), that it is "swathed in sweet garments"\(^3\), but is nevertheless an "old crone"; that its "white arms.... tirelessly tossing"\(^4\) are beautiful, but also grotesque, perhaps the arms of a siren; that it bathes, but perhaps, like the ocean in As I Ebb'd with the ocean of life, will also drown. The narrator knows, in other words, that there is danger as well as deliciousness in the concept of existence as a "measureless float"\(^5\), a sea of things endlessly involving themselves with each other. Were we to yield wholly to the truth of the "float"

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 207.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 208.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 204.
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 209.
we would lose the sense of things as separate: we would lose the bird's truth that death is final and life lonely and the boy's truth of a "sweet hell within". The sea may have been there "all the time", but its word is no truer than the word of the particular, lonely moment.

Thus, the narrator's exploration of attitudes toward death and love brings us back to the voice and attitudes of the narrator himself. The mature voice of the narrator - combining style and structure to represent itself as both organic and mechanistic - plays against the voices of the characters in the story. Their separate styles are less true than the narrator's to the poet's concept of beauty, in the sense of being less comprehensive, just as their attitudes toward love and death are less true. Thus to the bird's proudly innocent song of self-gratulation (Two together!) is juxtaposed Whitman's understated narrative - his revelation to us, itself appearing "of a sudden", that Eden was invaded by the

2. Ibid., p. 207.
3. Ibid., p. 203.
unknown. The half-certain exclamations that follow:
'Blow! blow! blow!' are answered by the poet's voice,
first conversational: 'Yes, when the stars glisten'd'¹
than increasingly caught up by the action it describes,
until it moves from addressing the reader: 'He call'd
on his mate' to addressing the bird:

He call'd on his mate,
He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know
yes my brother I know,
The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note,
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with
the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the
sounds and sights after their sorts,
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with barefeet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listen'd long and long.²

But the narrator, pulled into the past as he is,
does not lose his identity for us, for we have been prepared
by the envelope to expect this much latitude in his movement.
There too he turns from us to the bird:

¹ Whitman, Walt, Leaves of Grass, p. 204.
² Ibid., p. 204.
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me, From your memories sad brother, from the fitful risings and fallings I heard.....

Standing at a position between removal from the past and involvement in it, between a stance as observer and a stance as experiencer, the narrator defines his identity in a series of paradoxes. He is above all a blender of things. The elements which have formed him, which have brought him to this place and movement, all seem to fuse contradictory characteristics. The "Ninth-month Midnight", suggests both birth (the midnight of the womb) and death (the running out of the year); "the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they were alive", seems horrible as well as mysteriously enticing; the bird's song has "fitful risings and fallings"; the word of the sea is both "stronger" and "more delicious" than any. And the self-contradictory elements also contradict each

other: the narrator has been "borne hither" out of contrary songs the sea's rocking and the shuttling of the bird's throat, out of sterility and fertility, the "sterile sands"1 and "the patches of briars and black berries"2, out of darkness and light, the play of the shadows and "that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with tears"3, out of advance and response the call of yearning and loving and the "responses"4 of his own heart. Finally — and this is the largest paradox of the narrator's situation — whereas on the one hand he has been "borne hither" by all the things that have made his life, on the other hand he is free of them:

Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly, A man, yet by these tears a little boy again, Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,5

He is helpless, brought to this position by his memories,

5. Ibid., p. 203.
a man who passively embodies his past and a poet who is impelled to sing. Yet, at the same time he chooses his moment to sing. He is a free man leaping into the future and a poet who now stands enlightened.

Beauty, Whitman maintains is the spark of divinity. Loitering on the pavements or crossing the Ferry or travelling along the country by road, the poet sees all kinds of Faces—the "spiritual-prescient face"¹, the always welcome "common benevolent face"², the face of "the singing of music"³, the "pure extravagant, yearning, questioning artist's face"⁴. Likewise he sees the "ugly face of some beautiful soul, the handsome, detested or despised face"⁵, "the sacred faces of infants, the illuminated face of the mother"⁶. The poet sees them and does not make any complaint. He is "content with all"⁷. But

the poet has a faith in the ultimate justification of these faces. The poet would not be "content" with these faces if he thought them to be "their own finale." Even "the most smear'd and slobbering idiot" at "the asylum" has the spark of beauty. The poet looks at the divine plan behind this phenomenal world. The "Lord advances, and yet advances" to make man aware of the "superb." The poet maintains that:

This face is a life-boat,
This is the face commanding and bearded, it asks no odds of the rest.

His faith in the seed perfection existent even in the lowliest or meanest of creatures reveals his concept of beauty:

2. Ibid., p. 363.
3. Ibid., p. 364.
4. Ibid., p. 364.
5. Ibid., p. 365.
6. Ibid., p. 365.
7. Ibid., p. 365.
These faces bear testimony slumbering or awake,
They show their descent from the Master himself.¹

It is this divine spark which fills the poet with "albescent
honey" ² and bends "down" ³ to him in order to "rub" ⁴
his "breast and shoulder" ⁵.

The spark of beauty is to be found in the glorious
and enchanting world of nature. The "smoke of the First-day
morning" ⁶ hanging "low over the rows of trees by the
fences" ⁷ or hanging "thin by the sassafras and wild-cherry
and catbrier" ⁸ is indicative of the divine beauty operating
across this universe.

Beauty resides in simplicity. The picture of the
mother emerging from the concluding lines is that of a
fulfilled life that is in harmony with the cosmos around:

¹. Whitman, Walt, Leaves of Grass, p. 365.
². Ibid., p. 365.
³. Ibid., p. 365.
⁴. Ibid., p. 365.
⁵. Ibid., p. 365.
⁶. Ibid., p. 365.
⁷. Ibid., p. 365.
⁸. Ibid., p. 365.
Behold a woman!
She looks out from her quaker cap,
her face is clearer and more beautiful than the sky.¹

The action described by the poem There was a Child
went Forth is, an hinted by the phrase "stretching cycles
of years,"² symbolic of the organic vision. From the
start our attention is turned toward the becomingness of
life; in the spring of the year, a time of awakening the
child and the things around him fuse identities.

The first thing that becomes part of the child, and
that he becomes, are the country things of Whitman's boyhood
home, the center of the child's being:

The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass and white and red morning-glories,
and white and red clover, and the song of the phoebebird,
And the third-month lambs and the sow's pink-faint
litter, and the mare's foal and the cow's calf,
And the noisy brood of the barnyard or by the mire
of the pond-side,
And the fish suspending themselves so curiously,
below there, and the beautiful curious liquid,
And the water-plants with their graceful flat
heads, all became part of him.³

---

2. Ibid., p. 288.
3. Ibid., p. 288.
Mixing images of fresh life with more ordinary scenes of natural activity, Whitman is able to suggest that the child's journey of perception is a discovery of beauty or a making of new life. When seen by a clear childlike eye, when experienced by a being ready to be transformed each piece of life, even the mire, is new, "curious". Accepting each thing in its idiosyncrasy, the particular quality that makes its existence miraculous, as Whitman says in the poem Miracles, the child moves out temporally - we now have "field-sprouts of fourth-month and fifth-month"\(^1\) instead of "the Third-month lambs" - and spatially, past "the barnyard" and the "pond", through the fields and the "weeds"\(^2\) by the road to the people on the road itself: the "drunkard"\(^3\), the "schoolmistress"\(^4\), boys "friendly"\(^5\) and "quarrelsome"\(^6\), children "fresh-cheek'd"\(^7\) and Negro. As the

2. Ibid., p. 288.
3. Ibid., p. 288.
4. Ibid., p. 288.
5. Ibid., p. 288.
6. Ibid., p. 288.
7. Ibid., p. 288.
child becomes more and more, accommodating even the characteristics of the "drunkard" and the "quarrelsome" boys, which from a different perspective would be seen as unpleasant, so does the poem grow.

The steady expansion is interrupted by the next section, only three lines long, in which we are reminded that the child has a past as well as a future, a local particular existence as well as the potentiality for all-inclusiveness:

His own parents, he that had father'd him and she that had conceiv'd him in her womb and birth'd him, They give this child more of themselves than that, They gave him afterward everyday, they became part of him.¹

The child is returned to his parents, particularly to his birth-time and to the numerous "births" that ensue, the results of their "giving him" everyday. The result for us of this return is that the child is reborn in the poem, in the sense that we see another

¹ Whitman, Walt, _Leaves of Grass_, p. 288.
dimension of him; the self does not just enclose other things but offers its own newness to the world, the glow of beauty.

Whitman finds beauty in unity. Even the multitudes of human life ultimately lead to a coherent vision of the things entire. He is the poet of unity, the one, the universal:

Still though the one I sing,
(One, yet of contradictions made).... 1

Whitman's cultivation of polarities and synthesis in his thought and his poetry was probably based on a conviction that the basic truth of the universe was the progressive realization of such a logical scheme.

Penetrating beneath the shows and materials of the objective world we find, that in respect to human cognition of them, all and several are pervaded by the only absolute substance which is Spirit, endued with the eternal impetus of development, and producing, from

itself the opposing powers and forces of the universe. A curious, triplicate process seems the resultant action; first the positive, then the negative, then the product of mediation between them; from which product the process is repeated and so goes on without end.

To explain in dialectical terms, if we assume that fact is all of beauty, we must qualify this by admitting the antithesis; that the concrete is perceived and defined only by thought. Man is the blend of thought and fact; but we must qualify our postulation of him as the whole of beauty by admitting the existence of higher things than man in the universe: God. All of beauty is therefore an idea which blends God with man and both with man's world of fact and thought. By God is meant an immanent world-soul. The foregoing statement is partially paraphrased elsewhere, in the words placed in the mouth of "santa spirita".

Including all life on earth, touching, including God, including saviour and satan,

Ethereal, pervading all, (for without me what were
all? what were God?)
Essence of forms, life of the real identities,
Permanent, positive, (namely the unseen,)
Life of the great round world, the sun and stars,
and of man, I, the general soul...1

Great constituent elements of his poetry are
Materialism and spirituality. For the poet has the vision
to see beyond the conflicts which irk his fellow-men: ’’One
part does not counteract another part, he is the Joiner,
he sees how they join’’.2

The pages of Leaves of Grass are filled with the
evidences of Whitman's programme, in accordance with
which he would attempt to be ’’the arbiter of the diverse’’3
who would indicate the path between reality and souls. But
few expressions of the programme are so clear as the follow-
ing poem:

When the full-grown poet came,
Out spake pleased Nature (the round impassive globe,
with all its shows of day and night,) saying,
He is mine;
But out spake too the soul of man, proud, jealous
and unreconciled;/Nay, he is mine alone; 4

2. Ibid., p. 134.
3. Ibid., p. 274.
4. Ibid., p. 418.
Whitman's universe is to be seen as manifested in time in a series of unifications and separations:

Even the dim beginning,
Even the growth, the rounding of the circle,
Even the summit and the merge at last, (to surely start again,) 1

There are several hundred examples of triadic imagery beauty is expressed through. In Leaves of Grass, it is represented in at least four different types. There is, first, the static triad, in which thesis and antithesis are pictured, with the binding unity either stated:

My right and left arms round the sides of two friends, and I in the middle....2

Or implied:

....the crescent child that carries its own full mother in its belly....3

2. Ibid., p. 53.
3. Ibid., p. 53.
Then there is the dramatized triad, which presents thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in progressive succession:

Reckoning ahead O soul, when thou, the time achiev'd, The seas all cross'd, weather'd the capes, the voyage done Surrounded, copest, frontest God, yieldest, the aim attain'd,
As fill'd with friendship, love complete, the Elder Brother found,
The younger melts in fondness in his arms. ¹

Third, there is the triadic series:

Out of the dimness opposite equals advance, always Substance and increase, always sex, Always a knit of identity, always distinction, always a breed of life. ²

Fourth is the nuclear triad, represented twice in the early part of Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking. This triad synthesizes all the contradictions around it, as the "Two Together" of the mockingbird's song:

Two together!
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.¹

and the poet's reference to himself, fusing boyhood and
manhood sand and waves, pains and joys, here and here-
after, and his experience and its suggestions of beauty:

I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond
A reminiscence Sing.²

The four sections of the poem represent, at first,
smell, jehovah, or Law; Christ, or Love; Satan, or pride;
and "Santa Spiritæ"³, or spirit. A strict dialectical
reading taking the elements in order of their appearance
results in the abstract progressive pattern: Law (thesis),
Love (antithesis), Law-love (synthesis); Law-love (thesis),

². Ibid., p. 203.
³. Ibid., p. 349.
Pride (thesis), spirit (antithesis), Law-love-Pride-Spirit (synthesis). This is slightly more comprehensible if it is pictured allegorically as, first, the softening of Jehovah's lay by Christ's loving kindness, after which the pride which is Satan in Man is conciliated and given an equal place in the Godhead, until finally all three combine with Spirit in a great quaternity. The entire process is originated and culminated by spirit, yet spirit must necessarily create and be benefited by the others. Therefore, according to Whitman's reasoning, "all the sides (are)needed"¹ in order to have the glimpse of beauty, the divine pattern and its operation.

The poem is separated into two segments, one of which represents Law or Nature ("applicable indifferently to all"), while the other represents the other side of

¹ Whitman, Walt, Leaves of Grass, p. 348.
Whitman's familiar dualism, the human soul, with its emotions of pride and love and spirituality. One sees, then, that the first section of the poem defies the laws which govern human activity, while the second, third, and forth sections show the human traits which, if properly developed under law, bring about the deification of the human who heeds the poet's instructions:

Under the rule of God... be a rule unto thyself.¹

Thus human being possesses the triad of pride and love:

Encircling all, vast-darting up and wide, the American soul, with equal hemispheres, one Love, one Dilation
Or pride....²

And he will, in time, possess the spiritual:
Thou mental, moral orb-thou New, indeed new, spiritual world!
The present holds thee not—for such vast growth as thine,
For such unparallel'd flight as thine, such brood as thine
The FUTURE only holds thee and can hold thee.³

¹. Whitman, Walt, Leaves of Grass, p. 359.
². Ibid., p. 139.
³. Ibid., p. 360.
The successive Sections of the poem thus may be seen to be chronologically arranged, with the total embracing all of time. The first section represents the past, while the second and third sections represent the present constituents of humanity, and the fourth section the future. Chanting the Square Deific may thus be seen as complemented by the following poem:

For him I sing,
I raise the present on the past,
(As some perennial tree out of its roots, the present on the past,)
With time and space I him dilate and fuse the immortal laws,
To make himself by them the law unto himself.¹

In *Song of the Rolling Earth* Beauty and Truth are interlinked:

The earth does not withhold, it is generous enough,
The truths of the earth continually wait, they are not so conceal'd either,
They are calm, subtle, untransmissible by print,
They are imbued through all things conveying themselves willingly,
Conveying a sentiment and invitation, I utter and utter.²

² Ibid., p. 180.
In the divine light of beauty all opposites are reconciled — no arguments, no screaming, no threatening and no failings. Even discordant entities and harmonised and turned into things of joy and enlightenment:

The earth does not argue,  
Is not pathetic, has no arrangements,  
Does not scream, haste, persuade, threaten, promise,  
Makes no discriminations has no conceivable failures,  
Closes nothing, refuses nothing, shuts none out,  
of all the powers, objects, states, it notifies, shuts none out.¹

This glow of beauty is seen only by the seeing eye by the heart that watches and receives. It is to be found "underneath the ostensible sounds, the august chorus of heroes, the wall of Slaves"². The impelling influence of beauty is again experienced by the poet in the:

Persuasions of lovers, curses, gasps of the dying,  
Laughter of young people, accounts of bargainers,  
Underneath these possessing words that never fail.³

² Ibid., p. 180.  
³ Ibid., p. 181.
Since its "motion does not fail"\(^1\), the "true words do not fail"\(^2\). Since "the day and night do not fail"\(^3\), its "reflection does not fail"\(^4\). In the light of this spark of beauty "the voyage we pursue does not fail"\(^5\).

Whoever you are! motion and reflection are especially for you,
The divine ship sails the divine sea for you,
Whoever you are! you are he or she for whom the earth is solid and liquid,
You are he or she for whom the sun and moon hang in the skay....\(^6\)

*On the Beach at Night Alone* illustrates the idea:

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

All distances of place however wide,
All distances of time, all inanimate forms,
All souls, all living bodies though they be ever so different/or in different worlds,
All gaseous, watery, vegetable, mineral processes, the fishes, the brutes,

---

2. Ibid., p. 181.
3. Ibid., p. 181.
4. Ibid., p. 181.
5. Ibid., p. 181.
6. Ibid., p. 182.
All nations, colors, barbarism, civilizations, languages, all identities that have existed or may exist on this globe or any globe, all lives and deaths, all of the past, present, future, this vast similitude spans them, and always has spanned, and shall forever span them and compactly hold and enclose them.\(^1\)

Whitman finds beauty in the glorification of human life, of human values which adorn the life of man.

---