CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

A close study of the *Leaves of Grass* has revealed many a significant detail about Whitman's mystical vision which is undoubtedly cosmic. He sings of the immanent and not of the transcendent aspect of the greater self. For after all what can be more mystical than a sustained pre-occupation with the enigmatic Thee, an attempt at its meaning and identification, an insight into the inwardness of things, an endeavour at man's ultimate confrontation with his own self or with the cosmos around. It is through highly evocative symbols that he describes man's journey of exploration into the great unknown. His songs express highly abstract and metaphysical truths. They reveal a higher level of spiritual experiences and deal with the inevitable interplay of the here and the yonder. Whitman communicates to his readers his own perception of the essential oneness, the spiritual reality which exists at the back of the sensuous and the phenomenal. He equally conveys the fluidity or liquidity of what seems to be
solid and concrete.

Whitman grapples with the perpetual problems of life such as emancipation of soul, the mysteries of life and death, the nature of the Absolute, the spiritual reality, the impress of love and self-realization of truth. Though incapable of sustained logic he is acquainted with the phenomena of the illuminated life. Like Vedantic seers Whitman seeks the identity of human soul with the supreme soul. His mysticism proceeds from the egocentric perspective, the self of the poet reaching out and embracing the objective world. There is something of spirituality in his approach to life. He takes this universe as "a procession with measured and perfect motion." ¹

Unlike oriental mystics Whitman believes that spiritual experience is possible without sacrificing the sense in the least. He is a mystic while being at the same time a celebrant of sex. This strange blending of spiritualism and sensualism is evident in all his major poems. A mystic without a creed, he does not recognize

distinction between high or low. His world is man-centered and certainly not God-centered. No other poet has carried the apotheosis or glorification of man farther than Whitman. Thus in his exaltation and denunciation he resembles the old Testament prophets.

The mystical intensity of Whitman is revealed in his union of body and soul which is certainly a divine synthesis. In him the contradictory pairs are also visible: identity and distinction, universal and particular, humanity and deity. Whitman pictures his universe as consisting of two streams, both heading for the mystic ocean of spirit where life and death, object and subject, real and ideal, day and night are to be reconciled.

The spiritual world in which Whitman believes is, of course, invisible but like Emerson, Carlyle and other transcendentalists, he accepts the natural world as one vast analogy of the spiritual. Each man embraces and manifests only a part of the Divine universe, all men however collectively embrace and represent the Divine Universe as an idea and as a reality. He worships not
God but the Divinity, innate in each individual. He points with unmitigated conviction of success to the New world's fulfilment of its destiny in solving the problem of communion between Heaven and Earth. So even though Whitman pays homage to "God's due occasion"¹, he does so confident that he is experiencing, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the final completion of divine purpose which is the human souls identification with God. The ensuing journey is safe for there can be no risk of loss or pain in a world without differentiation or mutability. when all times and all space become Ideal "Time-space"² and when the self is God, all the future passages track through seas that are "all the seas of God"³.

1. whitman, walt, Leaves of Grass, p. 326.
2. Ibid., p. 295.
3. Ibid., p. 329.