

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL
INSTITUTO DE LETRAS
PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM LETRAS
LITERATURAS DE LÍNGUA INGLESA

Doutorando: Gentil Saraiva Junior

RE-CREATING WALT WHITMAN'S *LEAVES OF GRASS* INTO PORTUGUESE

Porto Alegre, 2008

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Tese de Doutorado submetida à
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul
para a obtenção do grau de Doutor em Letras
na ênfase de Literaturas de Língua Inglesa.

Orientadora: Prof^a. Dra. Kathrin H. L. Rosenfield

Porto Alegre, 2008

AGRADECIMENTOS

Agradeço às seguintes Pessoas e/ou Instituições:

Meu Pai, Gentil Saraiva, pelo incentivo à educação dado a todos os Filhos.

Minha Mãe, Sebastiana Cangussú Saraiva, que intuiu meu caminho nas Letras.

Austro Queiroz, meu Amigo, Terapeuta, Mestre Amado.

Montserrat Cardenas Galvez, Amiga e Mestra Amada.

Meus Irmãos/Amigos do Movimento Cultura Phenix.

Profa. Dra. Kathrin Rosenfield, por me orientar nesta difícil empreitada.

Profa. Dra. Sandra Sirangelo Maggio, pelas incansáveis informações técnicas.

Prof. Dr. Lawrence Flores Pereira, pelos valiosos conselhos literários.

Prof. Dr. Walter Costa, pela pronta amizade.

Membros Docentes deste PPG-Letras, que aprovaram meu projeto de pesquisa.

CAPES, que me possibilitou esta pesquisa,

proporcionando esta homenagem a Walt Whitman.

Servidores da UFRGS, que sempre me auxiliaram em tudo,

principalmente os do PPG-Letras e da Biblioteca.

Todos os Familiares, Amigos, Colegas e Conhecidos que não cito aqui,

mas que de alguma maneira contribuíram para minha evolução.

Todos os Escritores/Autores que me inspiraram de alguma forma.

“Artists are the antennae of the race.”

(POUND, 1987, p.81)

RESUMO

Este trabalho está focalizado na tradução criativa da poesia de Walt Whitman para o português. O termo utilizado para nos referir a este processo é **recriação**, ou seja, uma tradução que vai além da tradução literal (que privilegia apenas os significados), buscando um trabalho de reconstrução conjunta de significados e significantes, dada a relação profunda existente entre ambos (o capítulo 3 trata desse método de tradução criativa, aqui indicado, além de abordar temas relacionados a este na poesia, como verso livre, ritmo, metro, etc.). Esse termo foi emprestado de meus mestres neste tipo de tradução, que são os poetas Concretistas brasileiros: Haroldo de Campos, Augusto de Campos e Décio Pignatari. Em inglês, utilizamos essa palavra com hífen, “re-creation” (e seus derivados), devido ao fato de que “recreation” indica apenas recreação, divertimento, e não um “criar de novo”. É preciso lembrar que o precursor neste campo tradutório, da tradução a qual também é criação, foi Ezra Pound, que nos trouxe a idéia de renovação constante da poesia via tradução, e recebe atenção mais aprofundada nas seções 3.2 e 3.3.

Há outras traduções da obra de Whitman em português, inclusive uma edição completa de *Folhas de Relva* pela Martin Claret (2005), das quais fornecemos um histórico na seção 2.2, entretanto, nenhuma delas foi feita de modo semelhante ao nosso. Deste modo, o trabalho que apresentamos aqui é inédito, embora não seja completo. No corpo desta tese, no capítulo 4, apresentamos a recriação de vinte peças literárias, entre poemas e livros, do conjunto de *Folhas de Relva*, que é o volume que engloba a poesia completa de Whitman. Dentro das recriações apresentadas aqui, está o poema “Do Berço Infundamente Embalando,” que faz parte de *Detrito-Marinho*, o qual havia sido acrescentado como anexo em minha Dissertação de Mestrado. O poema foi revisado e corrigido e foi incluído aqui para que a seção *Detrito-Marinho* ficasse completa.

Na seção 2.1 há uma explicação da história editorial de *Folhas de Relva*. Além do contexto histórico dessa publicação, o capítulo 2 apresenta uma análise crítica da obra e do autor e discute um símbolo central nas *Folhas*, que é o cálamo. A recriação do livro “Cálamo”, bem como de “Descendentes de Adão” e “Canção de Mim Mesmo,” integra o texto da minha dissertação de mestrado (SARAIVA, 1995).

Palavras-chave: Tradução criativa; *Folhas de Relva*; Whitman.

ABSTRACT

This work focuses on the creative translation of Walt Whitman's poetry into Portuguese. The term that we use to refer to this process is **re-creation**, which is a type of translation that goes beyond literal translation (which favors the signified), searching for a work of conjoined reconstruction of signified and signifiers, due to the profound relation that exists between them (chapter 3 explains this method of creative translation; it also discusses the themes that are related to this in poetry, such as free verse, rhythm, meter, etc.). The term re-creation was borrowed from our masters in this type of translation, the Brazilian Concretist poets: Haroldo de Campos, Augusto de Campos and Décio Pignatari. In English, we use this word hyphenated, "re-creation" (and its derivatives), due to the fact that "recreation" indicates only diversion, an activity that is performed for relaxation and pleasure, and not "creating again". It is necessary to remember that the precursor in this translatorial field, of translation which is also creation, was Ezra Pound, who brought us the idea of constant renewing of poetry via translation, and who is given more attention in sections 3.2 and 3.3.

There are other translations of Whitman's works in Portuguese, including a complete edition of *Leaves of Grass* by Martin Claret publishing house (2005), of which we provide an account in section 2.2, however, none of them was carried out in a similar way to our own. Thus, the work we present here is original, although it is not complete. In the body of this dissertation, in chapter 4, we present the re-creation of twenty literary pieces, among poems and books, from *Leaves of Grass*, which is the volume that assembles the complete poetry of Whitman. Within the re-creations presented here, there is the poem "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking", which is part of *Sea-Drift*, and which had been added as an annex to our Master's thesis. This poem has been revised and corrected, and has been included here in order for the *Sea-Drift* cluster to be complete. In section 2.1 there is an explanation about the publishing history of *Leaves of Grass*. In addition to the historical context of this publication, chapter 2 presents a critical analysis of the works, author, and a central symbol in the *Leaves*, which is the calamus root. The re-creation of "Calamus", as well as of "Children of Adam" and "Song of Myself" appears in our Master's thesis (SARAIVA, 1995).

Key-words: Creative translation; *Leaves of Grass*; Whitman.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of our work is to render a considerable part of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* in Portuguese, so that the Brazilian reader can have an idea of who the great American poet was and what his poems convey. It is also intended to provide some information on his influence on the following generation of writers. In order to do this, we have divided the central part of our research in three chapters: chapter 2, Criticism and Context, contains a short account of the publishing history of the *Leaves* in the United States and its Brazilian editions. It also presents a critical review of the authors who have helped us to better understand Whitman and the *Leaves*, as well as a critical analysis of one major symbol in the *Leaves*, the calamus, or sweet-flag. In chapter 3, Re-creating *Leaves of Grass* Into Portuguese; we describe our method of creative translation, which can also be referred to as re-creation, or poetic re-recreation, which is different from literal translation. This chapter also presents our mentors in this type of translation, a discussion on the poetic aspects of Whitman's verse, some authors who are literarily connected to Whitman and some examples of poetic re-creation. Chapter 4 contains the poems and books which we have been re-creating since 2006. In chapter 5, the conclusion, we shall analyze the result of our work and assess if it has been fruitful. We will give now more details of this research, of Whitman, of *Leaves of Grass* and creative translation.

As we will find in chapter 2, which we believe will help the reader to understand the whole matter, *Leaves of Grass* comprises the complete poetic works of Walt Whitman. The first edition was published by the poet in 1855 with only the title and a picture of Whitman on its cover. The 1855 edition contained the famous Preface plus twelve poems, which had no titles either. Whitman's name appeared only in the middle of the poem that is known now as "Song of Myself," in the passage that later became section 24 (there were no subdivisions either in the first edition), in a verse that read: "Walt Whitman, one of the roughs, a kosmos," as we can see in a Brazilian edition of the 1855 edition by Iluminuras publishing house (WHITMAN, 2005, p.76). After a few changes over the years, Whitman finally arrived at the current and more poetic version of this line in 1881: "Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son" (WHITMAN, 2002, P.45). In subsequent editions, the poet gave titles to all the poems, and inscribed his name on the cover. The fact is that every new book or cluster of poems that he wrote, he added them to the already published book, keeping the same general title. Whitman did that from the 1856 second edition until the 1891-2 last or final edition,

which is called the “authorized” or “deathbed” edition, and which is the one that is used as the source of our creative translations.

Apart from the absence of the author’s name on the cover and of poem titles, the most striking literary fact¹ after the release of the first edition was that, among many people whom Whitman sent copies of his book, Emerson was the only one who personally answered him in writing, that is, by sending the poet the a letter that became famous in the History of American Literature, in which the poet-philosopher acknowledged Whitman’s poetic genius. Emerson, who was a great influence on Whitman, and would remain a friend for life, gave Whitman this “safe-conduct” into the literary world. Later, in section 2.5.6 there will be more information on the connection between these two poets and how some Emersonian ideas on poetry and poets are assimilated into *Leaves of Grass*, especially Emerson’s concept of “Language as fossil poetry” and the poet as “namer”, which is linked to Whitman’s role as American Adam in his book “Children of Adam”. In the same section we will discuss how Whitman’s poetry relates to William Blake’s at the spiritual level, and what there is of vision and prophecy in their writings. In section 3.4, when we discuss the catalogues, those long lists of people, professions, cities, countries and geographical locations, we will also refer to religiousness, since the Bible is one of the sources of this type of writing.

Also included in chapter 2, is a review of the criticism that has been of importance to us in researching the *Leaves* and the poet. Authors such as Ezra Pound, Harold Bloom, Gay Wilson Allen, Henry S. Canby, Ed Folsom, D. H. Lawrence and Fernando Alegria have been tremendously helpful in broadening our view of Whitman. These and many others are featured in section 2.4, with emphasis on their specific contribution to our inquiry. Then there is section 2.5, which examines the meaning and possible mythical origin of the use of the calamus, reed or sweet-flag as a major symbol of manly attachment in the *Leaves*, particularly in the “Calamus” cluster, in which it acquires a political meaning, representing comradeship, union (Calamus was a Greek mythological figure), and even nationality, which is an aspect that Whitman shares with the Romantics. By the way, whenever we find appropriate, we will point out what Whitman has in common with the Romantics and what aspects of Romanticism he rejected or surpassed. As a result of this approach to this literary movement, there will not be a specific section to discuss Romanticism in our dissertation. Moreover, we

¹ We term it literary because, personally or emotionally, the most important fact was the death of his father, just five days after the release of the book. More information in section 2.5.6.

will examine other meanings and uses of the calamus or reed, such as musical instrument, a pen, a pipe and even as spice.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to our translatorial method, a study of poetic elements, such as rhythm and meter, and an examination of Whitman's verse. Our method of creative translation is defined at the beginning, in section 3.2, where we summarize the set of ideas that has guided us in our task. In short, we might describe our method as the reconstruction or re-configuring of the original text in the target language in a way that both the meaning and its poetic elements and linguistic properties are maintained, as well as its atmosphere and diction. Naturally, our presentation in chapter 3 is more extensive and detailed, and it shows how we have put this concept of translation together. There we also mention and quote our mentors in this field of activity, what we have learned from them and how we use this knowledge in our work. As we can not cite all the translators who helped us in some way, we have decided to include in our research only the most immediately representative, to us, of what might be called today a Brazilian translation school. Although critics might complain that we have neglected many important scholars in this area, such as Paulo Rónai or Lawrence Flores Pereira, we have decided to narrow a little our focus for theoretical reasons. It does not mean that we are not aware of their work, especially Professor Pereira's, whose translations of T. S. Eliot's poems (2005), *Antigone* (2006) and *Hamlet* (2007) are outstanding and have been a model to us. However, our choice of authors forces us to keep our attention on them.

Thus, the poet translators whose concepts we have followed most closely here are Haroldo and Augusto de Campos (whom we have to refer to by their first names to avoid misunderstandings), plus Décio Pignatari, who, along with the Campos brothers, started the Concrete Poetry movement in the 1950's and renewed our poetry from then to the present. Ezra Pound, as their chief influence, is definitely part of the history of literary translation, or more specifically poetic translation, in the Western world and must be on any one's curriculum. We also mention Odorico Mendes, who was revived by the Concrete poets, since the Concrete poets were following Pound's path of searching for the living parts of the culture in order to integrate them into the current literary movement. Actually, there are other translators who appear in our work, in sections 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9, in which we compare our re-creation of passages from *Leaves of Grass* and the works of other poets to their translations. In this case, we do not discuss their theoretical view on translation, only their practical results. In this sense, it is not appropriate to relate them to the Concrete poet-translators' concepts and

activities, particularly for the reason that the Concrete poets depart from a different idea of translation. As suggested by Pound, we have just compared results to verify what works best.

As for the poetic elements and Whitman's verse, we refer in section 3.3 to what we have learned from Augusto de Campos, Décio Pignatari and Pound, especially about directness in language and poetic and linguistic correlations that exist between words in a text. When we deal specifically with verse, and in particular with Whitman's verse, we study parallelism, enumeration, catalogues and meter and the differences between their expression in English and Portuguese due to the intrinsic linguistic properties of each language (section 3.4). In section 3.5, we compare Whitman's career and production as a man of letters to Oswald de Andrade's career, which includes his political activity as de Andrade is one of our most combative writers. This is due to our view of Whitman as an author whose attitude and writings are closer to the kind of attitude towards nature, society and industrialization presented by Modernist poets than to most American and Brazilian poets of the nineteenth century. For this reason, we have included in this part of our research the contribution of Fernando Pessoa, speaking as his heteronym Álvaro de Campos, to the spread of Whitman's reputation as a poet who has inspired many other poets and writers in many different countries. Later in this chapter we shall dedicate some words to some of these poets, as a homage we pay to them. Still in section 3.5, we bring the word of Gilberto Freyre and Alexis de Tocqueville to help us furnish a portrait of the social and political situation in the United States during the years around the publication of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, mainly from 1849 until the end of the American Civil War. This situation was important because it prompted a major shift in Whitman's life and career, since he resigned politics in 1849, after many years of involvement in political parties, to dedicate his efforts to creating his poetic works.

After that, in section 3.6, we discuss Longfellow's poetry, which is placed here as a counterpoint to Whitman's, that is, as a voice that occurred simultaneously, but was independent in form and rhythm. Specifically, Longfellow represented traditional poetry, writing in poetic forms that had been used for centuries, while Whitman was the poet of current times, creating a type of poetry that mirrored the modern time in which he lived. Longfellow was also the most popular poet of that time; he was respected by Whitman and even visited the poet in Camden in 1879, a fact that was remembered with pride by Whitman, who was known for his cultivation of many devoted friends.

We have been reading, studying and translating *Leaves of Grass* for around twenty years now. During this time, we have been not only studying and translating poetry, but also developing a system of translation as well. Our translatorial method, which we describe in chapter 3, has been applied to various poetic works. Thus, we have improved our translating skills and have practiced them on texts which can be defined as difficult, that is, attractive to a translator, as we state in section 3.2. So, before tackling Whitman's songs, we spent some time learning how to re-create poetry. Samples of this work are shown in sections 3.7, in which there are examples of re-creations from *Leaves of Grass*, which are compared to other translations published in Brazil; in section 3.8, we offer the reader instances of creative translations of Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, and James Joyce's and Emily Dickinson's poetry, and in 3.9 there are more passages from *Leaves of Grass*. All these renderings are followed by comments or explanations on technical details or choice of words performed by us.

In chapter 4, we will find the result of our efforts: the poems, re-created in our tongue according to our idea of re-construction of content and form, of re-building the poetic elements that are the structure that carry the meanings. After we accomplished the re-creation of three books that are part of the *Leaves*, "Song of Myself", "Children of Adam" and "Calamus", in our Master's thesis, a work that was completed in 1995 and which is available at the UFRGS library, we resumed our task of bringing Whitman's poetry into our language. We have chosen the following books and poems to work on this time: "Inscriptions"; "Starting from Paumanok"; "Salut au Monde!"; "Song of the Open Road"; "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"; "Song of the Answerer"; "Our Old Feuilleage"; "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"; "A Broadway Pageant"; "SEA-DRIFT"; "Memories of President Lincoln"; "Passage to India" and "The Sleepers." Finally, in section 5, we will analyze critically the re-created poems in our language, quoting passages, in order to verify whether we have achieved the desired results. Apart from these five chapters, there is a reference section with all the publications and authors that have contributed to our research and an annex with the text of "Origins of Attempted Secession" (WHITMAN, 1996, pp.1018-24), since this document clarifies Whitman's political view on the United States of his time and is mentioned in section 3.5. We must also warn the reader about some technical details of our thesis. Many of our

sources are books published in Portuguese, because the authors are from Brazil. Therefore, unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Portuguese are our own. Another necessary notice is about biblical quotations. They are taken from *The Holy Bible: King James Version* (2005), 1611 Edition, and the language has not been updated. A final warning is about chapter 4, which contains the poems: we have chosen to use spacing between the lines according to the format of the poems in English, instead of the regular spacing applied to the other chapters. As Whitman's poetry and prose are entirely available on the internet nowadays and his printed works are quite cheap and available in Brazilian bookstores, we have not considered it necessary to include the original text in our research.

As we have stated above, we shall provide a few words here about some poets who are in some way connected to Whitman or who had something in common with Whitman. This is a way of honoring them and an explanation for the quotation at the beginning of our work: "Artists are the antennae of the race" (POUND, 1987, p.81), that is, the people who are able to anticipate what is coming. In section 3.3 we will address Pound's ideas on poetry and criticism in more depth and section 2.4 brings the poem "A Pact", which Pound wrote to Whitman when he felt that he was "old enough" to appear before his "father". We will need to quote Pound's own explanation about his statement, because it conveys an alert that is still valid today, as it has always been in all societies:

A graver issue needs biological analogy: artists are the antennae; an animal that neglects the warnings of its perceptions needs very great powers of resistance if it is to survive.

Your finer senses are protected, the eye by bone socket, etc.

A nation which neglects the perceptions of its artists declines. After a while it ceases to act, and merely survives.

There is probably no use in telling this to people who can't see it without being told.

Artists and poets undoubtedly get excited and 'over-excited' about things long before the general public.

Before deciding whether a man is a fool or a good artist, it would be well to ask, not only: 'is he excited unduly', but: 'does he see something we don't?'

Is his curious behaviour due to his feeling an oncoming earthquake, or smelling a forest fire which we do not yet feel or smell? (POUND, 1987, pp.82-3)

There is another ramification to Pound's assertion above, which is the fact that artists as such are not in a position to falsify records. As they are the first to sense what is coming in

a near future, they have to be true when conveying these findings to their readers, and the readers must also be alert to verify whether the artist is being true or not. The reading public must, then, respect the artists for their talent, but also demand from them their best. As a result, Pound is not only defending the artists, he is also placing them their responsibility. In section 2.5.6, the discussion about mediums and vision shows Whitman's and Blake's capacity for feeling "things long before the general public", as well as the well-known ability of Whitman for prophesying (his own future actions, for example, like his work as a nurse during the War of Secession, which is described in "Song of Myself," published years before the outset of the war), which has been proved to be true, as demonstrated by his biographers. This is another reason why Whitman is a poet who deserves more readership in Portuguese. When we live in a time that honors and studies Pound's writings, the study of his literary father is even more needed. Pound wrote in a 1909 essay² that although he did not feel very well when reading some passages of Whitman, for their crudity of expression, sometimes he found himself writing in Whitman's style. We mention this fact because Pound's style does resemble Whitman's, including when he is writing essays. For example, his *ABC of Reading* (1987), in general, and many other essays, with their frequent short statements instead of a text with a long course of reasoning, is similar to the style of "Song of Myself" with its ensemble of short passages, even though it is not reasonable to compare poetry to prose. However, this resemblance is a matter of substance, not form. Another obvious similarity is Pound's *The Cantos*, written between 1915 and 1962, which is a "work in progress," developed and published throughout the years in a like manner to *Leaves of Grass*. By the way, we are not even the first to point out this similarity, since Leminski, in his introduction to *Folhas das Folhas de Relva*, by Geir Campos (*Leaves from Leaves of Grass*, 2002, pp.7-12), suggests that "there is something in *The Cantos* that seems to breathe through the epic whitmanian lungs."

As the themes of governance and economics are constant in *The Cantos*, it is not by chance that we have written these paragraphs about some poets who have devoted time to them, especially, in this introduction, Lorca and José Martí. To speak then of the decline of nations when they neglect their artists, we do not need to give examples other than the cases in the literary world, because we all know, especially in Brazil, what happens when specific groups of people take over a country, either due to economic, political or military reasons:

² Pound's excerpts of this essay are quoted by Alan Trachtenberg in his article "Walt Whitman: Precipitant of the Modern" (GREENSPAN, 1997, p.194).

immediate censorship or a ban on artists in general, and on poets, in particular. Nevertheless, it is possible that sometimes artists are rejected by society at large. The recent history of Brazil, for example, shows that the military forces took office in Brazil in a *coup d'état* in 1964, and remained in power until 1985. In 1968, the military government issued the Institutional Act #5, which restricted the political freedom in the country. Whitman and Pound suffered this type of problem in their own lives, like other poets such as Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Joyce, Lorca, Pessoa and Oswald de Andrade, as we will see in section 3.5. Whitman began to receive greater recognition in his country only after his death, as it happened to many others, as these words, by one of his biographers, on his death show: "It is safe to say that in his death Whitman received more newspaper space than he had during his whole life-time. [...] Thus at his death Whitman's life and works became more widely known and appreciated." (ALLEN, 1955, pp.541-2). And when those in power no longer want to share in the collective life of the community and prefer to exert power over it, the artists are the ones who must leave the country or lose press space. Whitman was censored. Pound (1885-1972) was incarcerated in a U.S. detention camp outside Pisa for 25 days in an open cage before receiving a tent, where he seemed to have suffered a nervous breakdown. He had been arrested for cultural and propaganda activities against the Allied forces in Italy. After the war, Pound was taken to the United States to face charges of treason, but he was found unable to face trial by reason of insanity and he was sent to St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C., where he stayed from 1946 to 1958. After that, he returned to Italy, where he died in 1972. During all that time, he continued to write and translate poetry and was allowed to be in contact with friends and artists.

Another poet who loved Whitman and had an even sadder fate was Lorca, who was murdered at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. This Hispanic poet was one of Whitman's admirers, and paid a tribute to the American poet in 1929, when he visited the United States and wrote a book called *Poeta en Nueva York (A Poet in New York)*. Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936) was a Spanish poet and dramatist who was killed by Nationalist partisans at the age of 38 at the outset of the Spanish Civil War, which was won by Francisco Franco (1892–1975), who was the dictator and later head of state of parts of Spain from 1936 and of all of Spain from 1939 until the end of his life in 1975. Franco's regime placed a ban on Lorca's works, which include *Primer romancero gitano (Gypsy Ballads, 1928)*, *Poeta en Nueva York (1930, published in 1940, first translation into English in 1988, A Poet in New York)*; *Bodas de Sangre (Blood Wedding, 1932)* and *La Casa de Bernarda Alba (The House of*

Bernarda Alba, 1936). In his book *Poeta en Nueva York*, Lorca wrote an “Oda a Walt Whitman” (“Ode to Walt Whitman”), to salute the American bard, referred to in his Ode as “Adán de sangre, macho, hombre solo en el mar, Viejo hermoso Walt Whitman.”

Oswald de Andrade, who will receive more attention in section 3.5, had the circulation of his newspaper prohibited by the police in 1931 and suffered political persecution in 1932 (ANDRADE, 1990, p.iv; see the “Chronology” section). Finally, we must honor another great poet, José Martí, called the “Apostle of Cuban Independence” and a National Hero. He admired Whitman and attended one of the American poet’s lectures in 1887 in New York. “The web site of the Government of the Republic of Cuba³” provides the following information on José Martí, whose name does resemble “martyr”:

Working for independence from early adolescence, José Martí Pérez, (born in La Habana, 1853) suffered imprisonment and deportation during the Ten Years War. From his work with later conspiracies and revolutionary movements, he realized that the Cuban Revolution had to have new organizational and programmatic foundations. To this task, he devoted his work and his whole life.

Gifted with exquisite poetic sensibility and being a terrific and bright speaker, Martí also possessed a tremendous foresight and a profound political thought, enriched by the experience of the years he lived in Spain, the United States and other Latin American countries.

All his work for the union of the Cuban revolutionaries, mainly among the Cuban emigrates in the United States, had an important repercussion in Cuba, and became a reality in 1892, when the **Cuban Revolutionary Party** was founded. [...]

The war started on **February 24**, 1895. Martí landed in Cuba with Máximo Gómez, General in Chief of the Liberation Army, and shortly after was killed in combat at Dos Ríos. Though Martí’s death was a terrible loss for the Revolution, the revolutionary movement became stronger and stronger [...]

Allen supplies a beautiful account of Martí’s attendance of Whitman’s lecture in his biography of Whitman, *The Solitary Singer*:

[...] his New York friends arranged for him to give his Lincoln lecture in Madison Square Theater. [...] [Andrew] Carnegie [1835-1919], the millionaire author of *Triumphant Democracy* (1886), wrote to J. H.

³ Information available at <<http://www.cubagob.cu/ingles/default.htm>>. Accessed on July 26, 2007.

Johnston, the chief organizer of this benefit performance: “When the *Pall Mall Gazette* raised a subscription for Mr. Whitman, I felt triumphant democracy disgraced. Whitman is the great poet of America so far.” Other notables, such as Mark Twain, [...] attended the lecture, and a reception was given afterward at the Westminster Hotel, with an attendance of two hundred people. Apparently Whitman did not know that José Martí, a Cuban journalist then in exile because of his liberal political views, also heard the lecture and wrote a highly eulogistic account which spread Whitman’s fame throughout Latin America as the semi-divine author of *Leaves of Grass*. (ALLEN, 1955, p.525)

Apart from poets, like the ones already mentioned, we also resorted to writers in other areas of knowledge for help. This is the case of Alexis de Tocqueville, the French political thinker and historian, the author of *Democracy in America*, who, besides Gilberto Freyre, has provided us with the sociological basis for our analysis of the situation of the United States and Brazil in the nineteenth century. This is done in section 3.5, where we relate their work to the Brazilian writer and thinker, Oswald de Andrade, whom we consider to be the Brazilian equivalent of Whitman, given their personal characteristics: both are journalists, writers (Whitman wrote tales and a novel, too: *Franklin Evans; or The Inebriate*, which was published as an extra to a newspaper, *The New World*, in 1842), poets and sometime political activists.

In sum, what we truly believe is that our efforts to re-create a considerable part of *Leaves of Grass* in Portuguese might inject enthusiasm in our readers in order to increase Whitman’s readership in Brazil. Perhaps this action might even motivate new translators to try a new or better version for these texts or of other texts worthy of note. The fact is, when compared to Whitman’s reception in Latin-America in general, with the admiration of authors such as José Martí, Gilberto Freyre, Pablo Neruda, and Jorge Luis Borges, for example, we see that in Brazil there is a huge gap concerning *Leaves of Grass*. We do not know why this gap exists, but it is a reality. Maybe our undertaking will fill it or prompt others to help do it. If it serves any of these purposes, it will be worth having been attempted. Then, one day, Whitman might stand among us as an author common to us, such as many great authors have been. We hope that what has been written in the next pages will be of some value to our students, scholars and readers in general.

2 WHITMAN'S POETRY: CRITICISM AND CONTEXT

2.1 History of *Leaves of Grass*

Leaves of Grass has an uncommon publishing history. There were nine editions during Whitman's life and *Leaves of Grass* is the general title under which Whitman published his complete poetry. It all began with the first edition, published by the poet in 1855, with only the title and a picture of him on its cover. The 1855 edition contained the now historical Preface and twelve individually untitled poems (in fact, some of them received *Leaves of Grass* as titles). These poems, which were numbered and received titles from the second edition (1856) on, included "Song of Myself", the first and longer one, "A Song for Occupations", "To Think of Time" and "Great are the Myths". In the first edition, the poet's name only appeared in what was later known as section 24 of "Song of Myself", in the verse: "Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son." The following excerpt is an accurate description of this edition, from *Notes on Walt Whitman, as Poet and Person* (1867) by John Burroughs, Whitman's friend and disciple:

In the summer of 1855 a thin quarto volume of a hundred pages, poorly printed, and inscribed in great letters on the title-page, LEAVES OF GRASS, appeared from the press of a small job-office in the city of Brooklyn, New York.

It had no author's name, but there was a frontispiece, a choice and artistic steel engraving, portraying a man somewhere from thirty to thirty-five years of age, quite *neglige*, no coat or vest, shirt open at the neck, one hand in his trousers pocket, and the other resting on his hip; face bearded, and a felt hat pushed back slightly from the forehead; a mild yet firm enough pair of eyes, and a general expression, not only about the countenance, but equally in the whole figure, that held you looking long at the picture, under a feeling you could hardly account for.¹

The fact is that the book grew according to Whitman's poetic production throughout his life. But it was not as simple as it appears, because actually there were many changes, rearrangements, additions and subtractions to the book. The introduction to *Leaves of Grass and other writings* (WHITMAN, 2002), a Norton Critical Edition, brings a detailed account of this history, of which we give a brief summary here. In 1856, Whitman added twenty poems

¹ John Burroughs (1837-1921) met Whitman in Washington in 1864; Whitman helped him become a writer and in return Burroughs helped him to improve the poet's skill in precise observation of nature. *Notes on Walt Whitman* is available at The Walt Whitman Archive, <<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/burroughs/works.html>>, a broad source of writings on and by Whitman, which will be cited more specifically in section 2.4, on secondary sources. Accessed on September 9, 2008.

to the second edition. “By Blue Ontario’s Shore”, “Song of Prudence”, “Salut au Monde!”, “Song of the Open Road”, “Song of the Broad-Axe” and “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” were among them. This edition also had a great Preface, which was in fact his letter to Emerson, his “Dear Friend and Master”, in response to the letter Emerson had written him upon receiving a copy of the first edition, acknowledging “the wonderful gift” of the *Leaves* and the “free and brave thought” of the poet (WHITMAN, 2002, pp.637-8).

After that, he had an amazing productive time, which lasted until 1860, when he published the third edition, with the inclusion of 124 poems to the existing book. Besides the revisions and changes, he started also to group related poems into clusters, according to the themes. For this new edition, there were three clusters: “Calamus”, centered on the celebration of comradeship, “Children of Adam”, based on procreation, and *Drum-Taps*, on the nation at war (*Drum-Taps* was begun in 1860). Actually, *Drum-Taps* was published in 1865 and its “Sequel”, in 1866 as supplements to *Leaves of Grass*, but to be later bound up with the parent edition or to be issued separately if necessary. The “Sequel” was the special edition that contained his elegy to Lincoln, the poem “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed”, the fine poetic piece on the death of President Lincoln. These clusters were so strong that they remained mostly unchanged until the final edition, while other clusters were rearranged, or simply eliminated as such, with some of their poems inserted in other sections of the book. “Chants Democratic” and “Messenger Leaves” are examples of that.

In 1866 Whitman wanted to publish a new and better edition of the *Leaves*, which he did in 1867. It was the fourth edition that, with its supplements, comprised this time 236 poems. One of the supplements to this edition was “Songs Before Parting”. There was then the 1871 or fifth edition, with nine new poems. Later, in 1876, there was another edition, the sixth, with very few changes. But with an accompanying volume called *Two Rivulets*, made up of prose and poems, such as the “Centennial Songs” (due to the centennial of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776), “As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free”, and “Passage to India.” Eventually, in 1881, with a deep shift and final rearrangement, the seventh edition was brought out. This was the first proper publication of the *Leaves*; for it was the first which was done by a publishing house (it was called the Osgood edition, published by James R. Osgood and co.). Whitman himself had been responsible for all the previous editions. From 1881 on, there would be no more changes, but there would be additions like “Sands at Seventy” in the eighth edition, in 1888. And “Good-Bye My Fancy” in the 1891-92 “authorized” or

“deathbed” edition by David McKay, Philadelphia, who also published the poet’s *Complete Prose Works* (“Specimen Days”, “Collect”, “Notes Left Over”, “November Boughs”, etc., a collection of memoranda that ranges from his early youth in Long Island to his old age in Camden, NJ.) All this work is best described by Bradley and Blodgett in this passage from their introduction:

The construction of *Leaves of Grass* is best to be regarded, not as a hierarchic system of themes, but as resourceful editing by a man who was obliged to be his own publisher for most of his life, who serenely confronted a hostile literary market, who enjoyed little benefit of professional advice, and who nevertheless essentially achieved what he had set out to do. It took resolution—the resolution of the poet who told himself, ‘Now voyager sail thou forth to seek and find.’ (WHITMAN, 2002, p.xxxi)

2.2 Brazilian editions of *Leaves of Grass*

Compared to what happened in other nations, the *Leaves* has a short and small history in Brazil. The oldest edition is the famous *Folhas das Folhas de Relva* (*Leaves from Leaves of Grass*), a collection of poems and fragments translated by Geir Campos, published by Editora Brasiliense in 1983 (9th reprint in 2002; actually, the original edition was published by Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1964). After that, there is another edition by Imago Editora (2000), a literal translation of “Song of Myself” performed by André Cardoso. It is a bilingual edition, with a very careful translation, an honest work, without any pretentiousness. It is a very useful one to attentive (or inattentive) readers, for its fidelity to meaning. Then, there is a bilingual publication by Plano Editora, another selection of poems translated by Ramsés Ramos (2001). It is a literal translation, or almost that. Apart from these, there is another bilingual edition, this time a translation of the 1855 *Leaves of Grass* published by Iluminuras (2005), whose translator is Rodrigo Garcia Lopes, who is also a poet, journalist, and composer. This edition contains everything from the original edition: the preface and the twelve poems, which are accompanied by notes to the poems, a postface, and bibliography. In the postface, the translator gives detailed historical, economic, social and literary information on the United States of the nineteenth century, and discusses Whitman’s “basic procedures” of writing, such as borrowing words from other languages, parallelism, free verse, and catalogues. In short, it is a good homage to Whitman. Finally, there is a popular edition by Martin Claret publishing house of the complete text of the *Leaves* (*Folhas de Relva*, 2005), with an introduction by Luciano Alves Meira, the translator. Meira comments briefly on

Whitman and the book, but nothing is said of the operation of bringing the whole *Leaves of Grass* into Portuguese, which must have been a tremendous and long effort.

As for the other nations, it was published in England and translated into German (1870) and French still in the nineteenth century. It was translated into Italian (*Foglie di Erba*, by Luigi Gamberale) in 1900 (with a reprint in 1907); and into Spanish in 1912². It received acclaim and admiration from authors such as José Martí, Jorge Luis Borges, Pessoa and Lorca a long time ago and it has not received appropriate attention from Brazilian editors until today. There are in Brazil, up to the present, only the above mentioned few incomplete editions and the popular one, which are not able to completely re-create the atmosphere of the original, with its length of breath, flowing rhythm and unfolding images. These details are thoroughly dealt with in chapter 3, section 3.7, where we compare these translations to our own.

The editorial problems faced by *Leaves of Grass* in Brazil are similar to the hardships Whitman underwent in his own country concerning the publication of his books. *Leaves of Grass* was only properly published in the U.S. in 1881, which means that it took a long time since the first edition, in 1855, for the publishing houses to turn their attention to Whitman. This means that the author had been financially responsible for all the previous editions of the *Leaves*. His reception in both countries shows hostility from the critics and public (TREVISAN, 2001, p.207). However, the situation here seems to be worse, for a long time has elapsed since then and other countries have given him adequate attention, while we still fail in accomplishing the same task.

2.3 What we have done and what we intend to do

We have re-created a series of poems from *Leaves of Grass* into Portuguese and we are re-creating another group of poems now. Re-creating here means the artistic translation of poetry, which is different from literal translation in the sense that we want to reconstruct

² In the first section of the “Introduction to Walt Whitman, *Poemas*, by Álvaro Armando Vasseur”, by Matt Cohen and Rachel Price, in which the authors discuss the presence of Whitman in Latin America and Spain, they state that “Only with Vasseur's [...] 1912 translation did Whitman become available and important to generations of Latin American poets, from the residual *modernistas* to the region's major twentieth-century figures, including Peruvian vanguardist César Vallejo, Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, and the Argentine Jorge Luis Borges.” The text of the Spanish edition is available at <<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/index.html>>. Accessed on May 22, 2007.

poetic elements, such as rhythm and sound, and their close relationship with their meaning (methodology and examples are provided for in chapter 3). After we accomplished the re-creation³ of three books that are part of the *Leaves*, “Song of Myself”, “Children of Adam” and “Calamus”, in our Master’s thesis, a study completed in 1995 and available at the UFRGS library, we resumed our task of bringing Whitman’s poetry into our language. We have chosen the following books and poems to work on this time: “Inscriptions”; “Starting from Paumanok”; “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”; “SEA-DRIFT” (“Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking”); and “Passage to India”. We intend to include more poems in our project, which are: “A Song for Occupations”; “A Song of the Rolling Earth”; “Youth, Day, Old Age and Night”; “Birds of Passage”; “Memories of President Lincoln”; “By Blue Ontario’s Shore”; “Proud Music of the Storm”; “Prayer of Columbus” and “The Sleepers”. In numbers, this means something around 99 pages of poetry done in our previous work and 188 pages of the projected work now, from a total of 491 pages of poetic texts. We are using *Whitman poetry and prose* (1996) as our source, which contains the 1991-92 authorized edition, the one recommended by the poet himself. In chapter 5 we will explain if and what we have achieved of this projected work, how we have done it and whether the result is according to what we have proposed to do.

2.4 *Leaves of Grass*: secondary sources

In this section of our work, we will provide some information on the authors and works that have helped us understand *Leaves of Grass* better. There is a cosmos of literature on Whitman and the *Leaves*, which makes it virtually impossible to cover all criticisms on both. In this manner, we undertake the task of pointing out only those authors and texts that have been of assistance to our readings and re-readings of Whitman’s works. They have not been too many, but they have been useful. And their usefulness is based on a fact that we have

³ We translate the terms “recriação” and “re-criação” in English as “re-creation” or “re-creating”, always with a hyphen, since the word “recreation” in English, without a hyphen, refers to activities that refresh, amuse, divert and stimulate people, and not as an act of translating poetry or making something. Literarily speaking, re-creating a poem seems more like co-creating the piece, for the translator needs to create again the original text in consonance with it, not only to create something from or based on it. Actually, the word “re-create” was used by Whitman himself to describe how he was writing his own poetry, as he wrote in a review titled “Walt Whitman and his Poems” (*The United States Review* 5; September 1855: 205-12): “He must re-create poetry with the elements always at hand.” Available at: <<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/criticism/reviews/leaves1855/anc.00176.html>> Accessed on 2008-08-14.

realized after so many years of readership (we began reading *Leaves of Grass* in 1988): no single author is capable of understanding all aspects of the *Leaves*, and even when they work together the difficulty remains the same. Whitman does contain multitudes. Naturally, it requires a multitude of authors, writers, poets, biographers and critics, each addressing one or more aspects of the works of the American bard to compose a mosaic-like picture of the poet and his works, so that the reader can be supported in the joyful and difficult job of understanding them.

As they have all been of similar importance to us, we will mention them in order of appearance in our course of studies. The first of them is Ezra Pound. In sections 3.2 and 3.3, there is more detailed information on his works as poet, critic and translator. The two books by him that influenced us most were *How to Read* (1968), in which he exposes his method of reading by comparison, that is, by placing the texts side by side for a quick analysis, and *ABC of Reading* (1987), in which he does in practice what he did in theory in the first book, that is, he provides the texts of the poems mentioned, so that the readers can compare them and reach their own conclusions. The last section of *ABC of Reading* contains a “Treatise on Metre”, where he gives a concise description of the basic elements of verse, with a special focus on rhythm, and a general answer to questions on how to study, identify or write great poetry: “LISTEN to the sound that it makes.” (POUND, 1987, p.201). Although his lessons in poetics are quite abrupt, with a writing style of juxtaposing ideas instead of a linear development, they are fundamental for any one who wishes to be a poet or translator of poetry. His teachings have been invaluable for our re-creation of the *Leaves*, since rhythm is an essential element in Whitman’s poetry, especially when considered in a wider sense, that is, the movement of the verses in the longer poems, and not only of the syllables or words in a verse. This topic will be addressed in more depth in the conclusion.

The second author worthy of note is Harold Bloom. His importance consists in his unveiling of Whitman’s hermeticism to us. In his introduction to the volume of *Modern Critical Views* (1985) on Whitman, he explains to us why it is not easy or simple to understand the poet and his works, especially for a translator who needs or has to work on them, although this problem may affect any one who does that:

[...] No other poet insists so vehemently and so continuously that he will tell us all, and tell us all without artifice, and yet tells us so little, and so

cunningly. Except for Dickinson (the only American poet comparable to him in magnitude), there is no other nineteenth-century poet as difficult and hermetic as Whitman; not Blake, not Browning, not Mallarmé. Only an elite can read Whitman, despite the poet's insistence that he wrote for the people [...] (BLOOM, 1985, p.3)

The problem (and the solution) here rest in what is at the core of Whitman's personality and works: his contradiction. It is written on the first page of *Leaves of Grass*, in the first poem of "Inscriptions", that the poet sings "a simple separate person, / Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse." The poet's purpose is established from the start and every reader of Whitman knows that he prefers to spend his time among uneducated persons than among high class people, and that the most important people for him are the average persons, who are the force that builds the nation and its future, and from whom democracy springs. How could then that the writings of "one of the roughs" can only be understood by "an elite"? It seems to us that only contradiction can explain how a poet who was supposed to belong to the masses became the "center of the American canon" in literature.

It is not our purpose here to advance an explanation on this phenomenon; actually, we intend to do the opposite: to state that it was precisely Bloom's insights that helped us to understand that we do not and can not comprehend everything in the works and the man to do our work. This is coherent with what we have asserted above, that no single person can grasp the meaning of everything in the life or works of the American bard. Also, it is part of a translator's job not to explain things that must remain unexplained, or, in other words, our recreation of the *Leaves* does not aim at explaining difficult passages; if they are obscure in the original, they will remain obscure in the translation, and we are supposed not to understand everything in terms of significance or interpretation, although we should be able to do it in terms of grammar and lexicality and do our best to render in our vernacular the best text possible. Nevertheless, Bloom insists on this argument in his book *The Western Canon* (1995, p.248): "[...] It is an unhappy paradox that we have never got Whitman right, because he is a very difficult, immensely subtle poet who is usually at work doing almost the precise opposite of what he asserts himself to be doing." Paradoxically, Whitman was many times criticized exactly for the fact that his poetry was rude and indecent. When we take everything into account, we must agree again with the poet that he was contradictory and that no one can be termed wrong for having particular views on his poetry. However, we may note in passing that it is at least curious or ironic that a poet who considered himself not above or below anyone and who despised Romanticism, for the fact that Romanticism cherished aristocracy

and did not want to merge with the common people, should have his works understood by an elite, and not the common people.

As we do not intend to raise a discussion on this phenomenon, which Bloom has already addressed in his works, we shall comment now on another idea by Bloom and the other authors in *Modern Critical Views*. Although Bloom's main discussion in the introduction is about the "I", the "real Me" and the "Me myself" (1985, pp.6-7), what is important to us in this text is what he calls "Whitman's masterpieces", the "six long or longer poems" that are referred to by him as "elegies", or "elegies for the 'real Me'", which makes him observe that only one of these poems is truly an elegy ("When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"), and that these poems had a direct influence on many twentieth-century writers, such as Wallace Stevens, T. S. Eliot ("The Waste Land is 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd' rewritten," according to Bloom), Hemingway, and Hart Crane. The six longer poems mentioned by him are: "The Sleepers," "Song of Myself," "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life," "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd." By the way, Bloom's article in the volume of *Modern Critical Views*, "Whitman's Image of Voice: To the Tally of My Soul" (1985, pp.127-42), is mainly about the Lincoln elegy, in which he discusses the meaning of the term "tally", and its manifold meanings.

Mentioning Bloom's preference for these poems does not mean that we agree with him. Actually, what he gave us was a parameter to analyze the poems, and to see that there are other long poems as great as the ones cited above, such as "Starting from Paumanok," "Salut au Monde," "Song of the Open Road," and "Passage to India". All these poems have been re-created by us. Except for "Song of Myself", included in our Master's thesis, all the other poems are part of our present work. However, there are still other great poems, such as "Proud Music of the Storm," "Prayer of Columbus," "To Think of Time" and "There Was a Child Went Forth", which will be left for future work, not to mention the other poems and books which have been already re-created by now.

We shall give now a short account of the other articles in this volume of *Modern Critical Views* on Whitman, since they have broadened our view of the poet. The "Editor's Note" confirms what we have said above on the difficulty of understanding Whitman and his works; it states that "What emerges from these essays is a partial portrait of the greatest, most

enigmatic and most American of all American poets.”, because “As poet and as person, Walt Whitman remains large and evasive.” Which is why the volume focuses “[...] upon what is most difficult and vital in Whitman’s works, the ambiguity of the self or selves and the curious relation between the Whitmanian self and soul” (1985, p.1). The next critic to write about the American bard is D. H. Lawrence. Like Whitman himself, Lawrence always seems contradictory, since sometimes it is really difficult to know whether he is criticizing or praising Whitman. Moreover, he is often ironic. However, in the end, he shows his real feelings and thoughts for his object of study and confesses his love towards the American poet, for only a great soul would be able to recognize other great souls:

The love of man and woman [...] The love of comrades [...] Democracy: a recognition of souls, all down the open road, and a great soul seen in its greatness, as it travels on foot among the rest, down the common way of the living. A glad recognition of souls, and a gladder worship of great and greater souls, because they are the only riches. (BLOOM, 1985, p.23)

Another critic in this volume is Kenneth Burke, whose article, “Policy Made Personal” (BLOOM, 1985, pp.25-54), naturally revolves around the political issue in Whitman’s works. In this case, Burke uses specifically *Democratic Vistas* and the Lincoln elegy as the basis of his study, but also the *Leaves* in general. One of the main ideas that the article deals with is the dialects of the part and the whole, that is, how this idea is expressed by Whitman personally and politically, and how it appears in the texts. For example, in the first poem of “INSCRIPTIONS”, “One’s-Self I Sing”: “One’s-Self I sing, a simple separate person, / Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.3). These two verses show the individual and the collective spheres and how one is linked to the other by the poet, as he sings in the first verses of “Song of Myself”: “I celebrate myself, and sing myself, / And what I assume you shall assume, / For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.” Whitman never separates the individual person from the whole of society and the world. One of the ways he does that is via his catalogues, in which he depicts hundreds of individual persons in order to form a whole, or the “En-Masse”; there is more information on the catalogues in section 3.4. Therefore, it seems to us that Whitman’s contradiction is not really a problem, since it can be viewed as his dialectics instead, for he does not conceive of a single person without the masses or the masses without the individuals, even when he sings of personality, which is an essential aspect of Romanticism. As we have mentioned above, although Whitman absorbed some features of Romanticism, he was, at the same time, quite different from the Romantics. In fact, even the theme of contradiction is at the core of

Romanticism, a movement that was too complex to be unified, especially because of its “dissonance and inner conflict”, in which “Utopian dreams for the future” lived “side by side with nostalgia for the past” (SCHENK, 1979, p.xxii). However, as Whitman always does, he also took the contradiction and extended it further into dialectics. We believe that he learned this lesson from Hegel, as can be seen in this passage from one of his biographers:

He had been reading Hegel – or more accurately discussions of Hegel – for several years. Traces of Hegelian influence may be seen in *Democratic Vistas*, in Whitman’s belief that the “dialectic” of conflict and struggle will produce a more perfect society. Or as he re-expressed this idea more poetically in “Song of the Universal”⁴ [...]. (ALLEN, 1955, p.460)

Whitman was aware of his contradictions and he understood that the case was not of being one thing or another. As he wrote about good and evil, both of which he said he was the singer in Section 22 of “Song of Myself”: “I am not the poet of goodness only—I do not decline to be the poet of wickedness also.” This entry about Hegel’s definition of dialectic will illustrate the point:

dialectic (Gk., *dialektikē*, the art of conversation or debate) [...] According to the different views of this process, different conceptions of dialectic emerge. [...] In Hegel, dialect refers to the necessary process that makes up progress in both thought and the world. [...] The process is one of overcoming the contradiction between thesis and antithesis, by means of synthesis; the synthesis in turn becomes contradicted, and the process repeats itself until final perfection is reached. (BLACKBURN, 1994, p. 104)

That is, by reaching a harmony between two opposing positions, which can be things, people, thoughts or ideas, by seeking to join them, Whitman was trying to achieve synthesis. Such feat is found by looking for what unites and not what separates. Therefore, Whitman acknowledged his contradictions in order to reach a synthesis and continue on the path to progress, which, by the way, is the “Old Cause” (the progress and the freedom of his race) sung by him in a poem from “INSCRIPTIONS”, “To Thee Old Cause” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.6). Politically speaking, he developed the idea of the ensemble as the right path for the United States in the first note of the book *Notes Left Over*, titled “Nationality—(And Yet)”, in which he describes how it should be in relation to the people and the states of the Union:

⁴ “Song of the Universal” is the first poem of “BIRDS OF PASSAGE”; Allen’s reference is to the use of the word “ensemble” in this poem, which points to the integration “of all microcosms in the grand single macrocosm of Being.” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.191).

Thus the existence of the true American continental solidarity of the future, depending on myriads of superb, large-sized, emotional and physically perfect individualities, of one sex just as much as the other, the supply of such individualities, in my opinion, wholly depends on a compacted imperial ensemble. [...] For the theory of this Republic is, not that the General government is the fountain of all life and power, dispensing it forth, around, and to the remotest portions of our territory, but that THE PEOPLE are, represented in both, underlying both the General and State governments, and consider'd just as well in their individualities and in their separate aggregates, or States, as consider'd in one vast aggregate, the Union. (WHITMAN, 1996, pp.1074-5)

A passage from *The Mind of the European Romantics* (SCHENK, 1979) will clarify how different is Whitman's view of individualism, egalitarianism and his dialectics with respect to Romantic thought:

So marked was the anti-egalitarian *leit-motiv* in the Romantic movement, at any rate before 1830, that some historians have interpreted Romanticism as the swan song of the European nobility. To be sure, there is more than a grain of truth in this view. Indeed, the list of Romantic noblemen is impressive, [...] The Romantic attitude in this respect [political egalitarianism] is essentially different from the individualism expounded by rationalist minds. Whereas the latter emphasized the equality and interchangeability of individual beings or groups, the Romantics laid the greatest stress on their peculiarity, or singularity, and therefore made more allowances for the rights of personality. This applied not only to individuals but also to communities such as provinces or nationalities. (SCHENK, 1979, p.13, 15)

We know that Whitman stressed personality, but not with neglect to equality. He did rather the opposite, for he praised the "divine average"⁵, the common people, all treated as equals in the nation from its very beginning. We also know that he not only wrote against the malady of the soul that was typical of Romanticism (1979, p.49), but he also sang against it, as he did in "Song of the Exposition":

Away with old romance!
 Away with novels, plots, and plays of foreign courts,
 Away with love-verses, sugar'd in rhyme, the intrigues, amours of idlers,
 Fitted for only banquets of the night, where dancers to late music slide,
 The unhealthy pleasures, extravagant dissipations of the few,
 With perfumes, heat and wine, beneath the dazzling chandeliers.
 (WHITMAN, 2002, p.170)

⁵ "O such themes! Equalities! / O amazement of things! O divine average!"; from "Starting from Paumanok" (WHITMAN, 2002, p.20).

Actually, this entire poem is anti-romantic, because it was written to celebrate the Annual Exhibition in New York City, 1871, in response to an invitation of the American Institute (an industrial fair), and to praise what Whitman calls the “materials” of the United States, that is, its material progress, its farming and industrial products, and also its people, workers, geography and nature (2002, pp.165-73). Curiously, the poet invites the Muses to migrate from the ancient world to visit the new world and its modern wonders, its modern constructions, another feature that was disliked by romantics, who were “offended by the hideousness of [...] industrial districts” (SCHENK, 1979, p.22). What we mean by curious here is the fact that the escape⁶ into the past is another trait of Romanticism, which Whitman twisted according to his will to make the past come into the present. A similar work is performed in the poem “A Song for Occupations”, in which he sings the “Workmen and Workwomen”, the “Union” and the “Constitution”; he does not forget or despise the “Old Institutions” (2002, pp.177-83), but he does not consider the current ones any smaller or lower than the ancient. This is totally non-noble, but coherent with the poet who considered himself to be “one of the roughs”.

On the other hand, Whitman is closer to the rationalists⁷, who “believed in the equality and interchangeability of human beings”, and whose “aims” included “Equality of education, equal political rights, no discrimination as regards professions” and “a movement for female emancipation” (SCHENK, 1979, p.151), ideas which are all connected to the cause defended by the poet: the progress and freedom of the race, that is, of the American people. Once again, when we compare Whitman’s idea of the interchangeability between the microcosms and the macrocosm, and the interrelation of all parts to the whole and the other way around, we can see how his dialects pointed to a synthesis not accomplished by the Romantics, who fell prey

⁶ Chapter five of Part 1 of *The Mind of the European Romantics* (SCHENK, 1979, pp.30-45), “Forebodings and Nostalgia for the Past”, addresses this topic, showing how the romantics looked “with reverence to the example of the Christian Middle Ages” and “nations could be made to look back to times when they had reached their political or cultural apogee,” which are “typical Romantic-quixotic escape into the past,” that is, “into unreality.” As we know, Whitman is always praising the present time, the greatness of the States and the heroes of the nation, be them generals or workmen or sailors.

⁷ The poem “The Base of All Metaphysics”, from “Calamus”, is about Whitman’s philosophical readings and what he learned from them; this poem mentions some ancient and modern rationalists, like Plato, Socrates, Kant and Hegel (WHITMAN, 2002, p.104). Concerning the emancipation of women, Whitman received great support from women, especially Fanny Fern (1811-1872), whose real name was Sara Willis Parton, who was a very popular American columnist, humorist, novelist, and author of children's stories (2002, pp.798-800); and Anne Gilchrist (1828-1885), who was an English writer who traveled to the United States to meet Whitman (2002, pp. 802-6). Another woman who became a great admirer and follower of Whitman and his works is Isadora Duncan, who considered Whitman as her spiritual father (GREENSPAN, 1997, pp.166-93).

to contradiction, which is expressed by their attempt to “encompass the whole of existence”, at the expense of attacking and excluding rationalism (SCHENK, 1979, p.6-7).

Continuing our critical review, we shall refer now to Richard Chase, whose article, “The Theory of America”, helped us a lot in understanding the political mind of Whitman. His article is centered on *Democratic Vistas*, which contains Whitman’s views on democracy and his personal beliefs in this field. According to the author, Whitman “had always believed that social reform was a matter of individual regeneration, was not a political but a moral and spiritual problem; and all the weaknesses and strength of this view are in *Democratic Vistas*.” (BLOOM, 1985, pp.55-63). Roy Harvey Pearce, another critic in this volume, contributes a study on the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass* to it, “Whitman Justified: The Poet in 1860”, in which he traces Whitman’s revisions, rearrangements, additions and exclusions of the poems of this edition, which is, for him, the most important edition, and how these changes modified the body of the texts (1985, pp.65-86) through the years. Pearce reminds us in his article of the religious aspect of the *Leaves*, for Whitman had been working on the 1860 edition as the construction of a new Bible (1985, p.70), which would hold, when finished, 365 poems, one for each day of the year. A well-known fact is that Whitman was a constant reader of the Bible and in sections 2.5.6 and 3.4 there is more information on this subject, where we discuss his role as Adam (the book “Children of Adam” is dedicated to this theme) and provide a passage from his article “The Bible as Poetry”. Once more, Whitman shows his connection and distancing from Romanticism, for his approach to religion is not doubtful or without faith, as he sings in section 48 of “Song of Myself”: “No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God, and about death.” On the other hand, in general, Romantics suffered a “longing for extinction” and many contemplated suicide, for death appeared to them as the “only salvation” for those undergoing the “malady of the soul”. In this respect, there are two important aspects of Romanticism that must be emphasized that were not present in Whitman’s mind: “the quest for religion and the inability to embrace it”; this is a conflict that did not worry Whitman, for he himself was creating a religion that was in accordance with the love of God. Yet, as Schenk (1979, pp.63-77) highlights, although “the search for God and the rejection of God are in some ways characteristic of human nature in general [...] never before the Romantic era, it seems, were the two phenomena so inextricably interwoven”, for, paradoxical as it may seem, “the eighteenth century had witnessed a considerable weakening of the Christian religion over men’s minds”, however, the “Romantic yearning appeared to be the legacy of Christianity.”

James A. Wright writes one of the finest articles in this volume, appropriately titled “The Delicacy of Walt Whitman” (BLOOM, 1985, pp.87-97). It is about the delicacy of Whitman’s poetry, which “has delicacy of music, diction, and of form,” with “powers of restraint, clarity, and wholeness, all of which taken together embody that deep spiritual inwardness” which is “the most beautiful power of Whitman’s poetry” (1985, p.87-8). The critic addresses Whitman’s knowledge of traditional metric and his developments from there with plenty of examples. This author is also mentioned in section 3.4 when we discuss parallelism of verse forms in the *Leaves*.

The study carried out by R. W. B. Lewis in *Modern Critical Views* (1985, pp.99-125), “Always Going Out and Coming In” is in a way similar to Pearce’s, mentioned above. It describes Whitman’s “editorial” constant re-working on the *Leaves*, especially after 1871, which resulted in “a serious shift of emphasis whereby the authentic Whitman was gradually dismembered and replaced by a synthetic entity” (1985, p.99). Lewis’s work is to “disentangle Whitman, to separate the real from the unpersuasive, to separate the poet from the posture” (1985, p.100). In order to do that, he had to put all the poems back in their “original and chronological order,” which is a very difficult task. Nevertheless, the critic accomplishes what he undertook to do, edition by edition, which made him recognize in Whitman “the poet of an aesthetic and moral democracy” (p.125). This article is in fact a very good way of showing how the *Leaves* changed, edition by edition.

Since we have already dealt with Bloom’s article above, we can present now the last article in this volume, Paul Zweig’s “The Wound-Dresser” (1985, pp143-57). Zweig is also the author of a critical biography of Whitman, the famous *The Making of the Poet* (1984). In the article he gives a detailed description of Whitman’s life and work during the American civil war, his worries about his brother George, who fought in the war, and the writing of *Drum-Taps*, the book that contains the poet’s realistic and precise description of what he saw in and around Washington during the war, mainly when he was working as a wound-dresser in the improvised and impoverished military hospitals. It is amazing to know that Whitman helped relieve the pain of more than eighty thousand soldiers, northerners and southerners alike.

Another very important secondary source for us was the *Cambridge Companion to Walt Whitman*, edited by Ezra Greenspan. This book, according to its editor, contains “a variety of critical perspectives on and approaches to the phenomenon of Whitman” which “will reflect the wide-open, decentralized situation of current thinking” (GREENSPAN, 1997, p.4). Stephen Railton writes the first article, “‘As If I Were With You’—The Performance of Whitman’s Poetry” (1997, pp.7-26), on the use of the pronouns *I* and *you*. He states that the use of *I* may be more frequent, but that *you* is more pervasive, even when compared to other major poets. The point is that, although the *I* shows how egotistical Whitman is, the *you* indicates how the poems are conceived to address the readers in a dramatic way, the crowds of *you* referred to by the poems, to whom the poet always returns. Another question discussed by the author is the fact that how could a mature and experienced journalist, who knew a lot about advertising, write a book that would sell so little. Did the poet lose touch with reality or did he really know what he was doing, by shocking the public with his uncommon way of addressing themes like sexuality, for example? The answer is that Whitman never changed anything in his works due to public reaction or censoring. He kept faithful to his poetry till the end.

M. Wynn Thomas is the author of the second article, “Fratricide and Brotherly Love: Whitman and the Civil War” (1997, pp.27-44). It focuses on the importance of Whitman’s relationship with his brother George, who fought for the Union during the four years of the war, and received many promotions due to his bravery on the battlefield. The critic suggests that “it was at least partly through George that Whitman was led to an intimate understanding of the real, hidden nature of the war” and that his connection with his brother that helped the poet to “arrange several of those imaginative configurations that articulated his hopes and anxieties and that supplied the deep structure of his war poetry” (1997, p.27). In fact, Whitman went to Washington, in December 1862, to look for George, for he had read news that “George had been wounded in the battle of Fredericksburg” (BLOOM, 1985, p.143). After a terrible trip and a day and a half wandering around Washington hospitals and another trip by boat to Falmouth, opposite Fredericksburg, he found his brother in the camp, with his minor wound already healing. After walking around the camp and back to the hospitals, watching horrible scenes and meeting a former publisher and a friend, William O’connor⁸, he decided to stay in Washington, which he did until 1874. From the beginning, Whitman was

⁸ 1832-1889; O’connor is the author of the famous *The Good Gray Poet: A Vindication*, 1866, a pamphlet in defense of Whitman's poetry.

always taking notes of everything he witnessed. Actually, writing was one of his great help to soldiers at camp hospitals, for usually they were unable to, due to trauma or wounds. As we have said, the book *Drum-Taps* is his poetic production of this period.

The next author in this volume is James Perrin Warren, whose article, “Reading Whitman’s Postwar Poetry” (1997, pp.45-65), addresses two problems and “two distinct models of stylistic change.” The two problems are Whitman’s changes in “voice and style in the post-Civil War poems” and what could be described as the “decline and failure” of his career as poet. And the two “models of stylistic change” are: the revolutionary model, represented by the “unexpected publication of the first *Leaves of Grass* in 1855”, in which Whitman shows his poetics of “absolute discontinuity with the tradition of English verse”; and the evolutionary model, which appears in his postwar writings. The second model explains why Whitman’s career after the Civil War was not one of “decline and failure” (1997, pp.45-8).

David S. Reynolds writes the fifth essay in this book, titled “Politics and Poetry: *Leaves of Grass* and the Social Crisis of the 1850s” (GREENSPAN, 1997, pp.66-91). We must emphasize that the social crisis included in the title is closely linked to the political crisis that is discussed in the article and which is the main topic under discussion. A passage from this essay will give a better view of it, that is, a view of the political situation of the United States in the decade preceding the publication of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*:

The early 1850s witnessed one of the most momentous phenomena in American political history: the collapse of the party system. The Whig Party, weak for years, broke up in 1854 as a result of the sectional quarrels over slavery, and Whitman’s Democratic Party became strife-ridden as well. The party crisis aroused Whitman’s wrath against the governmental authority figures he had once revered. The presidencies of Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, and James Buchanan eroded his confidence in the executive office. This period was a time of egregious presidential incompetence, mainly because of these leaders’ soft-spined compromises on the slavery issue. [...] The 1850s was also a decade of unprecedented political corruption, a time of vote buying, wire pulling, graft, and patronage on all levels of state and national government. Class divisions were growing at an alarming rate.

The social forces that drove Whitman to despair simultaneously opened up new vistas of self-empowerment. As authority figures collapsed, the individual self – sovereign, rich, complex – stood forth amid the ruin of the parties. Whitman’s growing disillusionment with authority figures sparked his deep faith in common people and in the power of populist

poetry. [...] The healing of a divided nation, he had come to believe, could be best achieved through all-absorptive poetry. (1997, p.66-7)

We have in these two paragraphs a summary of what was happening in the United States and to Whitman in that period. Whitman's view on this topic is given in "Origins of Attempted Secession", which is referred to in section 3.5, along with a broader description of the American situation at that time.

The editor of this book of essays, Ezra Greenspan, is the author of the next piece in it: "Some Remarks on the Poetics of 'Participle-Loving Whitman'" (1997, pp.92-109), which is about the frequent use of present participles, or -ing forms, by Whitman. The critic explains that the "practice of self-consciously utilizing present participles" is unknown; however, he suggests that Whitman used present participles "because he saw the poetic act basically as one of physical and intellectual mobility" (p.94-5), and its use was his way of inserting this into the language. In the critic's opinion, the first strophe of "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" is "The best instance" of the use of present participles, which is also "one of the finest sustained pieces of verse he ever wrote" (p.95). This poem, which shows Whitman's love for "long-flowing poetic syntax", also shows his fondness for "delaying the appearance of the subject 'I' until the end of a long-flowing sequence of participial, prepositional, or clausal expressions, thus creating the context out of which his 'I' will be born" (p.95). Whitman also loved doing all this with the subject (*I, myself*) at the beginning of verses.

Sherry Ceniza is the author of an essay in defense of Whitman's contribution to women's rights in this *Cambridge Companion* volume: "'Being a Woman ... I Wish to Give My Own View': Some Nineteenth-Century Women's Responses to the 1860 *Leaves of Grass*" (GREENSPAN, 1997, pp.110-34). The noteworthy fact in this essay is that its author defends Whitman against "criticism that sees Whitman as a less than positive force for female readers." This criticism, which is in general negative, is responsible for the "negative view of Whitman's representation of women in his poetry", and it goes from "D. H. Lawrence [...] to Edwin Haviland Miller" and "on to [...] Joyce W. Warren" (1997, p.111). Ceniza highlights that it is necessary to contextualize the presence of "women important in Whitman's life", because "many of these women took part in the most significant movement for women's rights", the "National Woman's Rights Movement", which happened during the 1850s and lasted until the beginning of the Civil War (1861). One of her arguments in favor of Whitman

is that “Whitman’s own contradictions are no different in kind from those of his female contemporaries,” which neutralizes the idea that Whitman was not completely coherent in his attitude towards women and sexuality. Another is Whitman’s poetry itself, especially “Children of Adam”, which was the focus of the attacks in the past and is the focus of her defense, because in the cluster there is a strong attitude in favor of equality between the sexes, expressed in verses like “By my side or back of me Eve following, / Or in front, and I following her just the same” (1997, pp. 111-127), which are the last verses of “To the Garden the World” the first poem in “Children of Adam.”

Ed Folsom writes one of the most remarkable essays in this collection. His article, “Appearing in Print: Illustrations of the Self in *Leaves of Grass*” (GREENSPAN, 1997, pp.135-165), discusses about Whitman’s portraits on the covers of most editions of the *Leaves*. The frontispiece portrait of the 1855 edition is the first and most famous of them until today, and all the initial reviews of the book commented on it, especially because of the fact that the author’s name did not appear on the book cover. In his view, this portrait, “Over the next century, [...] would prove to be highly influential: It gradually worked to transform the way most American poets portrayed themselves on their book jackets and frontispieces” (1997, pp.135-7). The purpose of the critic is to study these illustrations of Whitman’s self along the poet’s life. He also informs us that Whitman did appropriate the technology of engraving and later of photoduplication and performed, along with the artists, a detailed work on his images. Whitman was also one of the most photographed men in the nineteenth century.

However, Ed Folsom has helped us with much more than this insightful essay. He and Kenneth M. Price are co-directors of The Walt Whitman Archive project on the Internet. The Archive comprises the following sections: Published Works, with Periodical Printings and Foreign Editions; Manuscripts, with Transcriptions and images; Biography and Correspondence; Criticism, which includes Contemporary Reviews (this section is a valuable and reliable source of information on the reception of the *Leaves* in the Nineteenth century), Selected Criticism, with copyrighted and out-of-copyright criticism and commentary, and even books, Bibliography, from 1975 to the present and Disciples, with the works of four of Whitman’s disciples: Richard Maurice Bucke⁹, John Burroughs, William Douglas O’Connor

⁹ Bucke was a Canadian physician who was one of Whitman's best and loyal friends and who supported the poet in his last years, being his medical consultant as well. Bucke is also renowned as the writer of Whitman's first

and Horace Traubel; Pictures and Sound, which include a gallery of 128 images of Whitman, showing them in chronological order and an audio recording which is “a 36-second wax cylinder recording of what is thought to be Whitman's voice reading four lines from the poem ‘America’”; there is also a Resources section and an About the Archive section, which gives a short summary of each of the people involved in the project. The criticism section also presents Whitman’s own reviews of *Leaves of Grass*, for he used to write reviews of his own books in the press, with many of them published anonymously. The purpose of the Archive is to compile Whitman’s vast work, poetry and prose, and criticism on him and his works from his time to the present. It is invaluable work.¹⁰

As we have mentioned before, there is an essay on Isadora Duncan in *The Cambridge Companion to Walt Whitman*, “‘I Sing the Body Electric’: Isadora Duncan, Whitman and the Dance”, by Ruth L. Bohan (GREENSPAN, 1997, pp.166-193). This essay provides a short account of Duncan’s life and works, emphasizing her connection with Whitman, her “spiritual father”, and how her dance was linked to Whitman’s vision of the human body: sacred, without shame, open, electric, free, natural, harmonious. She even advised an audience, after a performance, to go home and read the works of Walt Whitman (p.178), after they had objected to her bared breast. Actually, later in life she had acquired a way of teasing audiences in a Whitmanesque style, as a daring way of questioning traditional values; furthermore, she associated her dances publicly with Whitman’s poetry. There is another curious link between Duncan and Whitman: her mother, Dora Duncan, was “a piano teacher and a follower of the radical free thinker Robert Ingersoll” (p.167), who was “a friend of Whitman’s in his later years and spoke at his funeral. It is not known whether Dora Duncan knew of this connection” (p.190).

Alan Trachtenberg writes about Whitman’s influence on modern poets in his essay “Walt Whitman: Precipitant of the Modern” (GREENSPAN, 1997, pp.194-207). He is

biography (1883), in which he was helped by the poet (in writing parts of it and revising the rest), who traveled with him to important places in Whitman’s life. Bucke is also the author of *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind* (1991), a classic study originally published in 1901, which presents Whitman surrounded by a mystical aura. Horace Traubel, another close and loyal friend of Whitman’s, wrote a work in nine volumes, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, in which he collects and describes Whitman’s thoughts on all types of subjects; many of these volumes are already available at The Walt Whitman Archive.

¹⁰ The Walt Whitman Archive is available at: <<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/>> Accessed on August 22, 2008.

amazed by Whitman's significance to Pound, who even wrote a poem to his "father."¹¹ Trachtenberg reminds us that Pound considered himself a Whitman who had learned to behave, but not always, that is, that Pound acknowledged Whitman's hard work to clear the field for the following generation, for the "poets to come", and especially Whitman's humbleness and genius in knowing that he was a beginning and not an end. The critic's purpose is to study the presence of Whitman among the American modern poets in the initial years of the twentieth-century, who considered the American bard as their "forerunner, progenitor, mentor" (p.195). Authors and artists like

Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright in architecture; Robert Henri, Marsden Hartley, John Marin, and Joseph Stella in painting; Isadora Duncan in dance; Pound, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, and Hart Crane in poetry; and Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, Jean Toomer, and John dos Passos in prose fiction – [...] William James, George Santayana, Horace Traubel, Emma Goldman, Van Wyck Brooks, and Waldo Frank [...] Henry James reading and weeping over Whitman with Edith Wharton [...] (GREENSPAN, 1997, p.195-6)

Whitman's prophecies in "Poets to Come"¹² was correct, for a whole generation of artists in every field and many nations would receive his legacy and struggle with this influence, until they were mature enough to have an artistic existence of their own. In section 3.5 there is more information on other writers who were admirers of Whitman and who recognized how much he meant to them, like Fernando Pessoa and Gilberto Freyre.

Fernando Alegría writes the last essay in this volume on Whitman, a wonderful essay titled "Borges's 'Song of Myself'" (GREENSPAN, 1997, pp.208-219). It is, of course, about Borges's translation of "Song of Myself" into Spanish. The critic considered Borges's translation as a literal one, although the translator sometimes "does take liberties as he translates, but always making an effort to stay close to Whitman's directness and bluntness"

¹¹ **A Pact**

"I MAKE a pact with you, Walt Whitman-- / I have detested you long enough.

I come to you as a grown child / Who has had a pig-headed father;

I am old enough now to make friends. / It was you that broke the new wood,

Now is a time for carving. / We have one sap and one root-- / Let there be commerce between us."

A translation of this poem is included in Geir Campos's edition of a selection from Whitman's poems, *Folhas das Folhas de Relva* (*Leaves from Leaves of Grass*), in the introduction, which was written by Paulo Leminski:

"A Pact": "Um trato com você, Walt Whitman, / Já te detestei o bastante. / Hoje, cresci. / Já posso chegar na tua frente. // Idade eu tenho para tanto. / Você cortou a madeira nova. / Tá na hora de esculpir. / Tua seiva é a minha, tua raiz." (WHITMAN, 2002, p.10)

¹² This poems is part of "Inscriptions" (WHITMAN, 1996, p.175), the first book of *Leaves of Grass*.

(p.209). However, he is sure that Borges knows when he is using other words instead of the correct one (in the literal sense) in his translation, for Borges is actually being faithful to meaning, and not to form. He then provides numerous passages of the translated text, which shows indeed that Borges's literal and spontaneous way of rendering Whitman's verses into Spanish is worth praising. The only sad note in this entire story is that we have been unable to locate this translation.¹³ This volume of *The Cambridge Companion to Walt Whitman* also brings detailed primary bibliography and extensive secondary bibliography on Whitman, which is very useful to any reader.

Two biographies of Whitman have been secondary sources of immeasurable worth to us. We refer to *Walt Whitman an American*, by Henry Seidel Canby (1943), which is "A study in biography", and *The Solitary Singer*, by Gay Wilson Allen (1955), "A critical biography of Walt Whitman." Canby's style is more essayistic and personal, as the subtitle of his book indicates. In this sense, he has more room to speculate and suggest explanation for events and changes in Whitman's life and career. As we all know, Whitman left as little account as possible of his personal life, so that anyone investigating his life needs to have a lot of imagination and creativity to look for plausible interpretation of his acts. On the other hand, even taking into consideration Whitman's evasiveness, Allen's work is more factual, providing the reader with practically a year by year description of what happened in Whitman's life and works. It does not lack personal opinion on his part; however, it is always less interpretive and more concrete in his utterances. We have profited a lot from both works; and both are worth reading. As the reader will notice, our work contains numerous passages from both books. This is why we do not write a longer description of them here.

Finally, we will refer here to a book that has given us more insight on the role of Whitman as Adam in America: *The American Adam*, "Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century", by R. W. B. Lewis (1955). His book centers upon the appearance of a "native American mythology," from 1820 to 1860. As he declares, he is

interested rather in the history of ideas and, especially, in the representative imagery and anecdote that crystallized whole clusters of ideas; my interest is therefore limited to articulate thinkers and conscious artists. A century ago, the image contrived to embody the most fruitful contemporary ideas

¹³ The reference we have is: "Jorge Luis Borges, *Hojas de hierba* (Buenos Aires: Juárez Editor. Selección, traducción y prólogo de J. L. Borges; estudio crítico de Guillermo Nolasco Juárez; grabados de Antonio Berni, 1969)" (GREENSPAN, 1997, p.218).

was that of the authentic American as a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities, poised at the start of a new history [...] suggested by the image of a radically new personality, the hero of the new adventure: an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources. It was not surprising, in a Bible reading generation, that the new hero (in praise of disapproval) was most easily identified with Adam before the Fall. (LEWIS, 1955, pp.1-5)

Needless to say that this archetypal man was clearly observed in Whitman, who wrote a book especially on this theme: “Children of Adam”. Thus, the contextualization of this myth in America by Lewis has helped us understand Whitman’s position, which is studied in more depth in section 2.5.6 below. All these authors have made us open our minds to the vast universe of Whitman’s life and works, and see aspects of the *Leaves* that we could not see before. Some of these aspects are discussed in the following sections.

2.5 Addressing some themes in *Leaves of Grass*

This section comprises the following subdivisions: 2.5.1, on the myth of Calamus and Carpus; 2.5.2, on two other elements in the myth, water and swimmers; 2.5.3, on what happens after the death of Carpus; 2.5.4, on the political meaning of Calamus; 2.5.5, on Calamus, Carpus, aulos or ‘reed singers’; and 2.5.6, which discusses about “Language [as] fossil poetry”, the poetic function, Emerson, Blake, mediums, and Adam.

2.5.1 The myth of calamus

There is a network of interconnections in *Leaves of Grass* around the word calamus, or reed. It points to several myths, meanings and details that lead us to many directions; however, they are all related in some way to this plant. It is as though the reed were a tree with various branches. We shall seek here to try and follow these branches to find the flowers and fruits they might give us. First, it is necessary to go back in time to the account of the myth of **calamus** (or *kalamos*, in Greek), which will take us to the Greek mythological figure that bears this name:

Calamus, the son of the river-god Meander, his name means ‘reed’. He was in love with a youth named Carpus [*Karpos*, in Greek]. One day they were

both bathing in the Meander and Calamus wanted to show his friend that he was the better swimmer, but in the competition that ensued Carpus was drowned. In his grief Calamus withered to such extent that he became a reed by the river bank. (GRIMAL, 1991, p.80)

From the start, we have an allusion both to male love and antiquity, that is, to a mythological past, the past that Whitman did not want to “repel”, as he stated in the first sentence of his Preface to the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. We can see in this very brief record of the myth the summary of what the poet wanted to express by the “Calamus” cluster: manly attachment, comradeship, “unphysical” or disembodied love between men, union, nationality. Certainly the title of this cluster was not chosen at random, for Whitman was an expert on inventing titles for poems and books. As indicated by the manly attachment of the myth, the “Calamus” poems are widely recognized as homage to male love, as is stated by Canby (1943, p.176) in his *Walt Whitman, An American, “A Study in Biography”* of the America bard:

In 1860, the central theme is love – between the sexes in *Children of Adam*, and the love of male comrades in *Calamus*. It was the centrality of a love which was sexual as well as spiritual, that Walt could not successfully explain to Emerson, and so kept silent.

For example, in “Calamus”, Whitman sings how the attraction from man to man can be acknowledged as the real love that will unite the nation. His best known poem on this subject is “For You O Democracy”, whose first stanza presents the “life-long love of comrades” as the foundation of the indissolubility of the future continent:

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.

I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of
 America, and along the shores of the great lakes, and all over the
 prairies,
I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each other's necks,
 By the love of comrades,
 By the manly love of comrades.

For you these from me, O Democracy, to serve you ma femme!
For you, for you I am trilling these songs.

The poet sings that everything will be done with and by “manly love”, especially to serve Democracy, the mother of all the children of the nation. These are the children who will be employed later, in the American Civil War (1861-1865), to protect the Union fighting against the Confederate States of America, the eleven Southern slave states, which did not agree with the Union politics of preventing the expansion of slavery into new territories of the United States and decided to secede. The fact is that Whitman was against slavery, but he was in favor of the unity of the country and of the Constitution, which is similar to the position withheld by the Union. Even though he suffered a lot and did what he could to help relieve Northern and Southern soldiers’ suffering, he knew that, given the political and economic situation of the United States¹⁴, the only possible solution to maintain the union as such was the war. His love for his country as a unity made him support the leader of the nation, Abraham Lincoln¹⁵, whom he admired personally. This attitude is coherent with what he had sung in his belief in inseparability. Later, during the war, while in daily contact with soldiers, he verified that what he had written was true, for what he had felt about his countrymen before, that they were comrades capable of love and friendship and of a magnetic energy that “will make divine [...] lands”, was something real. When he was close to them, those simple affectionate people, who were the basis of the nation, lived up to his expectations. For these simple men were also capable of heroic deeds, of giving their lives to maintain the union of their homeland, even though there were those for whom North-America was a forced or new homeland (African Americans and immigrants). Whitman recorded this deep human experience in *Drum-Taps* (1865), “Sequel” to *Drum-Taps* (1866) and *Specimen Days and Collect*, published in 1882-3 by Rees Welsh and Co., and later included in his *Complete Prose Works*, 1892, published by David McKay. As written above in section 2.1, the “Sequel” is the supplement that contains the poet’s meditation on the death of Abraham Lincoln, his “Memories of President Lincoln”. There are other poems as well in this edition, such as “O Captain! My Captain!”, a beautiful and sad lament because the captain “does not answer” any

¹⁴ We will print as an annex to this work a document called “Origins of Attempted Secession” (WHITMAN, 1996, pp.1018-24; included in “Specimen Days and Collect”), in which Whitman offers his historical, political and economic analysis of the circumstances that led to the American Civil War, where he shows that both North and South were responsible for the fratricidal events that tore the country.

¹⁵ Lincoln (1809-1865) was from Kentucky, which was considered frontier land at the time. He was born from uneducated anti-slavery farming parents. However, he was an avid reader, and self-taught law, which he began to practice in 1837, though having had only eighteen months of formal education. At the same time, he developed his writing and continued his political career, which he had begun in 1832. In 1844, he entered the Republican Party, and was nominated in 1860 for the Presidency, which he won. His main attributes were: being a “western” man, which made him gain support from frontier states and his anti-slavery view, which was not too extremist. In 1864, he was re-elected, for his commitment to winning the war. The fact is that Lincoln’s background fits Whitman’s ideal of a political leader, someone who would come from the multitude of common men.

more; “Hushed Be the Camps Today”, the quiet song of the poet on the “dear commander’s death”, speaking for those who were silent; and “By Blue Ontario’s Shore”, the poem that he was asked to sing by a “Phantom gigantic superb” that said to him:

*Chant me the poem, it said, that comes from the soul of America, chant me
the carol of victory,
And strike up the marches of Libertad, marches more powerful yet,
And sing me before you go the song of the throes of Democracy.*
(WHITMAN, 1996, p.469)

Here is the poet singing Democracy, comradeship, heroism, but never forgetting the pain that was in everybody’s soul and in many people’s bodies. This is why we mentioned unphysical love. Whitman was describing a type of love that is beyond pure physical love, or sex. He was talking about something greater, something that continues after the death of the physical bodies, or something one feels for their homeland, their country, because while the country does have a concrete existence, it also exists as a mental concept and a sentiment. They are all related to create the sense of being, the spirit of the nation. And this is beyond bodily attraction. In this sense, the myth of Calamus illustrates this type of love, because their love remains in a different form.

In this manner, Whitman sings a complex form of love that goes beyond homo-erotic sex, although it might include that: the myth tells the story of two youths that end up dying. One is called Carpus (the fruit of the vegetation) and the other becomes a reed, which is a kind of tall grass. The myth tells us that when the two young men die, they continue to live in new and different bodies, but as transformed parts of nature that can live near each other. That signifies that the poet is depicting a kind of love that transcends the physical bodies and even a form of life. It is really a metamorphosis, a transformation, but a natural one, as it happens when a caterpillar changes into a butterfly, a process which is common in nature and is assimilated into ancient mythology¹⁶. Which means that this kind of love the poet is

¹⁶ The *Metamorphoses* by the Roman poet Ovid [Publius Ovidius Naso. 43 B.C.-A.D. 17.] is a poem in fifteen books that describes the creation and history of the world in terms according to Greek and Roman points of view. Probably written in 8 BC, it has remained one of the most popular works of mythology, being the Classical work best known to medieval writers and thus having a great deal of influence on medieval poetry. Content: Ovid emphasizes tales of transformation often found in myths, in which a person or lesser deity is permanently transformed into an animal or plant. Available at: <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metamorphoses>>

Accessed on: March, 14th 2007.

For Ezra Pound, Arthur Golding’s (1536-1606) translation of the *Metamorphoses* “is the most beautiful book in the [English] language”, and he said he suspected this would be Shakespeare’s opinion as well. (POUND, 1987, p.58).

portraying is long lasting, not to say eternal, and also that our spirits are undying, and may continue living in a different way.

A scene from “These I Singing in Spring”, from “Calamus”, might be helpful to clarify this point, for in this passage the poet at first thinks that he is alone, but some unexpected visitors show up:

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,
 Plucking something for tokens, tossing toward whoever is near me,
 Here, lilac, with a branch of pine,
 Here, out of my pocket, some moss which I pull'd off a live-oak in Florida
 as it hung trailing down,
 Here, some pinks and laurel leaves, and a handful of sage,
 And here what I now draw from the water, wading in the pond-side,
 (O here I last saw him that tenderly loves me, and returns again never to
 separate from me,
 And this, O this shall henceforth be the token of comrades, this calamus-
 root shall,
 Interchange it youths with each other! let none render it back!)
 (WHITMAN, 1996, p.272-3)

In parenthesis we can see the reference to the scene of Calamus and Carpus, where the poet plays the part of Calamus, walking in the water, recollecting the one who loved him, who now returns never to separate from him in spirit, for the crowd that appeared to accompany him is a crowd of spirits of beloved companions. This poem also presents some elements or symbols that will appear later in the poem mentioned before, the “Lincoln elegy”: the lilac, the pine, the one he loves, nature, dead persons, memory of dear comrades. Allen (1955, pp.329-30) sometimes comments on the poet in his biography of Whitman, *The Solitary Singer*, that he is many times prophesying. Amazing as it may seem, it is a fact that many items that appeared in the 1860 edition in “Calamus” and “Children of Adam” naturally become part of the elegy on Lincoln’s death.¹⁷ The time, the weather and nature before the assassination of the President were unusually strange. The evening star was brighter than

¹⁷ Similarly, *Drum-Taps*, his volume on the American Civil War, was started in 1860, the year before the war, which begun in April, 1861. Coincidentally, the original title for this book was *Banner at Day Break*. Later it became “Song of the Banner at Daybreak” and was included in *Drum-Taps*. In reality, “Song of the Banner at Daybreak” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.239-244) is a conversation, or a play, in which the following characters discuss the oncoming war: Poet, Child, Father, Banner and Pennant (types of military flags).

before, the lilacs were blooming everywhere, the sky was clear, but there was a terrible rush at the White House on the day of Lincoln's inauguration, and Whitman reported that after that, when the President came out of the Capitol portico, there was only one cloud in the sky hovering over the President. The poet was deeply touched by these events. When the one he loved so much was assassinated, his dear comrade, all these elements that were fluttering in his soul were poured into the poems. This shows how the poet is integrated into his surroundings, or environment, living his life and absorbing the life that is taking place around him, in order to put them together in his poetry. We will discuss about this a little more below, where we mention other poets that were able to fuse individual interest with collective action.

Another poem from "Calamus" that deals specifically with the theme of comradeship and love from person to person as the linking element that will sustain the nation, that is, a personal sentiment with a political significance, is "The Base of All Metaphysics":

[...]
 Having studied the new and antique, the Greek and Germanic systems,
 Kant having studied and stated, Fichte and Schelling and Hegel,
 Stated the lore of Plato, and Socrates greater than Plato,
 And greater than Socrates sought and stated, Christ divine having studied
 long,
 I see reminiscent to-day those Greek and Germanic systems,
 See the philosophies all, Christian churches and tenets see,
 Yet 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. (WHITMAN, 1996, p.275)

This "dear love" is also what maintains the "city of Friends", the "city invincible to the attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth", the city that is the poet's dream seen "in a dream" ("I Dream'd in a Dream", from "Calamus"; WHITMAN, 1996, p.284). In short, the poet was always seeking those whose blood was like his, someone who could become his "eleve"¹⁸ (pupil, student), to learn this kind of love, his capacity to love all, unconditionally. This is what is amazing in Whitman, this broad heart of his, with an ocean of love ready to pour forth as he sings in "Recorders Ages Hence" from "Calamus" (WHITMAN, 1996, p.276). This is his strength, his all-embracing human warmth, showing affection towards everybody and every body, low people, prisoners, soldiers, men, and women, as in "O woman

¹⁸ Both references from "To a Western Boy", in "Calamus" (WHITMAN, 1996, p.285).

I love! O bride! O wife!”¹⁹. As he sings in “From Pent-up Aching Rivers”, from “Children of Adam”:

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!

We can trace the movement of his love, and we can see that it goes from a personal level, in which he speaks of love between comrades, then of friends, from friends to families, and crowds, cities, lands, nations, until it reaches a spiritual level, as at the end of “I Sing the Body Electric”, in which he describes the beauty of bodies and of each part of the bodies, to finally summarize all these bodily expressions in “I say these are not the parts and poems of the body only, but of the soul, / O I say now these are the soul!” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.258). And even then he goes further, for he raises his song to a religious level, for he is the “immortal [...] chanter of Adamic songs”, which are bathed “in Sex”²⁰. Again, he performs this interpenetration of dimensions, as he asks of his own “children” to interpenetrate with others, the children that he impregnated on women, who are to be “the best-beloved of [him] and America”. He becomes a myth, Adam, re-incarnated and a man, the poet who is singing the songs. He is an archetypal father (like his dear comrade Lincoln) and the man who is on earth singing his days and the life of his land, that is, the present, as he does in “Passage to India” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.531). He sings a “simple separate person”, yet he sings the democratic “En-Masse”²¹. The first lines of “Song of Myself” describe this whitmanian capacity to synthesize the private and the public, the individual and the community, the physical and the spiritual, body and soul, in a single act of love for all: “I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself, / And what I assume you shall assume, / For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.”.

This broad gesture of Whitman’s reminds us of other artists who incarnated this same spirit, such as Oswald de Andrade²², in his “Cântico dos Cânticos Para Flauta e Violão” (“Song of Songs to Flute and Guitar”), in which he abolishes the frontier between individual

¹⁹ “Fast Anchor’d Eternal O Love!”, from “Calamus” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.285).

²⁰ “Ages and Ages Returning at Intervals”, from “Children of Adam” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.264).

²¹ “One’s Self I Sing”, from “Inscriptions” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.165).

²² There are other aspects that relate Whitman and Oswald, such as their use of free verse and their relationship with nature, which will be dealt with in section 3.5.

love and collective love, for he sings his love for his beloved Maria Antonieta d'Alkmin inextricably mingled with his love for humanity, who was at that moment celebrating the victory of Liberty during World War II (ANDRADE, 1991, pp.55-65). His love for one person or for a woman is not separated from his love for all. This is where the personal sphere is linked to the collective sphere, where the specimen meets the species, or is not afraid to surrender to it; by understanding that only as a part of it can he actually exist, for a part can not be greater or larger than the whole. In modern times, this can be said to be the limit of selfishness and the beginning of selflessness, or what we might define as a personal interest surrendering to a collective interest, which becomes stronger by this act, being also a transmutation and integration of the person into his human group. This is the democratic aim of the poet, which shows the common interest of the whole overcoming the egotistical interest of only one part of it. The fact is that artists, and especially great artists, are able to fuse, to blend, to commingle their personal lives with the collective life of the community they represent.

Haroldo de Campos, in “Lirismo e Participação” (“Lyricism and Participation”; 1992, pp.89-96), describes this blending of the “two spheres”, the personal and the collective, not only in the themes addressed by the artists, but also in the language used by them. He cites Vladímir Maiakóvski, the Russian-Soviet poet (in his poem “Letter to Tatiana Iácovleva”), Oswald de Andrade (in his poem “Song of Songs”), and Alain Resnais, the French film-maker (in his film “Hiroshima”), as examples of artists who were able to mix the two sides of a person’s life into one single motif: love, by which we mean individual love mixed with collective love, to show that one is not separated from the other, and both are different forms of the same feeling.

2.5.2 Two other elements in the myth: water and swimmers

The myth of calamus, as quoted in section 2.5.1 above, brings up other features that are present in the *Leaves*, besides the reed, which is really a central symbol in *Leaves of Grass*. They are water and swimmers. Water appears in many poems and sections of the book; however, the poet has an important relationship with the sea. The following poems address this symbolism of water: “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” and “As I Ebb’d with the Ocean of Life”, both from the cluster “SEA-DRIFT”, which was compiled in 1881, even though these poems had been actually written in 1859. “Out of the Cradle...” depicts the

poet's awakening as a bard, when he is wishing to receive a clue from the sea, so that he can have a confirmation of his intuition. "As I Ebb'd...", which was originally titled "Bardic Symbols", describes the hard times the poet is undergoing, when he speaks to his "fierce old mother", the sea, about his not understanding any thing at all and his oppression for having dared to open his mouth. In this sense, in "Out of the Cradle..." the poet receives the answer he was asking for in "As I Ebb'd..." Speaking of these emotionally oscillating but highly creative times of Whitman's, Canby states in his "Study in Biography" of the American bard: "So he writes a poem ["As I Ebb'd..."] made entirely out of symbols of the ebbing and flowing sea which he knew so well, and the shores on which are flotsam and jetsam [...]" (1943, p.181). "Flotsam and jetsam" are objects washed ashore, wreckage or remains from ships left floating, which is similar to the "trail of drift and debris", a metaphor that the poet uses to describe himself in "As I Ebb'd..." (WHITMAN, 1996, p.395).

As the two poems are closely related, we will add some comments on them. The following lines from the end of "Out of the Cradle..." show both the moment of awakening and the "clew", the "word" (Death) he needed to hear from the sea to confirm his "Premonition"²³ about his own future, after he had sung about his own reminiscences as a child on that shore, where he saw a suffering he-bird that had lost his mate and was there singing sadly:

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

[...]
O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere,)
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

[...]
Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,
Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,

²³ "Premonition" was the first title of the poem "Starting from Paumanok", in which the poet set his "programme of chants".

[...]
 My own songs, awaked from that hour;
 And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
 The word of the sweetest song, and all songs,
 That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet, (Or like some
 old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet garments, bending aside,)
 The sea whisper'd me.
 (WHITMAN, 2002, p.211)

There are many “clues” to Whitman’s poetry, such as words or verses that serve to guide us in our reading of *Leaves of Grass*, because they carry more information than we might glance at first sight. We will try to point them out whenever we find them. When such a piece appears, we will add a footnote on it, as it can be verified in the translated poems chapter. In this poem, we believe the word “clew” is the clue, the hint, the indication for us here: “clew” means “a ball of yarn or thread”, the same ball of thread that Ariadne, one of Minos’ daughters, gave to Theseus “so that he would not lose his way in the Labyrinth”. After Theseus had killed the Minotaur, he sabotaged the Cretan ships and escaped accompanied by Ariadne and the other Athenians who had been saved. When Theseus reached Naxos, they went to rest. But the next day Theseus abandoned Ariadne there and sailed home. Later, he stopped by Delos to consecrate in the temple a statue of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, lust, beauty, and sexuality. After his father’s death (Aegeus, who threw himself into the sea, for he believed his son was dead when he saw the black sails of his boat – Theseus was supposed to hoist the white sails of victory if he returned), Theseus disposed of the Pallantidae (the fifty sons of Pallas) and assumed power in Attica, uniting in a single city the inhabitants who had been spread around the countryside, and Athens became the capital of the state. Theseus gave it essential political institutions, he conquered and incorporated Megara, and, among other deeds, reorganized the Isthmian Games at Corinth in honor of Poseidon, who, in Greek mythology, was the god of the sea as well as of horses and, as "Earth-Shaker", of earthquakes. In this short account of myths, which we found by following the “clue/clew” given by the poet, we can see features of Whitman’s poetry, such as his necessity to escape from the labyrinth of his mind/emotions, as he writes in the poem “As I Ebbd with the Ocean of Life”, in which the poet feels “oppress’d with myself that I have dared to open my mouth”, and that he is “but a trail of drift and debris”, seeking protection from his “fierce old mother” (the sea) and “upon [the] breast [of his] father”, “Paumanok [...] [the] fish-shaped island” where he lives, which he did through poetry, following the clew given by the sea that answered his prayer. Sought by Whitman and present in the myths are also love, union, essential political institutions, and the ancient culture and mythology that he never rejected.

And finally the Hero, uniter of the people, who followed a clew given by a feminine deity, Ariadne (left by Theseus - acting on the command of the gods -, she was married by Dionysus and taken to Olympus). Another interpretation for this myth in America points to President Lincoln, who, like the Greek myth, had to fight against his fellowmen to establish a new state (Theseus fought his 50 cousins, the Pallantidae) and after being killed, received a magnificent funeral, for both had been protectors of democracy, fugitive slaves and poor people (GRIMAL, 1991, pp.429-35).

It is not easy to understand the response, the “clew,” given by the sea if we consider the word death out of the context of Whitman’s whole poetry. For how could this word be so delicious to any one and a path to life? Only by studying Whitman’s works can we realize the meaning of death to him, although in the myth of Theseus we can also see that death, or destruction, was a necessary stage before building or rebuilding/rebirth: death is an outlet, as Whitman sings in “Memories of President Lincoln”, section 4: “Death’s outlet song of life” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.460); death is a door, a passage, a way that connects one thing to another, like the thread that saved Theseus. In this sense, as he had already sung in section 6 of “Song of Myself”, “the smallest sprout shows there is really no death”, for “All goes onward and outward,” and “nothing collapses”, for the reason that we are all spiritually immortal. Death is just the passageway from mortality to immortality, from material to immaterial, from the world of appearances to the real world, which is spiritual, and also, in the material/physical world from a phase to another, from destruction of a form of organization that is not capable of expressing the whole of a nation to a new form of organization that might serve that purpose better, as it happened in the American Civil War. In this manner, the episode of Lincoln’s murder can be viewed as a part of that context as well. So, be death a mythical, religious, personal or societal process, it remains a necessary stage to the awareness of something greater, better, different or new. He gives us this clue in many poems. For example, in the same cluster, “SEA-DRIFT”, in the poem “On the Beach at Night”, in which he depicts a weeping child, he says to the child who is “holding the hand of her father”, speaking of immortality:

Weep not, child,
Weep not, my darling,
With these kisses let me remove your tears,
The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious,
They shall not long possess the sky, they devour the stars only in apparition,

Jupiter shall emerge, be patient, watch again another night, the Pleiades
 shall emerge,
 They are immortal, all those stars both silvery and golden shall shine out
 again,
 The great stars and the little ones shall shine out again, they endure,
 The vast immortal suns and the long-enduring pensive moons, shall again
 shine.

[...]
 Something there is,
 (With my lips soothing thee, adding I whisper,
 I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and indirection.)
 Something there is more immortal even than the stars,
 (Many the burials, many the days and nights, passing away,)
 Something that shall endure longer even than lustrous Jupiter,
 Longer than sun, or any revolving satellite,
 Or the radiant sisters, the Pleiades. (WHITMAN, 1996, p.399)

And to confirm what he had said before, in the next cluster, “By the Roadside”, in the now famous poem “O Me! O Life”²⁴, the poet himself gives the answer:

O ME! O life! of the questions of these recurring,
 Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish,
 Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and
 who more faithless?)
 Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the struggle ever
 renew'd;
 Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around
 me,
 Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined,
 The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O
 life?

Answer.

That you are here—that life exists, and identity,
 That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.
 (WHITMAN, 1996, p.410)

Although the poet could at times falter, and suffer like any other human being, he would always recover and renew his hopes in life and immortality, and leave the bad moments behind. We can see this in a later cluster, appropriately titled “Whispers of Heavenly Death”,

²⁴ This poem is quoted by Mr. John Keating, a character played by Robin Williams, in the 1989 Peter Weir movie **Dead Poets Society**: “We don't read and write poetry because it's cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. And medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for. To quote from Whitman, "O me! O life!... of the questions of these recurring; of the endless trains of the faithless--of cities filled with the foolish; what good amid these, O me, O life? Answer. That you are here - that life exists, and identity; that the powerful play goes on and you may contribute a verse." That the powerful play goes on and you may contribute a verse. What will your verse be?”

originally published in *Passage to India*, 1871, in a poem called “O Living Always, Always Dying”, in which he buries his own dead and seeks living:

O LIVING always, always dying!
 O the burials of me, past and present!
 O me, while I stride ahead, material, visible, imperious as ever;
 O me, what I was for years, now dead, (I lament not, I am content;)
 O to disengage myself from those corpses of me, which I turn and look at,
 where I cast them,
 To pass on, (O living! always living!) and leave the corpses behind!
 (WHITMAN, 1996, p.565)

In “As I Ebbed with the Ocean of Life”, in which the poet addresses the sea/ocean as his symbolic “fierce old mother”, with her “endless cries for her castaways” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.394), he shows he accepts the circling law of nature, which returns with every returning spring, like the love of his liquid mother: “Ebb, ocean of life, (the flow will return)” (1996, p.396), he sings sure that after a time of decline the tide of life will rise again. Thus, it is necessary to “leave the corpses behind”, so that we can welcome life when it comes back. If we adhere to a past that is dead, we will remain dead and blind to life when it appears. However, if we leave what is dead behind, when we enter life again, what is alive in the past will be integrated into our present. And what remained dead will become “This Compost”, decaying organic matter that will serve as nutrients to the roots of what is living. As it happens when “distemper’d corpses” and “sour dead” are deposited in the earth, because the Earth “grows such sweet things out of such corruptions, / [...] It gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such leavings from them at last” (WHITMAN, 2002, pp.309-11). This is the way the poet actually does, for he accepts everything in his large heart: what is good and what is evil of America, as he sings in “Song of Myself”, section 22: “I am not the poet of goodness only, I do not decline to be the poet of wickedness also.” Indeed, the poet himself is clearly aware that his physical body will follow that path too, and will be transmuted by the incredible chemistry of the soil, as he chants in section 49 of “Song of Myself” (2002, p.75): “And as to you Corpse I think you are good manure, but that does not offend me”. He assumes the same attitude in section 52: “I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun, / I effuse my flesh in eddies/ and drift it in lacy jags. // I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love, / if you want me again look for me under your boot-soles” (2002, p.77). All this transformation within the cycles of nature was shown above in the myth of Calamus, where the swimmer became a reed.

Another poem where the poet deals with the water is “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”, in which he speaks to the river below - the East River in New York City, which separates Long Island, where the borough of Brooklyn is located, from the island of Manhattan: “Flood-tide below me! I watch you face to face” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.135). This poem is an excellent counterpoint to “As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life”, in which the poet expresses his sadness and despair²⁵, and needs desperately to be embraced by his symbolic father, “Paumanok”, and his “fierce old mother”, the sea. In “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”, he is at his “high tide”, at the flood tide of his career as a poet, letting his inspiration flow like the high water. At this moment, coherently high, he sings in section 3 (2002, p.136): “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 [...]”. Like the East River, which, despite the name, is a tidal strait and not a river²⁶, the poet’s “afflatus” and emotions follow the ups and downs of the tides²⁷, which are in phase with the cyclic rising and falling of Earth's ocean surface caused by the tidal forces of the Moon and the Sun acting on the Earth. Perhaps that is the reason why, even in low moments like the one described in “As I Ebb'd...”, he did not lose faith in life, in Nature or in God, or even in his many friends, knowing that the low waters would give way to high waters again, which made him sing: “Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-tide!” (section 9, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”; 2002, p.139). Thus, at this crossing, a trip that he loved so much to take on the ferry between Brooklyn and Manhattan, he knows this time he is at a climax, totally open to give his heart and mind and receive the same from others, totally unafraid of what is to come, feeling “The current rushing so swiftly, and swimming with me far away;” (section 2; 2002, p.136), and letting himself go with it.

²⁵ Allen says of Whitman in *The Solitary Singer* (1955, p.247), in relation to “As I Ebb'd...”: “Whether the poet felt himself to be physically, emotionally, or morally wrecked the reader can only guess, and the biographer has no objective evidence. Whitman’s recent loss of his editorship, and his inability to provide for his mother as he felt he should, may have been partly responsible for this vicarious sympathy with the debris and human wrecks. But the poetic failure was evidently a major factor [...]”.

²⁶ It connects Upper New York Bay, which is the northern area of New York Harbor, on its south end, where the Statue of Liberty is found, to Long Island Sound, which is an estuary of the Atlantic Ocean on its north end. Information available at: <<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9031795/East-River>> Accessed on August 14, 2007.

²⁷ The following verses from “Starting from Paumanok” show this kind of phenomena in his mind and heart: “This then is life, / Here is what has come to the surface after so many throes and convulsions” (Sec. 2; 2002, p.15). And, as he always recorded in many passages, he felt that his soul was above all these “convulsions” here on Earth: “The soul, / Forever and forever – longer than soil is brown and solid – longer than water ebbs and flows.” (Sec. 6; 2002, p.17), which adds to the idea mentioned above that he believed in something beyond the material movements on the face of the planet. And these verses from “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”, Sec. 2, show the same confidence in himself as well as in humanity, Nature and God: “A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others will see them, / Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring in of the flood-tide, the falling back to the sea of the ebb-tide.” (2002, p.136).

“Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” appeared in the 1856 Edition, and received the following comment by Allen:

But powerful and sustained as the “Poem of Salutation [“Salut au Monde!”] is, it is far surpassed by “Sun-Down Poem” (“Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”), the masterpiece of the first two editions. Here the poet transmutes his own dream life and personal experience into esthetic form. The imagery is real, rising vividly out of the poet’s own memory, but the sentiment and the intuition transcend the actual. For the first time Whitman has everything under control – theme, imagery, rhythm, and symbolism – a feat which he would be able to repeat in major poems only two or three times during the remainder of his life. [...] the poem is, in fact, a masterly demonstration of self-control, and shows what Whitman might have done if self-control had not been so difficult for him. (1955, p.184)

After speaking of water, we turn to the image of a swimmer, which naturally can not be separated from that of the water. Swimmers represent in the *Leaves* the ideal of perfectly healthy bodies, as we can see from the adjectives used by the poet to refer to them. Swimmers play an important part in poems like: 1) “From Pent-up Aching Rivers” (from “Children of Adam”), where “The welcome nearness, the sight of the perfect body, / The swimmer swimming naked in the bath, or motionless on his back lying and floating” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.79), in which he praises the perfection and health of the human body; 2) in “I Sing the Body Electric”, where the poet sings “The swimmer naked in the swimming-bath, seen as he swims through the transparent green-shine, or lies with his face up and rolls silently to and fro in the heave of the water” (2002, p.81), the silent beauty of a man in the water; and 3) in “Song of Myself” (section 46), where he sings “Now I will you to be a bold swimmer”, after washing the gum from the eyes of a “dear son” and showing him the “dazzle of the light and of every moment” (2002, p.73) of his life, literally showing the boy the light of whom he was a loving comrade. Again, in the poem “The Sleepers”, he sees “a beautiful gigantic swimmer swimming naked through the eddies of the sea / His brown hair lies close and even to his head, he strikes out with courageous arms, he urges himself with his legs” (2002, p.359), and he stands there appreciating the struggle between the swimmer and the sea, until “His beautiful body is borne in the circling eddies, it is continually bruis’d on rocks” and finally, just like Calamus swimming in the river, “Swiftly and out of sight is borne the brave corpse.” (p.359). This section of “The Sleepers” is the most direct reference to the myth of Calamus, for the entire section 3 is dedicated to the description of the swimmer and his death by water.

We should not forget to mention that Whitman himself was a swimmer²⁸ and he enjoyed his baths in Brooklyn and Manhattan when he was a young compositor and then journalist. In “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”, section 5 (2002, p.137), he mentions it: “I too walk’d the streets of Manhattan Island, and bathed in the waters around it”. He also enjoyed his bathing by the sea on Long Island (“fish-shaped Paumanok”), where he was born. There is even a poem that was actually part of a longer poem in which he describes himself as a swimmer. This poem is “His Shape Arises” (title according to the first line of the poem), taken from “Song of the Broad-Axe”. It was published in 1856 and excluded from “Song of the Broad-Axe” in 1860. This new poem was made by excluding it from the longer poem. Nevertheless, it is worth quoting it here in order for us to see how the poet conceived of himself physically. Actually, it is a self-portrait:

His shape arises,
 Arrogant, masculine, naive, rowdyish,
 Laugher, weeper, worker, idler, citizen, countryman,
 Saunterer of woods, stander upon hills, summer swimmer in rivers or by the
 sea,
 Of pure American breed, of reckless health, his body perfect, free from taint
 from top to toe, free forever from headache and dyspepsia, clean-
 breathed,
 Ample-limbed, a good feeder, weight a hundred and eighty pounds, full-
 blooded, six feet high, forty inches round the breast and back,
 Countenance sun-burnt, bearded, calm, unrefined,
 Reminder of animals, meeter of savage and gentleman on equal terms,
 Attitudes lithe and erect, costume free, neck gray and open, of slow
 movement on foot,
 Passer of his right arm round the shoulders of his friends, companion of the
 street,
 Persuader always of people to give him their sweetest touches, and never
 their meanest,
 A Manhattanese bred, fond of Brooklyn, fond of Broadway, fond of the life
 of the wharves and the great ferries,
 Enterer everywhere, welcomed everywhere, easily understood after all,
 Never offering others, always offering himself, corroborating his
 phrenology,
 Voluptuous, inhabitive, combative, conscientious, alimensive, intuitive, of
 copious friendship, sublimity, firmness, self-esteem, comparison,
 individuality, form, locality, eventuality,
 Avowing by life, manners, works, to contribute illustrations of results of
 The States,
 Teacher of the unquenchable creed, namely, egotism,
 Inviter of others continually henceforth to try their strength against his.
 (WHITMAN, 2002, pp.550-1)

²⁸ Canby (1943, p.22) reminds us of this in this brief physical description of Walt: “By 1834 and 1835, still unsettled in a lasting job, Walt was a big fellow, probably already six feet, heavy, but not athletic, a rambler on beaches, farms, city streets. He played no games except tossing a ball, was hearty, healthy, a swimmer, a dreamer [...]”

Whitman presents himself in the poem as the “summer swimmer in rivers or by the sea”, the same sea which he loved so much and enjoyed fully to the end, and which he called as his dear “mother”. The poet reveals himself in every word he writes, showing the boldness of a swimmer who faces strong currents. When reading Allen’s excellent biography of Walt Whitman, *The Solitary Singer* (1955), we realize that the poet was being entirely honest with his readers. Even when the poet is incoherent, which is what he confessed when he assumed his contradictions, he is being sincere; as he was in “As I Ebb’d with the Ocean of Life”, when he described hard moments in his life. In “His Shape Arises”, which was part of “Song of the Broad-Axe”, a poem that describes “the heroic shape” of the new Man, he is deeply moving, sincere, genuine and trustworthy. Not a word can be dropped from the lines above. Even when he is being contradictory, singing that he is “naïve, rowdyish”, “laughter, weeper”, “worker, idler”, “citizen, countryman”, or “calm, unrefined”. One might even think that he is boasting about himself when he writes that he is capable “of copious friendship”, but that is true. He did have many loyal friends in the U.S. and overseas. As he is true when he says that he is a “Teacher of the unquenchable creed, namely, egotism”, that is, the tendency to speak or write of oneself excessively and boastfully. However, someone who was born from a working class family (his father was a carpenter and his mother a housewife), had at most six years of formal education, started working at the age of eleven, did self-education from then on, studied the great classics by himself, and eventually became the greatest poet of America, certainly could be boastful. Contradictory as he was, the words that describe him best are honest, frank, loving, unselfish, as well as arrogant, proudish and egotistical.

In this sense, this proud “Inviter of others continually henceforth to try their strength against his” once again indicates the myth of Calamus challenging Carpus to find out the better swimmer, which caused Carpus to drown while they were swimming against each other. As there are several scenes that illustrate the myth in the *Leaves*, we should take a look at part of a poem from “Children of Adam”, which is practically a modern version of the myth: “We Two, How Long We Were Fool'd”:

We two, how long we were fool'd,
 Now transmuted, we swiftly escape as Nature escapes,
 We are Nature, long have we been absent, but now we return,
 We become plants, trunks, foliage, roots, bark,
 We are bedded in the ground, we are rocks,
 We are oaks, we grow in the openings side by side,

We browse, we are two among the wild herds spontaneous as any,
 We are two fishes swimming in the sea together,
 We are what locust blossoms are, we drop scent around lanes mornings and
 evenings, [...]
 (WHITMAN, 2002, pp.92-3)

To resume the topic of metamorphosis, we believe the poet is speaking in this poem of an unfulfilled terrestrial love that can only be realized transcendently in nature. And he does this by disguising it under different natural forms, so that no one could judge him. He might also be describing his love in a way that he could escape the censorship of his time, the love he had for a person that he could not show in public. As he could not suppress what he felt, he expressed it in a way that people would not consider disrespectful or offensive to society. Perhaps this was his way to say that love is so natural that all elements in nature manifest it spontaneously, in its various kingdoms: mineral (rocks), vegetable (oaks) and animal (two among herds, fishes). What we can in fact say is that in these scenes where the swimmers are depicted, there is no physical contact between the observer and the person observed. The poet describes what he sees from a distance, as if he were painting a picture of another creature moving in a landscape where he has no direct participation.

Speaking of distancing between persons, when there is a physical contact between someone and the person in the water, it is another person than the poet-observer that performs it. For example, in section 11 of “Song of Myself”, it is the “lady” who has lived “twenty eight years” of a lonesome life by the river bank that watches the “twenty eight young men [...] by the shore” and later, resistless to the attraction, approaches the boys and touches her hand to their bodies, while the “young men float on their backs” and “do not think whom they souse with spray”. It is a quite erotic passage that does not involve the poet personally. In this case, we could argue that the poet is representing himself in someone who is watching the boys from afar, a spectator or even voyeur, who looks at them from behind window blinds, someone for whom direct physical contact is too much. Naturally, this distance does not prevent him from looking at and describing everything “with love”²⁹, such as the love that the

²⁹ Canby (1943, p.98) describes Whitman’s empathy in this way: “He has never seen a wreck, though there were wrecks on the dangerous South Shore of Long Island while he was living near-by, but in *Song of Myself*, he identifies himself completely with the courageous devotion of the rescuers: ‘I am the man, I suffered, I was there.’ He has never seen a runaway slave captured, but he can identify himself with tortured humanity. He knows, at this time, not too much intimately about drovers and fishers and axemen and criminals and carpenters and vigorous farmers, though he has seen them all, talked with them, lived with them. Yet he feels capable of representing them, because he enters their personalities, not as an observer merely, but with love. He makes so complete an identification between his soul and what he will write, that he will be able to say when the ‘Leaves’ have expanded into a real book, ‘Who touches this touches a man.’”

“lady” feels for the boys, even if they look unattractive to her. With regard to details of Whitman’s personal life, biographers and critics agree that there is nothing much to be said, for the poet was intent on leaving no records on that. So what we know of him is in the *Leaves* and in his prose works, which, by the way, give us at least his feelings and thoughts on the world around him. Personally, Whitman was careful enough to remain “evasive” about himself in his poetry, and although he promised to “tell us all”, he “tells us so little”, as Bloom complains (1985, p.1-3). What Whitman tells the reader, he tells by “indirections”, that is, by symbols, by myths, by the eyes and hands of another person, and this is what we need to study.

2.5.3 After the death of Carpus

There is a poem on this theme of nonphysical love, love beyond the flesh, or intangible love, which is really love between souls, as opposed to carnal, worldly or earthly love, which can be termed “romance” in worldly language, an attachment or involvement between people that is basically emotional and material (or concerned with the physical as distinct from the intellectual or spiritual, or immaterial, as Whitman himself liked to call it). The poem is “Out of the Rolling Ocean the Crowd”, from “Children of Adam”:

Out of the rolling ocean the crowd came a drop gently to me,
Whispering *I love you, before long I die,*
I have travel'd a long way merely to look on you to touch you,
For I could not die till I once look'd on you,
For I fear'd I might afterward lose you.

Now we have met, we have look'd, we are safe,
Return in peace to the ocean my love,
I too am part of that ocean my love, we are not so much separated,
Behold the great rondure, the cohesion of all, how perfect!
But as for me, for you, the irresistible sea is to separate us,
As for an hour carrying us diverse, yet cannot carry us diverse forever;
Be not impatient -- a little space -- know you I salute the air, the ocean and
the land,
Every day at sundown for your dear sake my love.
(WHITMAN, 2002, p.92)

This poem shows that the poet conceived of love as an inseparable flow of material and immaterial, physical and metaphysical; however, these conceptions are not the point here. The point, or more specifically the problem, is that he has difficulty in handling bodily relations. He asks the person who loves him to return to the “ocean”, the crowd, of which he also is a

part. He recognizes the love the person has for him, and he returns that love. The only problem he has with it is that he is unable to deal with a close loving relationship, although it is natural to have one, which is indicated by the natural elements in it: ocean/sea, air, land. Nonetheless, the poet is not capable of close physical contact; at most he can share a look or a touch, as the other “drop” of the “rolling ocean the crowd” wishes from him. And even as part of that same ocean/crowd, he can not endure embodied proximity. Thus he envisages the separation by sea, which might be viewed here only as a symbol of separation, and not really a body of water (he and the other drop are parts of the same ocean), and perhaps a future re-joining, pointed by the “Be not impatient – a little space...”, but then probably when both are departed “from materials”, that is, when both are disembodied souls, reunited in a metaphysical love, after a metamorphosis. It seems to be Calamus after the death of Carpus: he feels so sorry for what happened that he chooses not to have intimacy with anyone else. He prefers to interact with other people at the spiritual level and to maintain some physical distance in personal relations. It might even mean that the poet chooses to interact with everyone, instead of with particular individuals, like the reed, which thrives by river banks among a multitude of grass plants. As he too is part of the ocean/crowd, he would rather walk unacquainted among the crowd than to be in private rooms with private persons, for merely touching is enough. It suggests that his personal love is diluted into communal love. “Communal” is the best adjective we have found for Whitman’s love towards the democratic crowd, the “en-masse”. We know that this expression has political connotations, but we also know that he used the calamus for a political purpose of uniting the people, as we can verify in section 2.5.1 and section 2.5.4.

In this sense, communal and collective are very close, like community and collectivity, and both terms share common and political meanings. In reality, the topic here is his movement of changing the focus from private life to public life, from individual to collective, from person to crowd, which does not mean to repress or suppress the individual. It is the other way around: it is by nurturing the individual that we arrive at the en-masse. This is a very delicate balance that must be held in view, and certainly not by chance it is in the first lines of *Leaves of Grass*, in the poem “One’s Self I Sing”, from “Inscriptions”: “ONE’S SELF I sing, a simple, separate person; / Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-masse.” This indicates a perfect or ideal relation between the whole and its parts, which could be materialized in state and citizens, which means that each part/citizen is as important to the whole/state as the whole is important to each part of it and each part in relation to another. In

this case, all parts are equally important with equal rights to every one, which is the principle of democracy or social equality, as he chanted in another line of the same poem mentioned above: “The Female equally with the Male I sing.” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.165).

In reality, the poem mentioned above, “Out of the Rolling Ocean the Crowd”, was written to a woman; according to Allen (1955, p.340), “[...] the poem [was] said to have been written to Mrs. Juliette Beach.” And it shows how Whitman felt about women approaching him. Indeed, the physical distance that the poet put between himself and his lovers, whether male or female, prevented him from having a deeply carnal steady relationship with anyone; so that merely touching was enough. Allen gives the following account of this attempted affair:

But if she [Mrs. Juliette Beach] was actually aggressive in her love for the poet--like Mrs. Gilchrist a few years later--this poem [“Out of the Rolling Ocean”] probably made her feel that she might as well have been in love with a monk. Indeed, there is a positive religious connotation in the absolute renunciation and advised resignation of this response. (1955, p.341)

This kind of “renunciation” and detachment was also what the poet’s other great admirer, Mrs. Gilchrist, whose passionate love was not returned by the poet, received from him. Anne Gilchrist (1828–1885) was an English writer who traveled to the United States to meet Whitman. She fell in love with him after reading *Leaves of Grass* in 1869. After moving to the U.S. in 1876, she met Whitman and they formed a wonderful friendship (Mrs. Gilchrist’s husband, Alexander Gilchrist, with whom she had four children, died in 1861). She wished to give children to Whitman, but he refused to have a loving relationship with her. She moved back to England in 1879. As with others, he did not react the way she expected, and treated her only with affectionate friendship, as he did towards his many comrades, such as Tom Sawyer, Lew Brown, Peter Doyle, and Harry Stafford. Allen writes about Mrs. Gilchrist’s feelings:

[...] she insisted that she had not been disappointed in him, that he was all she expected him to be. But she must soon have realized that he simply could not return the affection for her that she felt for him. She was always to remain a loyal friend, but henceforth the friendship was to exist on the level that Whitman himself preferred—informal, companionable, but devoid of any sexual emotion whatever. (1955, p.477)

Thus the poet remained coherent with his way of dealing with what we call romance. This agrees with what we said before about his transfusing his personal love to a collective love. Perhaps this is the main reason for his trying to erase every trace of his personal life, to show that we need to cultivate our personal love to serve a greater purpose, which is to serve the life of the community. Perhaps he tried to conceal his private life because he was extremely disappointed in it. We do not really know the main reason. What we do know is that the life of the man comes through the writings of the poet. In fact, we, like all other critics, may only guess about the man. What we know is that Whitman never got married and there are no written records of intimate relationships. There are the letters he exchanged with his fellows and beloved friends, and nothing else. As for women, many critics and biographers speculate about why nothing more than friendship happened between the poet and Mrs. Beach or Mrs. Gilchrist. Possibly, he never really met a woman with whom he fell totally in love. Perhaps this was the real reason why he never accepted attachment to the women that lived and moved around him. Maybe this was his great disillusion in life, not finding the one that was right for him. Allen again provides us with a hint at this by quoting a poem Whitman wrote in 1840, at the age of 21, when he was making experiments in the use of “the friendship theme”, in Allen’s words:

O, mighty powers of Destiny!
 When from this coil of flesh I’m free—
 When through my second life I rove,
 Let me but find *one* heart to love
 As I would wish to love.

Let me but meet a single breast,
 Where this tired soul its hope may rest,
 In never-dying faith; ah, then,
 That would be bliss all free from pain,
 And sickness of the heart.

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.
 (1955, pp.38-9)

Whitman’s wondering whether he would ever find “one” heart to love as he would wish to is definitely not about friendship. To find one heart to love would mean “bliss”, ecstasy, complete joy, his total aspiration and inspiration. And already he is talking about doing that in his “second life”, not in his current one, which is a sign that he knew from an early age that he

would not find it. Allen adds that this poem was Walt's "premonition" of the "solitary singer" he was going to be. The poet felt within his soul that he would spend a lifetime without the right person for him, as if the right person had died or had not been born at all and he knew he would have to remain alone in that life, waiting for a second life to meet this person somewhere "above". He knew he would "carry that weight" for a long time, as The Beatles sang in this song from the album *Abbey Road*, from 1969. The poet would take a very long time, perhaps until his "second life", to finally be able to have "golden slumbers" in his eyes, to quote another song from the same album by The Beatles. In short, we might not know what really happened to make him act that way; yet, we do know what he did with what happened: he "transmuted" everything into poetry (as is chanted in the poem quoted in section 2.5.2), to escape as Nature escapes, or "depart from materials", and reincarnate in a new form of life, like Calamus himself, so that he could do something effective for his comrades.

2.5.4 Calamus: the political meaning

After this discussion about water, swimmers and relationships, let us again look at the reed, which is the result of the metamorphosis of Calamus after he dies. Although Whitman does not explicitly sing the myth of Calamus and Carpus, verses such as these, from the poem "Italian Music in Dakota" ("Autumn Rivulets"), show that this natural connection is possible in his poetry:

While Nature, sovereign of this gnarl'd realm,
Lurking in hidden barbaric grim recesses,
Acknowledging rapport however far remov'd,
(As some old root or soil of earth its last-born flower or fruit.)
Listens well pleas'd. (WHITMAN, 1996, p.523)

The "rapport" acknowledged by "Nature", as "far removed" as it can be, and as a "root" is linked to its "fruit", indicates the holism of Nature, in which no part is separated from the whole. In this case, the connection between a plant and a fruit in the unity of nature lies beyond any formulation. And this is what the poet is doing in his works: creating a link between everything, trying to encompass the whole in a volume, so that when a person follows his tracks they will see the whole. In particular, he uses the calamus plant as a symbol of this unity. He does not need to be direct, that is, to mention the myths openly in the poems for us to understand the messages he is conveying. Therefore, even if the use of Calamus as a symbol in the *Leaves* was not consciously based on the Greek myth of Calamus and Carpus,

the context where it appears is complete enough to create the environment that suggests this type of association.

To expand our research on the reed a little further, we will see how it appears in the Bible³⁰ and how it connects to *Leaves of Grass*. In fact, the calamus plant appears three times in the Bible, but in different contexts. Although the other passages are as important as the passage quoted below from Exodus³¹, we will only discuss this one. In Exodus, Chapter XXX: 22-33, the calamus plant is used as a spice, yet its meaning is wider than that. It is important to observe the significance of calamus in this passage because it shows traces of what Whitman said about the meaning of this plant, that is, the “sweet-flag” as a token of “manly attachment”:

The holy anynting oyle

22 Moreover the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
 23 Take thou also unto thee principall spices, of pure myrrhe five hundred shekels [ancient unit of weight equal to about a half ounce; around 15 grams], and of sweet cinnamon halfe so much, even two hundred and fifty *shekels*, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty *shekels*,
 24 And of Cassia [a tree or shrub] five hundred *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oyle olive an Hin [about 5 liters].
 25 And thou shalt make it an oyle of holy oyntment, an oyntment compound after the arte of the Apothecarie: it shallbe an holy anointing oyle.
 26 And thou shalt anoint the Tabernacle of the Congregation therewith, and the Arke of the Testimonie,
 27 And the Table and all his vessels, and the Candlesticke and his vessels, and the Altar of incense:
 28 And the Altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the Laver [basin] and his foot.
 29 And thou shalt sanctifie them, that they may bee most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy,
 30 And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sonnes, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto mee in the priests office.
 31 And thou shalt speake unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall bee an holy anointing oyle unto mee, throughout your generations.
 32 Upon mans flesh shall it not bee powred, neither shall ye make *any other* like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you.

³⁰ We are using *The Holy Bible: King James Version*, a reprint of the edition of 1611, Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005, as the source of our quotations.

³¹ The other two passages are: 1) in the “Song of Solomon”, Chapter IV:14, it is used to describe the spouse of the singer, that is, to describe how good she smells, because she is like a garden containing fruits and all spices: “Spikenard and Saffron; Calamus and Cynamom, with all trees of Frankincense, Mirrhe and Aloes, with all the chiefe spices.”; and 2) in Ezekiel, Chapter XXVII:19, it is used to describe the “rich supply of Tyrus”, because there are merchants trading calamus there,: “Dan also and Iauan going to and fro, occupied in thy faires: bright yron, Cassia and Calamus were in thy market.”.

33 Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth *any* of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.

As we can see in the passage above, the calamus, together with other spices, is used to make a holy ointment that will be used to sanctify the place of worship so much that only by touching them “whatsoever [...] shall be holy”. As a reader of the Bible himself, the poet did know about these passages, which he naturally adapted to his own purpose, as is the case in this verse from section 24 of “Song of Myself”: “Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touch’d from;”. However, Whitman respected what the Lord advised Moses to do: that the oil should be used strictly as recommended. For this reason, the poet inserts the calamus root in the *Leaves* as a sacred symbol of attachment, but the religious rule is maintained: he does not use it as a source of ointment. His ability to merge information retained from varied sources into his poetry is described by him in the poem “There was a Child Went Forth” (from “Autumn Rivulets”), in which he describes what happens to a child who became everything he saw, including what he read or heard, for example, “The family usages, the language [...]” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.492). He absorbed everything to use later in his poetry³². Naturally, he did that with the Bible too, the basic reading of the Americans in the nineteenth century, which was necessarily his own textbook as a youth. Again Canby writes about the poet, on how Whitman acquired his biblical diction (the influence of the Bible on Whitman also appears in poetical features, such as catalogues, enumerations and figures of speech, which are discussed in chapter 3, section 3.4):

Walt, in truth, was very much like the Quakers of his youth, who had a definite diction and a style (bad singsong usually) when they were moved by inner voice, which was utterly different from their usual speech. These rhythms in both poetic prose and in poetry, these rhythms of passion, mysticism, exaltation, of deep emotion whether religious or not, were, in their ultimate source, the rhythms of the English Bible. This was natural in a country where simple people, like his family, usually had only one book, and all the people were nourished upon, or at least were familiar with, the sound of that book. I do not say that Whitman’s poetical style is imitated from Job or Isaiah. [...] The point to be emphasized is that free rhythms, in no tight pattern, yet able to lift and discharge imagination (which is the function of poetry), were natural, inescapable for the American masses. Free verse of the Biblical kind was their *emotionalized* speech.
(CANBY, 1943, p.309)

³² Canby remarks on Whitman (1943, p.15): “His whole life, with the exception of his activities as printer, carpenter, political worker, and hospital visitor, may be summed up in two functions: absorption and communication. [...] Whitman’s own reminiscences of his childhood are records of absorption [...]”

These memories from childhood and youth were re-worked to fit into his poetry, as well as his memories from books read, and the “free rhythms [...] to lift and discharge imagination” (discussed in chapter 3). The ideas remained in his mind and later reappeared in a different form, in the poet’s own personal style and diction. Therefore, the calamus of the Bible, which served to sanctify the “children of Israel”, as is shown in the passage above, for generations to come, is now, in a different context, chosen to be the token of “fervent [...] comradeship”, of personal affection, which will be the basis for a national union of America, as he expresses in the “Calamus” cluster. Here is his poetic genius at work: he takes an element from a reliable source which is common to all, regardless of social, economic or political groups, and applies it to a new context, while maintaining features of its previous context, especially its sacred characteristics. He uses something which is already in the hearts and minds of the people as a device to create a new reality, in which it becomes a common tie between them by renewing the meaning of an existing element and bringing it into circulation, as he does in the poems of “Calamus”.

The question then is about his specific use of the calamus plant in his poetry, his intention with it. The answer comes from his own words quoted below, a passage from his notes to the “Preface 1876—*Leaves of Grass* and *Two Rivulets*”, where he presented what he intended with his *Leaves* and particularly with “Calamus”:

Something more may be added—for, while I am about it, I would make a full confession. I also sent out LEAVES OF GRASS to arouse and set flowing in men’s and women’s hearts, young and old, (my present and future readers,) endless streams of living, pulsating love and friendship, directly from them to myself, now and ever. [...] I say, the subtlest, sweetest, surest tie between me and Him or Her, who, in the pages of *Calamus* and other pieces realizes me—though we never see each other, or though ages and ages hence—must, in this way, be personal affection. [...]

Besides, important as they are in my purpose as emotional expressions for humanity, the special meaning of the *Calamus* cluster of LEAVES OF GRASS [...] mainly resides in its Political significance. In my opinion, it is by a fervent, accepted development of Comradeship, the beautiful and sane affection of man for man, latent in all the young fellows, North and South, East and West—it is by this, I say, and by what goes directly and indirectly along with it, that the United States of the future, (I cannot too often repeat,) are to be most effectually welded together, intercalated, anneal’d into a living union.

Then, for enclosing clue of all, it is imperatively and ever to be borne in mind that LEAVES OF GRASS entire is not to be construed as an intellectual or scholastic effort or Poem mainly, but more as a radical utterance out of the abysses of the Soul [...], the Emotions and the Physique—an utterance adjusted to, perhaps born of, Democracy and

Modern Science [...], and in its very nature regardless of the old conventions, and, under the great Laws, following only its own impulses. (WHITMAN, 2002, p.657)

Whitman had seen the failure of the American political system, in which he had been previously involved, both as a journalist and supporter.³³ In fact, he was disappointed in the political system as a provider of concrete solutions to real problems, especially slavery, a canker that had infected the life of the nation and was bringing it to a state of moral decay. He was a personal witness to this, for he had belonged to political parties; he had been a “successful professional writer of competent journalism” as well as a “Democrat” (CANBY, 1943, pp.72; 88), and he knew the politicians of his time and their affairs. Although he was against slavery, he was also against dividing the country and its people, and he respected the Constitution³⁴. This is why he is sometimes criticized for not being a radical abolitionist. He deprecated slavery, but he felt that a nation divided would be much worse than that. Allen helps us with a brief comment on this attitude of the poet:

To Whitman the Constitution was sacred and every section must be observed “in spirit and in letter.” He regarded slavery as wrong, but until abolished by the action or consent of the states, the Constitution must not be violated even to combat slavery. (1955, p.198)

He had then this terrible dilemma tearing his mind and heart apart. So, he decided to abandon professional politics in favor of a greater purpose: to create a work that would do what politics could not, namely, to unite the country, to make a nation, which could not be achieved by materialistic ideas and actions only. He totally believed that there must be something beyond the materialistic view of the world that dominated the American scene that could be used for this greater purpose, and that was love from person to person, affection, equality, comradeship, amateness, adhesiveness³⁵, the themes that he chanted in the *Leaves*. As he

³³ In “Origins of Attempted Secession”, added as an annex to this work, the poet gives a description of his political activities as a “close observer” and “voter” for around twenty years (1840-1860).

³⁴ As we are discussing about Whitman’s belief in the integrity of the nation, through his faithfulness to the Constitution, it seems appropriate to mention that Hölderlin, on commenting on Sophocles’ representation of the State in *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*, says that the “patriotic forms” of the poets are “preferable”, for these forms are able to grasp the “the spirit of the times”, in order for it to be understood, since poets have this ability to apprehend it (ROSENFELD, 2000, p.408).

³⁵ Whitman’s interest in phrenology, the science of mind that states that mental faculties are indicated by the conformation of the skull and thus can be analyzed and improved, made him visit the office of the Fowler brothers for an examination. Ed Folsom and Kenneth M. Price give an account of this visit in their biography of Whitman on their “The Walt Whitman Archive” website: “On July 16, 1849, the publisher, health guru, and social reformer Lorenzo Fowler confirmed Whitman’s growing sense of personal capacity when his phrenological analysis of the poet’s head led to a flattering—and in some ways quite accurate—description of his character. In addition to bolstering Whitman’s confidence, the reading of the “bumps” on his skull gave him

stated in the 1876 Preface, there is a political significance in his poetry, and the reed, calamus or sweet-flag, is the symbol that represents the political meaning of the “fervent comradeship”, the element that links the personal affection to its political application. It is the transformation of something that is individual into something that is collective. Thus, Whitman abandoned professional politics, but not a political attitude as we will see in the following passage from *Walt Whitman, An American*, which gives an accurate description of his thoughts and feelings in the period previous to the publication of *Leaves of Grass*:

[...] In September of 1849, he resigned with a bitter farewell to his enemies, and ‘old Hunkers generally,’ by which he meant conservative Democrats ready to sacrifice free soil in order to keep the party in power.

This – and I feel sure that Walt realized it – was the end of his career as political editor. Walt was not only a Free-Soiler like his friend Bryant, he was a ‘Barnburner’, willing to sacrifice patronage and power to principles, and ready to split the party if necessary. And like many leading members of this faction, he later deserted the Democrats entirely and went over to the new Republican Party, where, however, he never functioned as a politician or editor. His journalistic career had many years to go; he was, as we shall see, to hold another editorship, though not a political one; but, from this crucial year of 1849, he becomes more and more distrustful of American politics, more and more resolved to speak for himself. (CANBY, 1943, p.79)

Free-Soilers were members of the Free Soil Party, a political party in the United States which acted in the 1848 and 1852 presidential elections, and in some state elections. It was a breakaway section of the Democratic Party and was later integrated into the Republican Party in 1854. Its principal aim was to oppose the establishment of slavery in the new territories, and they defended the idea that free men working on free soil was a morally and economically superior system to slavery. Basically, they wanted to keep the new states created in the west free of slaves, although they were not against slavery itself in the states where it already existed. Whitman was put in charge of their newspaper, *The Freeman*, in 1848, but the newspaper was burned out in a fire after one number and only resumed activities two months later. However, Whitman was “determined to keep slavery out of the new lands west of the Mississippi, though he was still in no sense an Abolitionist. He was certainly becoming more

some key vocabulary (like "amativeness" and "adhesiveness," phrenological terms delineating affections between and among the sexes) for *Leaves of Grass*. Whitman's association with Lorenzo Fowler and his brother Orson would prove to be of continuing importance well into the 1850s. The Fowler brothers distributed the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, published the second anonymously, and provided a venue in their firm's magazine for one of Whitman's self-reviews.”

Available at <http://www.whitmanarchive.org/biography/biographymainindex.html>. Accessed on July 21, 2007.

radical, too radical for *The Freeman*” (CANBY, 1943, p.78-9). Consequently, in 1849, he gave up the job.

Thus, it is quite plausible that a total political disillusionment is a strong enough motivation to make someone with artistic urge to shift from politics to literature, especially because this literary gift had been present already throughout his career as a journalist, while reviewing books and meeting writers personally, such as Edgar Alan Poe³⁶ and William Cullent Bryant³⁷ (American poet, critic, and editor, 1794-1878). In “Song of Myself”, section 24, there is a verse with the word “afflatus” (Whitman enjoyed using the word “afflatus” to describe a strong creative impulse or divine inspiration): “Through me the afflatus surging and surging [...]”. It is interesting to note that the verb “to surge”, to explain his “afflatus”, his divine inspiration, means to rise and move in a billowing or swelling manner, to roll or be tossed about on waves, as a boat and also to move like advancing waves. That means that not only he poured forth his ocean of love, “[...] the measureless ocean of love within him [...]”, as he did in “Recorders Ages Hence”, from “Calamus”, but also his creative impulse, which practically took control of him, and he had to surrender to its “large imperious waves” (“In Cabin’d Ships at Sea”, from “INSCRIPTIONS”). Politics was not an appropriate means of conveying this “ocean of love” to the public. Thus, at the time of the harsh ideological crisis faced by him in the late 1840’s, when he saw corruption taking over all the three spheres of political government (municipal, state and federal), all he wanted was to flee from professional politics. As Canby describes his mood in those days:

His first reaction to political disillusion was into violent distaste for the whole business of party politics. Like many another idealist who has been disappointed in the machinery by which life in society is carried on, he wanted to smash all machines. [...] Whitman is fed up with practical politics. The time has come for men to count, not parties. Party machines are run by office-seekers and creatures of the President. [...] Walt [...] has lost faith, for a while, in the democratic system, though not in democracy. His political-editorial days are over [...], his interest in getting out of the vote has been swallowed up by his interest in giving ideals to his country. (1943, pp.131-2)

³⁶ Canby (1943, p.61) quotes a passage from Whitman where he describes his meeting Poe and other writers: “[...] I knew and frequented Broadway [...] Here I saw, during those times, ... [William Cullent] Bryant, [...] I also remember seeing Edgar A. Poe, and having a short interview with him, [...] in his office. [...] Poe was very cordial, in a quiet way, appear’d well in person, dress, etc. I have a distinct and pleasing remembrance of his looks, voice, manner and matter; very kindly and human, but subdued, perhaps a little jaded”

³⁷ Canby (1943, p.65) describes why this friend left Whitman: “They rambled together for miles in the Brooklyn countryside where Bryant joined him, talking about Europe, and doubtless, also about New York politics. And it was only the violent unrestraint of the “Leaves” when it was published which caused them to drift apart.”

Then, there was no salvation for him or for the nation in politics. How could the nation's unity be maintained by a corrupt State? How could a corrupt government keep free work and slavery in peace in a country if it was this very corrupt government that traded personal interests to maintain this same state of affairs? Surely any honest citizen would agree that it is not necessary to be inspired to perceive that there is no solution in dishonest politicians who try to convince the population that slavery is good for slaves (to make them accept it and not fight for freedom) and also good for free workers, who are losing jobs because there are slaves available to do work for free.

Some critics suggest that Whitman's change of mind in this period was due to some kind of illumination, which would have driven him towards poetry. As no one seems to accept that a "creative genius" might begin work at an older age, as the poet himself sings in "Song of Myself", section 1: "I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin, / Hoping to cease not till death.", Canby says that "The Whitman legend takes charge of Walt's biography in these years. Says that Walt dropped from the journalistic world. Says that he had mystical experiences" (1943, p.82). Simply because no one can explain how "[...] from the pen of a political editor and literary dilettante, appeared the first radical, revolutionary, egotistic, powerful poems of the 'Leaves of Grass'" (1943, p.82).

Therefore, instead of thinking of an illumination³⁸ which could never be proved, although we can never deny Whitman's lucidity and brilliancy, we had better think of a man, a person, who indeed loved his fellow citizens with all his heart, who loved them so much that he would give up his journalistic career to do what his heart commanded him to do: sing his people, his nation, a unity which could be achieved by the all-embracing, "all-inclusive"³⁹

³⁸ Canby again helps us in this matter (1943, p.86): "The legend describes some mystical illumination of the consciousness, or sudden outrush of genius in the 1850's, to account for the unexpected birth of a savage masterpiece in the thirty-sixth year of Whitman's age. Great conceptions, novel methods, original poetry do not happen that way." Richard Maurice Bucke, referred to in section 2.4 for his biography of Whitman and his book *Cosmic Consciousness* (1991), is one of the authors who helped to build Whitman's reputation as a mystical and enlightened being. Whitman himself helped to write and revise his biography in an attempt to present the readers a more human and less messianic view of himself.

³⁹ Bloom speaks of this "all-inclusive" personality of Whitman in *The Western Canon* (1995, p.259), faithfully quoted here: "In his old age, nursing his memories of his mentor, Whitman reported a consoling remark made to him by Emerson, that in the end the world would come round to the poet of *Leaves of Grass* because it would have to, because it was indebted to him. Whatever the later misunderstandings between Emerson and Whitman – and they were many – we remember that accurate prophecy, even as we remember Whitman's remark at Emerson's grave: "A just man, poised on himself, all-loving, all-inclusive, and sane and clear as the sun." What

heart of a poet. A poet who wanted to spread his love around as much as the sea would do with its water, a poet “who was not proud of his songs, but of the measureless ocean of love within him—and freely pour’d it forth” for the sake of his dear comrades, the true friends who would build a nation together. And this poet found the calamus, the reed, to be the symbol that could represent this unifying energy connecting person to person, or more specifically, man to man.

2.5.5 Calamus, Carpus, aulos or ‘reed singers’

Going a little further to explore the multiple meanings of calamus or sweet flag, the description of the plant below shows us why it was indicated by the Lord in the Bible as a spice to make the “holy ointment”: it is a medicinal plant. The following passage gives us an extensive and accurate description of its various uses:

Sweet flag [which grows in Europe, Asia and N. America] has a very long history of medicinal use in many herbal traditions. It is widely employed in modern herbal medicine as an aromatic stimulant and mild tonic. In Ayurveda [Hindu science of health and medicine] it is highly valued as a rejuvenator for the brain and nervous system and as a remedy for digestive disorders. [...] The root is anodyne, aphrodisiac, aromatic, [...] expectorant, febrifuge, hallucinogenic, hypotensive, sedative, stimulant, stomachic, mildly tonic and vermifuge. It is used internally in the treatment of digestive complaints, bronchitis, sinusitis, etc. It is said to have wonderfully tonic powers of stimulating and normalizing the appetite. In small doses it reduces stomach acidity whilst larger doses increase stomach secretions and it is, therefore, recommended in the treatment of anorexia nervosa. [...] Sweet flag is also used externally to treat skin eruptions, rheumatic pains and neuralgia. An infusion of the root can bring about an abortion whilst chewing the root alleviates toothache. It is a folk remedy for arthritis, cancer, convulsions, diarrhoea, dyspepsia, epilepsy etc. Chewing the root is said to kill the taste for tobacco. [...] It is used in the treatment of flatulence, dyspepsia, anorexia and disorders of the gall bladder.⁴⁰

Although the sweet flag is present in the USA and in many other countries, especially all over Europe and Asia, in *Leaves of Grass* it sounds completely American given the symbolism it acquires when used by Whitman to represent comradeship as the basis for democracy⁴¹. The

links Whitman and Emerson is far more vital than what divides them, and Whitman caught it in that “all-inclusive,” the image of the sun as a self-sufficient orb.”

⁴⁰ This information is available at: <<http://www.pfaf.org/database/plants.php?Acorus+calamus>>; accessed on 9 November 2007. The webpage is called “Plants For A Future”, “a resource center for rare and unusual plants”.

⁴¹ In the “Notes” to *Whitman*, Justin Kaplan, the editor of this volume of the Library of America (College Editions), includes a “partial explanation” by Whitman about Calamus, the reed, which we quote here in full: “It is the very large & aromatic grass, or rush, growing about water-ponds in the valleys [...] often called ‘sweet

wide range of products made from calamus demonstrates its high potential for symbolic use; one type of calamus, the common reed, which grows throughout the world, is shown below in its multiplicity of purposes:

The stems are useful in the production of homogeneous boards. They can also be processed into a fine fibrous material suitable as a filler in upholstery. The stems have many uses. They are used for thatching roofs. [...] The stems and leaves are also used for building dwellings, lattices [framework in crisscross pattern], fences, arrows by Indians, and for weaving mats, carrying nets, basket making, insulation, fuel, as a cork substitute etc. The stem contains over 50 percent cellulose and is useful in the manufacture of pulps for rayon and paper. The fibre from the leaves and stems is used for making paper. [...] A fibre obtained from the plant is used for making string. The flowering stalks yield a fibre suitable for rope making. [...] A light green dye is obtained from the flowers. Freshly cut shoots are a good green manure. [...] The inflorescences are used as brooms. The plant can be used as a cork substitute. [...] The plant is mixed with mud to make a plaster for walls. Pens for writing on parchment were cut and fashioned from the thin stems of this reed, whilst the stems were also used as a linear measuring device. The plant has a very vigorous and running rootstock, it is useful for binding the soil along the sides of streams etc. It is planted for flood control since it stabilizes the banks and gradually builds up soil depth, thus raising the level of the bank.⁴²

Apart from all this, it is useful to explain that a “pen” made from reed is similar to a quill, which is a pen made from the shaft of a bird’s feather. Consequently, the “reed pen” is also called calamus, which is a writing instrument. This way, both words, reed and calamus, are used to describe writing tools, as both words are used to name the plant. There is still another word, *calumet*, which is a name for the Amerindian peace pipe or tobacco pipe, a ceremonial pipe smoked on special occasions as a token of peace, which was often made from a hollow reed. The word “calumet” comes from the word calamus. This term, known to Whitman, appears in the poem “Our Old Feuillage”, in the following lines: “In arriere [that is, in the past] the peace-talk with the Iroquois the aborigines, the calumet, the pipe of good-will, arbitration, and indorsement [sic], / The sachem⁴³ blowing the smoke first toward the sun and then toward the earth” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.321), to describe the old custom of the Amerindians of smoking the today famous pipe of peace. Finally, there are the reed

flag’ [...] The recherché or ethereal sense of the terms, as used in my book, arises probably from the actual Calamus presenting the biggest & hardiest kind of spears of grass—and their fresh, aquatic, pungent bouquet” (1996, p.1380). The “sweet flag” naturally appears in a more sexual context in the *Leaves*, which is certainly indicated by its “hardiest [...] spears of grass”.

⁴² Information available at “Plants For A Future”:

<<http://www.pfaf.org/database/plants.php?Phragmites+australis>>; accessed on 9 November 2007.

⁴³ Member of the ruling council of the Iroquois.

instruments, such as clarinet or saxophone, which use reeds to produce their sound (see pan pipe below).

From all this information we can see that calamus, or reed, has many and important meanings, which define its relevant role in *Leaves of Grass*. This is why the poet chose it to be the “token” of manly love, as mentioned in “These, I Singing in Spring” from “Calamus”, where he sings how he drew it from the water where he “last saw him that tenderly loves me, and returns again never to separate from me, / And this, O this shall henceforth be the token of comrades, this calamus-root shall” (1996, p.273). This is the same “Root of wash'd sweet-flag!” that appears in section 24 of “Song of Myself”, where the name of the poet first appeared in the 1855 edition. This means that the reed, also called sweet-flag, is placed in its natural context as a plant. This plant, in an act of poetic creation, is used in its “ethereal sense” as the symbol of “manly attachment” and of the “athletic Democracy” that will “define America”, as the poet sings in “To Foreign Lands”, from “Inscriptions” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.5). As is told in the Greek myth, Calamus becomes a plant that has medicinal use, as stated above, and Carpus, the fruit, becomes food for living beings, as we can see in this brief account of the myth of Carpus:

The Greek mythological figure **Karpos** (or **Carpus**, literally "fruit"), was a youth renowned for his beauty. He is the son of Zephyros (the west wind) and Khloris (spring or new vegetation), forming a natural metaphor — the west wind heralds the new growth of spring, which then bears fruit.⁴⁴

Thus, there is a natural connection between Calamus and Carpus, one being a plant by a river bank and the other being the fruit of a plant. As such, in an act of metamorphous reunion, they will remain close to each other forever, for there are environmental aspects that will always join them, such as soil, water, wind, sun, in short, Nature. Therefore, it is practically impossible to reduce all this symbolism to a mere case of homoerotic love. Actually, the more we study the significance of the reed, the more meanings we find. Each meaning leads to another, and in the end, we have a web of interconnected interpretations, all of them illuminating the poetry of *Leaves of Grass*, as the literal case of the medicinal use of calamus that can be used to heal the body and soul of the people, and Carpus, the fruit, as food for them.

⁴⁴ Information available at: <<http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Karpos>>; accessed on July 30, 2007.

Another example of this is the fact that *Carpus*, the fruit, is also the word that originates the Latin verb “*carpere*” (AURÉLIO, 1999, p.414), whose equivalent in Portuguese is “*carpir*”, which means “to weep” and “to remove weed”. “*Carpere*” means to pluck, to pull or pull out a plant or flower, and to remove weed; it also means to gather or to harvest, as in the Latin expression **Carpe Diem**, which means to seize, catch or gather the day, or, figuratively, live for today. Similarly to “*carpir*” in Portuguese, there is the verb “to carp” in English, which means to say, tell, or express grief, as when someone complains about something or weeps. Moreover, there is the broader significance of *Carpus*, the fruit: fruit and fruition come from the Latin word “*frui*”, the infinitive form of the verb “*fruor*”, “to enjoy” (“*fructus*” means “enjoyment”). So, **Carpe Diem** can be translated as *Enjoy the Day*, being life and day the fruits of Time that must be enjoyed now, for in the end Time will be responsible for the decay of all living bodies moving on the face of this planet (Space). Thus, *Carpus* represents both the fruit and its enjoyment, without which the meaning reverses, becoming “to carp”, that is, crying or weeping over something that did not happen, or for someone who has died⁴⁵. There is also a feminine version of *Carpus*, which is one of the **Horae**, who are the Athenian goddesses of nature, Daughters of Zeus and Themis; they are **Thallo, Auxo and Carpo**, who controlled the growth of plants. *Thallo*, *Auxo* and *Carpo* mean budding, growth and ripening (GRIMAL, 1991, p.205). They guarded the entrance to Olympus and were befriended by Pan, the god of shepherds and flocks, as we will see below. This way, *Carpus*, the fruit, has a feminine equivalent, *Carpo*, who represents ripening, the part of the natural process that makes the fruit available to be eaten.

As we mentioned before, the reed is also used to symbolize parts of musical instruments or to make them. This appears in the following lines, which describe the poet’s vision when he travels, in which we see “Where the katy-did works her chromatic reed on the walnut-tree over the well,”⁴⁶ and when “the performer launches his nerve—he has pass’d his prelude on the reeds within.”⁴⁷, contexts where the reed appears as parts of a musical instrument used to describe parts of the body of an insect and of a person. Now, as a musical

⁴⁵ “*Carpir*”: this is a grave activity and there were professional mourners who were hired to show grief at funerals, called weepers: in Brazil they are called “*carpideiras*”, that is, female weepers in traditional burials in rural areas.

⁴⁶ Line from section 33 of “*Song of Myself*”: “Onde o gafanhoto trabalha sua cromática estridência na nogueira sobre o poço.”

⁴⁷ Line from section 42 of “*Song of Myself*”: “Agora o artista mostra vigor, ele passou seus prelúdios nas palhetas interiores.” (SARAIVA, 1995, pp. 38-48)

instrument made from reed, we can mention the reed pipe, pan pipe, or pan flute. The fact is that the

pan flute (also known as **panpipes**, **syrix**, or **quills**) is an ancient musical instrument based on the principle of the stopped pipe, consisting usually of ten or more pipes of gradually increasing length (and, at times, girth). The syrix (Greek *συριγξ*) has long been popular as a folk instrument, and is considered the ancestor of both the pipe organ and the harmonica, or mouth organ. The pan flute is named for its association with the rustic Greek god Pan. The pipes of the pan flute are typically made from bamboo or giant reed;⁴⁸

And legend has it that Hermes was Pan's father and also the inventor of the pan pipe. According to Grimal, there was a "Homeric Hymn" that said that Pan was:

[...] a god of shepherds and flocks. He was depicted as half-man half-animal, with a reed pipe, a shepherd's crook and a branch of pine or a crown of pine leaves. [...] a Homeric Hymn says that he was the son of Hermes by a daughter of Dryops. [...] Pan's mother was frightened by her monstrous offspring, but Hermes carried him off to Olympus. The gods were delighted with the child. [...] and he was given the name Pan because he made them all feel happy (in popular etymology Pan is derived from the Greek *pan*, meaning 'all') (1991, p.324-5).

In addition, there is the **aulos** (Roman **tibia**), a single or double reed-pipe (**auloi**), the most important wind instrument of ancient Middle Eastern cultures, which existed until the Middle Ages. It could be made of cane (a flexible stem of bamboo or *Arundo donax*, the giant reed, for example), wood or metal. Its reed, the thin strip that vibrates to produce the sound on wind instruments, was made from reed as well (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1992, p.703). As in ancient times poetry and music were closely related, the calamus becomes even more important in the context of the *Leaves*, because it is also established as a link between a lyric/epic past and Whitman's attempt to create a lyric/epic present, as the title of Nagy's book indicates, "*Pindar's Homer: the lyric possession of an epic past*", which brings Nagy's statement that "[...] instrumental accompaniment of the words of song is primary, while instrumental solo is secondary" (1990, p.34). This means that stringed instruments such as lyre, harp, **kithara** (Latin **cithara**) and wind instruments such as pipes and flutes are inherent to poetry. As we can see in this quotation from Nagy's book: "In the same context of Panhellenic festivals, what we have been calling song or lyric poetry is being performed verbatim by kitharoidoi 'lyre singers' and auloidoi 'reed singers'" (1990, p.54).

⁴⁸ Information available at: <<http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/pan+flute>>; Accessed on July 30, 2007.

Moreover, Greek mythology teaches us that the lyre was a gift from Zeus to Apollo (his son), the god of poetry and music and inspirer of seers and poets, and an instrument Apollo acquired from Hermes in exchange for his cattle (GRIMAL, 1991, p.50). It also shows that Dionysus shares the position of god of music and poetry with Apollo; however, the instruments which are present in his festivals are the flute and the pan pipe, which Pan, the son of Hermes, plays whenever he joins the processions (1991, p.325). Besides, both gods are related to nature, for “Apollo’s love affairs with Nymphs and young people who became flowers and trees linked him intimately with plant growth and Nature” (1991, p.50) while “Dionysus, god of wine and inspiration, was worshipped with tumultuous processions in which the spirits of the earth and of fecundity appeared [...]” (1991, p.129). In a way, we can say that Whitman is Apollonian as well as Dionysian, that is, he is rational and intuitive, orderly and chaotic, platonic and sensual (as described particularly in the *Symposium*), sharing a cosmic love with the world, limpid, solar, and dionysiac, loving the body without fear, turning what is in the world, the crude physical reality of his time into something spiritual, utopian and perfect, that is, poetic or artistic.⁴⁹ This excerpt from *Specimen Days*, “Thoughts Under an Oak—A Dream”, gives us a description of these two mental states, contemplation and trance, experienced by the poet and recorded by himself:

[...] Seated here in solitude [June 2, 1878] I have been musing over my life—connecting events, dates, as links of a chain, neither sadly nor cheerily, but somehow, to-day here under the oak, in the rain, in an unusually matter-of-fact spirit.

But my great oak—sturdy, vital, green—five feet thick at the butt. I sit a great deal near or under him. Then the tulip tree near by—the Apollo of the woods—tall and graceful, yet robust and sinewy, inimitable in hang of foliage and throwing-out of limb; as if the beauteous, vital, leafy creature could walk, if it only would. (I had a sort of dream-trance the other day, in which I saw my favorite trees step out and promenade up, down and around, very curiously—with a whisper from one, leaning down as he pass’d me, *We do all this on the present occasion, exceptionally, just for you.*) (WHITMAN, 1996, p.840)

As for the elements that appear in the myth of Pan quoted above, they are present in the *Leaves* too. If we consider the three objects carried or worn by Pan, we will see that they are mentioned by Whitman in his works. First, the pipe: “Was the wind piping the pipe of

⁴⁹ There is an aspect of Apollo which is especially interesting in the context of Calamus, which is his love for young men, as shown in the following passage: “Apollo loved young men. The best known are the heroes Hyacinthus and Cyparissus, whose metamorphoses (the former became a hyacinth, the second became a cypress) distressed the god very deeply” (GRIMAL, 1991, p.50). This is totally in accordance with the myth of Calamus and Carpus described in this chapter, which presents the death and transformation of the two swimmers who became plants and were used as symbols of their union by Whitman.

death under the black clouds?”, which is a line from the poem “Rise O Days from your Fathomless Deeps” from “Drum-Taps” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.427). Second, the crook, which can also be called staff, which is mentioned in this line: “My signs are a rain-proof coat, good shoes, and a staff cut from the woods,” from section 46 of “Song of Myself”, the same staff that could appear in the Bible⁵⁰, for example, or in Greek mountains carried by a shepherd like Pan. And third, the pine, as in “Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines. // Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song”, from “When lilacs [...]” (1996, p.463); finally, “Welcome are lands of pine and oak”, from “Song of the Broad-Axe” (1996, p.331). It is not difficult to see that there are many classic components or mythical traces spread throughout the *Leaves*.

However many are they, we still have more information to provide on these interconnections between poetry, myth and ancient history that mingle in Whitman’s poetry to weave this fabric of symbols and meanings. The above mentioned pan pipe, which is also known as syrinx, is actually another Greek myth and a very interesting one, closely related to Pan. It is really worth mentioning it here, because of its context which conveys a sexual intention that is overcome by sacrifice. The Syrinx was:

An Arcadian Hamadryad who was loved by Pan. The god pursued her, but just as he was about to catch her, she changed herself into a reed on the banks of the River Ladon. As the wind’s breath was making the reeds sigh, Pan had the idea of joining reeds of different lengths together with wax. He thus made a musical instrument which he called the Syrinx. (GRIMAL, 1991, p.412)

This myth is similar to the myth of Calamus in the sense that it contains a metamorphosis, and especially because the Hamadryad changed herself into a reed by a river bank just like Calamus in a moment of pain: Calamus did it out of grief for the loss of his beloved friend Carpus; the Syrinx, because she was persecuted, and preferred undergoing a transformation to being caught. Both become reeds by an act of sacrifice, for they give up their actual form of life by changing themselves into a plant. They do not simply take their own lives; they choose to live under a different life form. However, they sigh when they are blown by the wind, which is the sound of their weeping. According to myth, Pan tested whether young girls were virgins by taking them to a grotto near the River Ladon and waiting for the sound of the

⁵⁰ The following passages from *The Holy Bible*: King James Version, portray that: Isaiah 36:6, “Lo, thou trustest in the **staff** of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into [...]” or Ezekiel, 29: “[...] And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.”

Syrinx, which meant virginity, for which the girls were crowned with pine; silence would indicate death. This scene reminds us of the famous section 11 of “Song of Myself” where the poet tells the tale of a “lady” who has lived “twenty eight years” of a lonesome life in a house by a river (or lake) bank where now “twenty eight young men bathe by the shore”. The lady, who is “stock still” in her room watching the boys from behind “the blinds of the window” shows some resemblance to the Syrinx in the sense that she can not have contact with the boys, in the same way that the Syrinx could not be physically touched by Pan. The only contact the Hamadryad could have with Pan was through her sighing, while the lady could at most pass “an unseen hand” on the young men’s bodies. In both situations, there is the impossibility of physical contact between male and female.

Another element in the study of this web of meanings in *Leaves of Grass* is the fact that Hamadryads were “Tree Nymphs who were born with the trees they protected, and shared their fate”, and whose significance is explained by Whitman in “Specimen Days” in the article titled “The Lesson of a Tree”, a magnificent expression of his love for nature, specially trees, where he describes his spiritual connection with nature when he shows how a plant is also a being:

[...] What suggestions of imperturbability and *being*, as against the human trait of mere *seeming*. Then the qualities, almost emotional, palpably artistic, heroic, of a tree; so innocent and harmless, yet so savage. It *is*, yet says nothing. How it rebukes by its tough and equable serenity all weathers, this gusty-temper’d little whiffet, man, that runs indoors at a mite of rain or snow. Science (or rather half-way science) scoffs at reminiscence of dryad and hamadryad, and of trees speaking. But, if they don’t, they do as well as most speaking, writing, poetry, sermons—or rather they do a great deal better. I should say indeed that those old dryad-reminiscences are quite as true as any, and profounder than most reminiscences we get. (WHITMAN, 1996, pp.813-14)

From all that has been said about the reed, we might conclude that it was carefully chosen to be one of the main symbols in the *Leaves*, which includes a wide range of meanings, linking, in a comprehensive term, nature, vegetation, singing, music, writing, mythology, history and unity among peoples. It is a symbol of unification, inclusion, which is one of the main aspects of the *Leaves* expressed by Whitman’s work toward uniting peoples, countries, continents, races, myths, histories, ancient and modern throughout the globe.

2.5.6 “Language is fossil poetry”: poetic function, Emerson, Blake, mediums, Adam

In this chapter we are discussing themes in or related to *Leaves of Grass*. We shall address now the following subjects: the “poetic function” of the language, which is part of the “Scheme of verbal communication” (discussed in the next chapter, in section 3.2, “The method”); how this function relates to Emerson’s idea of poetry, and how his conception will lead us to another poet, William Blake, and then to religiousness and the mythical figure of Adam, as well as the connection between these topics and Whitman. The fact is that the poetic function has a preponderating position in poetry or in creative prose, such as James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*, because this is the function where the language is turned upon itself, where the writer searches for the most beautiful or precise configuration possible to express an emotion or an idea. On the other hand, we can not deny the apparently opposite factor, by which we mean the appearance or existence of poetic constructions that show up in a given language, which is inherent to Emerson’s idea that “Language is fossil poetry”, or the creation of proto-poets long forgotten, as we will see in a quotation below. In both cases, modern poetry and “fossil poetry”, the poetic function is the primary linguistic factor under focus. So, this idea of poetry appearing naturally in common speech had been expressed by Whitman’s Master⁵¹, Ralph Waldo Emerson, the American poet and essayist (1803–82), who was born in Boston and attended Harvard College and Divinity School.⁵²

Before we present some of Emerson’s ideas, let us take a brief look at his life and works. Through his essays, poems, and lectures, the “Sage of Concord” (he later lived in Concord, Massachusetts) established himself as a spokesman of transcendentalism and as a major figure in American literature. Transcendentalism was a philosophical and literary movement that thrived in New England from 1836 to 1860. It originated among a group of intellectuals who developed their own faith centering on the divinity of humanity and the natural world. They were inspired by Kant and English authors such as Carlyle, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. Emerson believed that the “moral law” was the “transcendental law, through which man discovers the nature of god, a living spirit.” The ideas of transcendentalism were expressed by Emerson in essays such as “Nature” (1836), “Self-

⁵¹ Whitman referred to Emerson as “dear Friend and Master” in his Preface to the 1856 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, which was actually a letter to Emerson, because the poet had not “found how [he] could satisfy [himself] with sending any usual acknowledgment” of Emerson’s letter to him (WHITMAN, 2002, p.636-46).

⁵² Fernando Pessoa is a great master in the use of “common speech” in poetry. Apparently, his poems are written in daily language with common words; however, when studied in detail, we see that the verses are carefully composed and executed with great poetic precision, that is, the poems are so perfectly conceived that they sound like natural language to the reader.

Reliance,” “The Poet” and “The Over-Soul” (1841), and by Henry David Thoreau in his book *Walden* (1854), “the revelation of the simplicity and divine unity of nature”. The movement began with the meetings of a group of friends in Boston and Concord to discuss philosophy, literature, and religion. Thoreau, like Emerson, lived in Concord and attended Harvard College, which they paid by doing chores, given their scarce livelihood. Later, both became lecturers. Both, too, were the first persons to recognize Whitman’s poetic genius from the beginning. Thoreau is also the author of “Civil Disobedience”, “the origin of the modern concept of pacific resistance”.

Now, we shall see how the poet is conceived by Emerson as the artist who primarily works on the language to create a new view of the world. In “The Poet”⁵³, Emerson states that “Every word was once a poem.” The “[...] world being thus put under the mind for verb and noun, the poet is he who can articulate it. For, though life is great, and fascinates, and absorbs, and though all men are intelligent of the symbols through which it is named, yet they cannot originally use them.” So, it is “The poet, by an ulterior intellectual perception, [who] gives them a power which makes their old use forgotten, and puts eyes, and a tongue into every dumb and inanimate object.”, vivifying them, making them “new” to the new eyes that now see them. The poet, “through that better perception, [...] stands one step nearer to things”, articulating his vision in images that make what he sees visible to the common eye, “[...] so the poet turns the world to glass, and shows us all things in their right series and procession.” This process is an act of de-reification of words, an act of treating the language as a living organism that is created and changed by its users and that modifies through time, in form and meaning, but keeps in itself the original meanings, which make up what we could define as originary, primeval or primordial language. In this sense, the language is not just a physical object limited in itself. So, the role of poetry, or of poets, is to revitalize the language by trying to rediscover or search for what the objectification of the language does not allow us to see any more, the hidden beauty of each word. In fact, Whitman uses the word “primeval” to describe forests⁵⁴, times⁵⁵ and also words, as in “I speak the pass-word primeval”, in section 24 of “Song of Myself”. In the cluster “Children of Adam”, he uses “original” in the same sense when he describes himself as Adam, “with the potent original loins”, the “chanter of Adamic songs” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.264), necessarily written in an original language.

⁵³ Essays mentioned and general information on Emerson and Thoreau found in *The American Tradition in Literature*, 3. ed.. New York: Norton, 1967, v. 2, pp.1161-1236, edited by Sculley Bradley.

⁵⁴ As in “Pioneers! O Pioneers!”, from “Birds of Passage” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.192).

⁵⁵ As in “The Bible as Poetry”, from “November Boughs” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.1163).

In medical terms, the process of vivifying, healing or nourishing parts of the body, that is, the injection or supplying of blood or fluid into an organ or tissue to provide oxygen and nutrients, or drugs for treating diseases like cancer, is called perfusion. In poetic terms, we could say that this revitalization of ancient myths and poetry is an artistic perfusion, in the sense that the poet injects new blood, new energy, to bring the old corpses to life, as Whitman states in his 1855 Preface when he says that “America does not repel the past” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.616), and that “the greatest poet [...] drags the dead out of their coffins and stands them again on their feet. He says to the past, Rise and walk before me that I may realize you. He learns the lesson—he places himself where the future becomes present” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.623). Whitman also expressed this perfusing and invigorating gesture in section 40 of “Song of Myself,” in a passage that portrays a resurrecting and healing act:

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

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

I dilate you with tremendous breath, I buoy you up,
Every room of the house do I fill with an arm'd force,
Lovers of me, bafflers of graves.⁵⁶

At the height of his creative power and health, he felt capable of infusing life in “any one dying”, as well as being able to join past, present and future in a single act, as he wrote in the Preface and also in the *Leaves*, for example, in “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking”, when he sang that he was the “uniter of here and hereafter” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.207). In reality, he was bolder than that, for “hereafter”, besides meaning “in a future time” or “after this”,

⁵⁶ Our translation of this passage:

“A qualquer moribundo, corro e giro o trinco da porta,
Viro as roupas-de-cama para o pé da cama,
Mando o médico e o padre embora.

Agarro o declinante e o ergo com vontade irresistível,
Ah desesperado, eis meu pescoço,
Por Deus, não irás afundar! pendura todo o teu peso em mim.

Dilato-te com um tremendo hausto, dou-te alento,
Cada cómodo da casa preencho com uma força armada,
Amantes de mim, obstruidores de túmulos.” (SARAIVA, 1995, p.47)

also means “afterlife”, “immortality”. This way, he is saying that he knows what happens after death and is not afraid of it, and that no one needs to be, as he asserts throughout the *Leaves*. This is a way of creating peace in the present, for the poet assures us that there are no mysteries to be feared in the passage from this to an afterlife. We are convinced that the poet is in reality possessed of an immense power, the power to revive the past and unite the present and the future, and even to unite the material world to the immaterial, invisible world. This peace of mind is certainly what gives him the serenity to accept and write about his own future invisibility, his departure from the material world, as he does in the poem “Full of Life Now”, from “Calamus” (1860):

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.)⁵⁷
(WHITMAN, 2002, p.116)

In fact, we do not need to know whether he had all this power; the relevant factor in this context is that we know that he believed it to be real and expressed it in his poetry. This is in accordance with what Emerson had expounded on the subject of the poets’ ability to see beyond the limits of the vision of the common man. In order to write this type of message in a poem, the poet must be “one step nearer to things”, he must be seeing something that most common people do not, and for him what separates the visible from the invisible has to be only “glass”, indeed.

⁵⁷ Our re-creation of this poem:
PLENO DE VIDA AGORA

“PLENO de vida agora, compacto, visível,
Eu, quarenta anos de idade no octogésimo-terceiro ano dos Estados,
A alguém um século adiante ou qualquer número de séculos adiante,
A ti ainda inato estas, buscando-te.

Quando leres estas eu que era visível me tornei invisível,
Agora és tu, compacto, visível, percebendo meus poemas, buscando-me,
Fantasiando quão feliz serias se eu pudesse estar contigo e me tornar teu camarada;
Que seja como se eu estivesse contigo. (Não estejas certo demais, mas estou contigo agora)
(SARAIVA, 1995, p.92)

Consequently, as the poet is the one who is capable of conveying the knowledge he acquires in his vision to the readers, we could argue that, according to this conception, the poet may be called visionary, because of his “better perception” through which the material world becomes “glass” and the immaterial world becomes visible. However, we have to be careful in dealing with this subject, for the term visionary has distinctive connotations that apply specifically to two different types of people. Therefore, visionary can be someone who is characterized by vision or foresight (perception of events before they happen), and also someone who has fantasies, dreams, and visions, such as a seer. In this case, the two types of visionary people are the ones who may be given to apparitions, prophecies, or revelations, and the ones who are utopian and idealistic. The first type can be exemplified by William Blake (1757–1827), the English poet, visionary, painter, and printmaker. He did have visions and did see angels. He recorded these visions in books such as *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793; Albion is the ancient name of Great Britain) or *America: a Prophecy* (1793), *Europe a Prophecy* (1794), and engravings. The second type of visionary can be defined by a passage in Canby’s biography of Whitman, *Walt Whitman, An American*:

One remembers that the real visionaries of the twenties of this century were not idealists, but the supposedly hard-headed industrialists, financiers, and politicians who have been proved by the depression and the war to have been dreamers, whose fantasies of progress were not even good dreams, and emphatically did not come true. (1943, p.266)

Canby uses the definition above to emphasize that Whitman’s “democratic idealism [...] is in no sense visionary” (1943, p.265), that there is no utopia in his works and that Whitman’s “ideas are flexible, often indefinite, but they are based on what became an extraordinarily wide and intuitive knowledge of the heart of the common people, and [...] only along the path he indicates can democracy succeed.” According to Canby, Whitman can not be called a visionary of the second type, since he does not fit into this definition.⁵⁸ On the other hand, by using Canby’s own words mentioned above, we must relate Whitman to the other type of visionary, the one in which Blake fits into, for both poets present this prophetic trait and both have visions. Prophetically speaking, they are very close, for both are deeply religious men.

⁵⁸ As Whitman himself acknowledged his contradictions, we can not say that Canby is wrong, especially after what we have written in the previous section about the Apollonian and the Dionysian characteristics of Whitman. In “The Sleepers”, he writes in section 1: “I wander all night in my vision, / [...] / Wandering and confused, lost to myself, ill-assorted, contradictory” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.542). And in “Song of Myself”, section 51, he sings the famous lines: “Do I contradict myself? / Very well, then, I contradict myself; / I am large—I contain multitudes.” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.246).

The following verses from Whitman's "The Sleepers" show the readers the way into his prophetic and seeing soul. The poem, which first appeared in the 1855 edition as the fourth of the twelve original poems and was titled "Night Poem" in 1856, has eight sections and in short goes from a pessimistic view of the world to an optimistic one; this is the opening passage:

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 the sleepers,
Wandering and confused, lost to myself, ill-assorted, contradictory,
Pausing, gazing, bending, and stopping. (WHITMAN, 2002, p.356)

Then, he continues describing his capacity to see through the night: "Now I pierce the darkness—new beings appear, / The earth recedes from me into the night, / I saw that it was beautiful, and I see that what is not the earth is beautiful." Going from "bedside to bedside", he adds: "I dream in my dream all the dreams of the other dreamers, / And I become the other dreamers." As he sang in "Song of Myself": "I am he attesting sympathy" (section 22), he is the one who can feel what others feel, which he states in another section (48): "And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy, walks to his own funeral, drest in his shroud," that is, without sympathy, one is emotionally dead. Nevertheless, he continues to give us more details of his vision from "The Sleepers": "I see the hiding of douceurs [French for "delights"], I see nimble ghosts whichever way I look" (2002, p.357). In section seven, the terrible sights are over, and the poet finally sees everything in the light:

I swear they are all beautiful,
Every one that sleeps is beautiful, every thing in the dim light is
beautiful,
The wildest and bloodiest is over, and all is peace.

Peace is always beautiful,
The myth of heaven indicates peace and night.

The myth of heaven indicates the soul,
The soul is always beautiful [...]
(2002, p.362)

As we have said before, Whitman has this knowledge or intuition of the nature of the material and immaterial worlds. As a result, he was never afraid of death, he actually welcomed it. The following verses from "Song of Myself" will illustrate the point, because they show, from the beginning, his view on this subject: "The smallest sprout shows there is really no death"

(section 6); “I know I am deathless” (section 20); “Old age superbly rising! O welcome, ineffable grace of dying days!” (section 45); “the weakest and shallowest is deathless with me” (section 42); “No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God, and about death.” (section 48); “And as to you Death, and you bitter hug of mortality, it is idle to try to alarm me.” (section 49). His being “at peace about God, and about death” indicates that he was aware of the “myth of heaven”, which made him sing its beauty. And this beauty means that, in his vision, the only thing that dies is our body, which becomes “good manure” (section 49) for the vegetation, which implies that we, like all other living beings, follow the cycles of nature of birth and death. The four last verses above make a logical statement: the beauty of the soul is based on the beauty of heavenly peace.

Another aspect presented in the passage above, besides his being at peace with death, is his not being afraid of the night, which he, in the poem “The Sleepers”, depicts as his mother:

They pass the invigoration of the night, and the chemistry of the night, and
awake.

I too pass from the night,
I stay a while away O night, but I return to you again, and 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.
(2002, p.550-1)

We believe that it is his feeling at peace with everything, with God, death, night, and nature that creates space in his soul for never losing hope in God and other entities, even when he, like any other human being, undergoes hardships. Even in moments of despair, described in poems such as “As I Ebb’d with the Ocean of Life” or “The Prayer of Columbus”, in the end, his hope for better and happier times always overcome his ephemeral sadness and suffering. In the worst moments, he would “cling fast” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.542) to God, or to the Son of God, the “Lamb”⁵⁹. This deep religiousness, which Whitman considers to be what

⁵⁹ The Gospel according to John (1:29-34) reads: **Behold the Lamb of God**

constitutes the “union and rapport among all the poems and poets of the world, however wide their separations of time and place and theme⁶⁰,” is what links Whitman to the poet mentioned above, William Blake, who is also a very religious poet. For this reason, we quote below a poem by Blake about the Lamb: the “Introduction” to *Songs of Innocence*⁶¹:

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again;"
So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer!"
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read."
So he vanish'd from my sight;
And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

Curiously, Blake uses a reed⁶² to make a pen to write his songs, the same reed that Whitman chose to be the symbol of comradeship in his *Leaves*, and also of writing, music (the reed is

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lambe of God, which taketh away the sinne of the world!

30 This is he of whom I said, After me commeth a man, which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a Dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the holy Ghost.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Sonne of God. (*The Holy Bible*: King James Version)

⁶⁰ This statement is from “Five Thousand Poets”, an article included in “November Boughs” (1888): “In a very profound sense *religion is the poetry of humanity*. Then the points of union and rapport among all the poems and poets of the world, however wide their separations of time and place and theme, are much more numerous and weighty than the points of contrast” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.1209).

⁶¹ Blake’s works are nowadays available on the internet at various sites. “The William Blake Archive”, sponsored by the Library of Congress and supported by the University of North Carolina and the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities at the University of Virginia, is an excellent source. It contains reproductions of Blake’s engravings and etchings. Available at: <<http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/>>. Accessed on 27 July 2007.

⁶² For more information on the reed, or calamus, see previous sections.

used to make pipes as well), and closeness to nature⁶³, as we have seen in the section on calamus. In addition, Blake is asked by a “child” that is “on a cloud” to pipe a song “about a Lamb” and to write “happy songs [that] every child may joy to hear”, indicating that he is receiving messages from an ethereal⁶⁴ being, that is, from someone who appeared to him in a spiritual vision, requesting him to convey a message that may bring “joy” to children⁶⁵. Curious, also, is the fact that Whitman wrote a poem called “Mediums”, in which he call them “divine conveyers”, such as poets who are both visionaries and prophets, like Blake. In this context, we might say that they were mediums as well, in the sense that a medium is a person who serves as channel for thoughts. Whitman, already in his 1855 Preface, hinted at this subject, relating the poet to mediums: “The great poet has less a mark’d style, and is more the channel of thoughts and things without increase or diminution, and is the free channel of himself” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.624). He described these traits in the poem “Mediums”, speaking of his prophetic visions:

They shall arise in the States,
 They shall report Nature, laws, physiology, and happiness,
 They shall illustrate Democracy and the kosmos,
 They shall be alimentive, amative, perceptive,
 They shall be complete women and men, their pose brawny and supple,
 their drink water, their blood clean and clear,
 They shall fully enjoy materialism and the sight of products, they shall
 enjoy the sight of the beef, lumber, bread-stuffs, of Chicago the great
 city,
 They shall train themselves to go in public to become orators and oratresses,
 Strong and sweet shall their tongues be, poems and materials of poems shall
 come from their lives, they shall be makers and finders,
 Of them and of their works shall emerge divine conveyers, to convey
 gospels,
 Characters, events, retrospections, shall be convey'd in gospels, trees,

⁶³ The “Frontispiece to Songs of Innocence” shows the piper, the child on the cloud and lambs in the middle of a forest. Available at <http://blake-dev.lib.unc.edu/exist/blake/archive/object.xq?objectid=s-inn.b.illbk.01&java=yes>; accessed on 10 December 11, 2007.

⁶⁴ From Latin **aetherius**, from Greek **aitherios**, from **aithēr**, *upper air*, meaning celestial, heavenly (FERREIRA, 1999, p.848).

⁶⁵ It is a well known fact that Jesus liked little children and viewed them as symbols of innocence, the innocence that is required to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, as we can see in this passage from “The Gospel according to St. Matthew”, 18: “**Who Is the Greatest?**

1 At the same time came the disciples unto Iesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the Kingdome of heaven?

2 And Iesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except yee be converted, and become as little children, yee shall not enter into the kingdome of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himselfe as this little childe, the same is greatest in the Kingdome of heaven.

5 And who so shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me.” (*The Holy Bible: King James Version*, 2005)

animals, waters, shall be convey'd,
 Death, the future, the invisible faith, shall all be convey'd.
 (WHITMAN, 1996, p.590)

Mediums with sweet tongues that will produce poems and “convey gospels” certainly might be called poets too. Poets that will chant the “future”, as he does in section 2 of “Passage to India”, where he predicted the reality of today, when networks are part of our daily lives: “Lo, soul! seest thou not God’s purpose from the first? / The earth to be spann’d, connected by network” (1996, p.532). This is not even an interpretation of his words, it is the literal meaning: he envisaged an earth “connected by net-work”, “The seas inlaid with eloquent gentle wires” (sec. 1, p.531), based on the scientific advances of his times, which already had developed a technology that was capable of establishing communication between America and Europe by submersed cables. This was the case of the Atlantic cable in 1866 (after four previous attempts: one in 1857, two in 1858, and another in 1865) or the construction of the Suez Canal, which joined the Mediterranean and Red seas, begun in 1859 and opened in 1869. Whitman’s prophetic capacity has been attested by critics and biographers. Allen writes: “Walt Whitman must be given credit for being truly prophetic, in every sense of the word, in foreseeing the importance of humanizing science” (2000, p. xviii). Again, Allen, this time in *The Solitary Singer*, provides us with some prophesying or predictions by Whitman. On page 213, he writes on the celebration of “the laying of the Atlantic cable” in 1858:

[...] Whitman declared this was the biggest celebration in the history of the city. [August 17] [...] Previously, on July 17, he had also discussed the need for “A Northern Pacific Railroad” and predicted its construction. Some years later he would be able to celebrate these two engineering feats in one of his great poems, “Passage to India.”

On page 228, Allen comments on *Leaves* by quoting a passage from the poem “Starting from Paumanok” (section 17), as follows:

O expanding and swift! O henceforth,
 Elements, breeds, adjustments, turbulent, quick, and audacious,
 A world primal again, vistas of glory incessant and branching,
 A new race dominating previous ones and grander far, with new contests,
 New politics, new literatures and religions, new inventions and arts.

These, my voice announcing—I will sleep no more but arise,
 You oceans that have been calm within me! how I feel you, fathomless,
 stirring, preparing unprecedented waves and storms.
 (WHITMAN, 1996, pp.186-7)

Allen says that although there is a positive atmosphere in the first part above, the second shows that “[...] the new age will not come into existence calmly and peacefully.” About the oceans, waves and storms, he says:

It is not clear whether the poet was actually prophesying about himself or the nation. If himself, he perhaps anticipated a period of great creative activity; if the nation, he was indeed a true prophet, since this must have been written before 1860. But it is significant that his mood so closely paralleled the actual condition of “The States” between 1856 and 1860.
(ALLEN, 1955, p.228)

Allen is referring to the turbulent state of affairs in the U.S. at that time, politically, socially and economically with the withdrawal of 11 Southern states from the Union in 1860-1861, which led to the Civil War. Whitman’s capacity to look into the future is also testified by another biographer and critic, Canby, who was discussing Whitman’s abilities as a prophet in the field of democracy, because, already at that time, Whitman saw the “Corruption, degeneracy, pettiness, both physical and spiritual” (1943, p.263) that were devastating the United States of the 1850’s and later the 1870’s: “Was he a good prophet in his recital of the dangers to democracy lying just ahead? His prophecy was bitterly good, because bitterly true. [...] Yes, it was true prophecy” (1943, p.264). Even though we might run the risk of contradicting Canby in his view of Whitman (1819-1892), we must say that the poet may be highly praised for his personal capabilities to foresee the future and even when it comes to democracy, for in this field it was Canby who highlighted the poet’s “flexible ideas” and his capacity to grasp what was taking place in the heart of the people.

As Whitman had been deeply involved in politics in his younger years and had an accurate perception of people’s feelings and attitudes, we must agree that he was prophetic in this field. However, as we have commented before, he was also utopian or idealistic, for he dreamed of a nation united by comradeship and mutual love, as is depicted in “Calamus”. This idea of a loving society is the same ideal society or community that appears in “Children of Adam”. The only difference in relation to “Calamus” is that in “Children of Adam” the focus is on procreation and love between the sexes, which Whitman defined as *amativeness*, as we explained in section 2.5.4. As the title of this cluster indicates, the poems are about the creation of a new garden in the New World by “Adam”, together with his beloved “Eve”. In reality, the two clusters address the same subject, which is the necessity to create union in a Nation that was heading to division. The two groups of poems first appeared in the 1860

edition of *Leaves of Grass*, which also featured *Drum-Taps*, the book of poems on the nation at war, as we have explained in section 2.1. To introduce the subject of Adam and its connection with Democracy, we will supply some more information on the life of Whitman and North America in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Until 1849, when Whitman left the field of politics, he had been a member of the Democratic Party and later of the new Republican Party, while still living in Brooklyn and New York City. During and after the Civil War he lived in Washington, the capital city of the United States, where, from 1865 to 1874, he was a Government clerk. He had then inside knowledge of practical politics and he knew its real effects on the American spirit, which he had a close relationship with when he helped the sons of the Nation in the improvised hospitals as a volunteer nurse⁶⁶. It was in Washington where he witnessed procrastination taking place at the core of the federal administration, where he watched his beloved countrymen sick and exhausted by the war be deceived by the Government which they served with their own lives. From his office he saw the men's miserable state, coming from the hospitals to collect their pay and find nothing, just waiting for interminable weeks for an income that would take them home. The poet, who worked first at the Paymaster's office (ALLEN, 1955, p.286), saw the sad faces of the soldiers when they received nothing there. Thus, he could not enjoy the view he had from the beautiful place where he worked. Many of these suffering soldiers were the same ones he had taken care of while working as a nurse in military hospitals. He felt this problem on his own skin, for he spent his own income to buy the soldiers food and writing material. He was aware of both sides of the situation, for he could observe and experience them from the point of view of the employees and employers, since he was close to soldiers and government officials. This direct knowledge of the situation is what gave him the capacity to predict the dangers lying ahead on the path of democracy. With all this information, it was not difficult to anticipate what could happen if the actions taken in the future were the same as the ones taken at that time.

It is probable that these manifold aspects of life in the nineteenth century in the United States are what prompted him to perform the incarnation of a creation myth, trying to make an "indissoluble" continent, and "magnetic lands" with the "life-long love of comrades".

⁶⁶ See annex, which brings "Origins of Attempted Secession", a document where he depicts the reasons for the war and provides personal information on his activity in politics, in which he was directly involved from 1840 to 1860, as a member of parties and as editor of various newspapers.

Especially when we consider that he had a profound feeling of union for the nation and a clear perception of the division taking place in politics since the 1840's. As we have written before, he had been able to predict the approaching conflict. As he was disappointed in politics, his creative power needed another means of expression. The best one for him was poetry, which he had been practicing along with his journalistic career. In poetry, he would be able to dream about the "inseparable cities" of this new nation, free from the old problems, cities that would be the home for "Democracy", the poet's "femme", in the case of "Calamus", and "Eve", in the case of "Children of Adam", where he would be "Adam", the big Father of all the sons of the Nation: the citizens, the comrades, all of them the children living in a new garden in a new world. Although these two books are apparently dealing with opposite themes, adhesiveness or love between the same sex, and amateness or love between the sexes, their background subject is love as the linking factor uniting all the inhabitants of the country.

It is undeniable that the great force behind all these elements is the poet's love for his country, his people, everything good or bad, and his desire, as well as his inspiration, to express this feeling towards his nation in poetry. One thing that is visible in his poetry is the fact that what he was writing in his book he was actually accomplishing in his private and public life. He did have this infinite disposition to dedicate his energy to the care for his family as well as his friends, and the thousands and thousands of soldiers he cared for. Thus, what he predicted and promised to do in "Song of Myself", in reality he did in New York and Washington: he visited prisons and hospitals⁶⁷, he denounced slavery in New York⁶⁸, and later he cared for wounded soldiers in camp hospitals. In his private life he did that also; after his father's death on July 11, 1855, just five days after the first advertisement of the 1855 Edition of *Leaves of Grass* appeared in a newspaper, he took his place in supporting his mother (until her death in 1874) and siblings, whom he watched over as his own children.

⁶⁷ "During the winter of 1861-1862 Whitman continued to visit the hospital on Broadway, which had begun to receive soldiers after Bull Run [first major battle of the American Civil War, 21 July, 1861] and steadily increased its military men as the war continued. By the spring of 1862 this hospital was taking care of several hundred sick and wounded soldiers, and Whitman was regularly spending his Sunday afternoons and evenings visiting them and trying to cheer them up. [...] Like the stage drivers, these veterans were often unsophisticated country boys, surprisingly youthful, and Whitman found them wonderfully congenial and interesting [...]" (ALLEN, 1855, p.277)

⁶⁸ In 1856, Whitman wrote an article simply entitled "The Slave Trade", in which he depicted the commerce of slaves still taking place in New York, though it had been declared illegal in 1808. About the same year, he wrote a "[...] more ambitious treatise on the political aspects of contemporary slavery and the attempts of 350,000 slaveowners in the South to inflict their selfish will on thirty million American citizens. He called this essay "The Eighteenth Presidency!", whose language was "violent and overtly emotional", but given the situation, was "pertinent" and "just", as Allen indicates in his biography of Whitman, *The Solitary Singer* (1855, pp.195-6).

What we are trying to explain is that here we have reached the core of his action through life: his coherence linking his private, public, journalistic and poetic attitudes. Everything is connected, as we will see in chapter 3, section 3.5, where we discuss about Gilberto Freyre, the Brazilian sociologist, who said that Whitman had this Spanish personality, in which all these traces are connected and we cannot separate one from the other, for all of them are essential parts of the same complete man. This is why we are trying to deal with all these various aspects of the man, the poet, the politician, the citizen at the same time, to show his comprehensive approach to humanity in North America in the nineteenth century.

Thus, apart from his visionary skills, both in his journalistic/political activities and in his poetic craft, he also had the adamic capacity for naming things, because “The world and history lay all before him. And he was the type of creator, the poet par excellence, creating language itself by naming the elements of the scene about him” (LEWIS, 1955, p.5). This passage by Emerson in “The Poet” helps to clarify the idea:

By virtue of this science the poet is the Namer, or Language-maker, naming things sometimes after their appearance, sometimes after their essence, and giving to every one its own name and not another's, thereby rejoicing the intellect, which delights in detachment or boundary. The poets made all the words, and therefore language is the archives of history, and, if we must say it, a sort of tomb of the muses. For, though the origin of most of our words is forgotten, each word was at first a stroke of genius, and obtained currency, because for the moment it symbolized the world to the first speaker and to the hearer. The etymologist finds the dearest word to have been once a brilliant picture. Language is fossil poetry.⁶⁹

It is of much interest to us that Emerson refers to the poet as the “namer”, the person who goes about naming things after their appearance or essence. It is probable that Emerson, who was a minister, was inspired in his idea of the poet as capable of naming things by the figure of Adam in the Bible, who received from the Lord his capacity for naming things and living beings, as we can see in this quotation from the book of Genesis, chapter 2:19-20:

19 And out of y ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every foule of the aire; and brought *them* unto Adam, to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof.
20 And Adam gave names to all cattell, and to the foule of the aire, and to

⁶⁹ The text of this essay by Emerson is in *The American Tradition in Literature* (BRADLEY, 1967, p.1192).

every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an helpe meete for him.

(*The Holy Bible*: King James Version, 2005)

The poems in “Children of Adam” develop poetically the theme of the adamic ability. It is not necessary to look for hints, for the poet refers to himself as Adam in various occasions, such as in verses like: “The oath of procreation I have sworn, my Adamic and fresh daughters,” from “Spontaneous Me” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.89-91), or the poem “As Adam early in the morning,” where he sings to people: “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” (2002, p.96). As Whitman calls the poet “the true son of God”, and as we know that Adam is the first son of God, and definitely a true one, and at the same time Whitman identified himself completely with Emerson’s definition of the poet, the one who goes about naming things, it is clear to us that what we see here is another expression of Whitman’s capacity to give life to ancient myths, reenacting in North America the scene of creation. The poem “I Sing the Body Electric” chants the love of the body, of man and women, without shame, and in complete sacredness. It carries two biblical references: sacredness and enumeration, for the poem contains a catalogue of the parts of the body (see more information on catalogues in chapter 3, section 3.4). The following passage, from section 8 of the poem, will help us illustrate the point:

Have you ever loved the body of a woman?
Have you ever loved the body of a man?
Do you not see that these are exactly the same to all in all nations and
times all over the earth?

If any thing is sacred the human body is sacred,
And the glory and sweet of a man is the token of manhood untainted,
And in man or woman a clean, strong, firm-fibred body, is more beautiful
than the most beautiful face.

Have you seen the fool that corrupted his own live body? or the fool that
corrupted her own live body?
For they do not conceal themselves, and cannot conceal themselves.
(WHITMAN, 2002, p.86)

Haroldo de Campos, whose translatorial method will be presented in chapter 3, reminds us of the meaning of Adam in his posthumous book *Éden, Um Tríptico Bíblico* (*Eden, A Biblical Triptych*), where he mentions Adam as the man who “gives names by divine order” (2004, p.44). Campos refers to Adam in the same sense as Emerson does. Whitman,

who recognized Emerson as his master, was probably inspired by him and the Bible in order to conceive of himself as the American Adam, so that he could create a primordial language. The subject of an American Adam has been addressed by writers, and one of them is Lewis, an American scholar and critic (1917-2002), who dealt with “articulate thinkers and conscious artists” in his book *The American Adam* (1955, p.1). The first artist he discusses in his book is Whitman. For his approach, he defined the “image” represented by the title of the book: “A century ago [1855], the image contrived to embody the most fruitful contemporary ideas was that of the authentic American as a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentiality, poised at the start of a new history” (p.1). In this sense, this American myth was not based solely on *Leaves of Grass*, it was a collective creation, a new one, a beginning, not the end of almost two thousand years of history. This meant that the co-creators of this myth saw no connection with the past and only saw the future. Then, the individual who embodied this “hero” was “standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with [...] own unique and inherent resources” (LEWIS, 1955, p.5). In this manner, a generation that had the Bible as its most common source of reading identified this new hero as “Adam before the Fall”, the “first, the archetypal man”, whose “moral position was prior to experience” and who was “fundamentally innocent” (p.5).

However meaningful this is, we must have in mind that, despite Whitman’s viewing himself as Adam, he, like any other author, could not deny the fact that between the first man created by God and the new Adam in a new land, thousands of years of History had elapsed. Therefore, he was conscious of his role as Adam, but that was not everything. His awareness was an important aspect of the work of re-creating/reviving the myth, whose essence was represented in the *Leaves* by the newness of language and vision, not by ignoring hundreds of successive generations on the earth. This is clearly expressed in his 1855 Preface, where the first thing he says is: “America does not repel the past or what it has produced under its forms or amid other politics or the idea of castes or the old religions [...]” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.5). In reality, his greatness in this act is in his ability to incorporate an ancient myth of origin, embodying the first man, without any language or history ahead of him, affiliating himself with God, and at the same time not denying the already existing peoples and histories of the whole world, uniting in a single act the freshness and newness of a soul just arrived in Paradise and now living in a human form with all the existing creatures already living there with their own histories and religions. If there was something creative in this myth reviving movement, it was his capacity to do that, for it shows that he was working for the

conservation of life, he was in favor of life, and he did not come to attack it. Another aspect of this revitalization of the past in his poetry is indicated by the use of catalogues, as pointed before, about its use in “I Sing the Body Electric”, a form of composition which he inherited from the Bible and Homer’s epics, as we will see in chapter 3, section 3.4.

Later in the Preface he declared that “The power to destroy or remould is freely used by the greatest poet, but seldom the power of attack” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.620). Thus, we know what he was trying to destroy: the illusion that we can address a new form of life with past instruments, without creating the new tools according to the reality approached. We can not describe today’s world with disregard to its changes, progress and discoveries in every field. Therefore, we need a new vision to look at our own times from a current perspective as Whitman himself put it: “What is past is past. If he [the greatest poet] does not expose superior models, and prove himself by every step he takes, he is not what is wanted” (2002, p.620-1). If he just tried to destroy the past, even if it was only a past vision or past beliefs, without presenting “superior models” in the sense that they are adequate ones, he would be considered as just another crazy, ignorant person, who would soon be forgotten by Literature and History.

However, from the evident interest Whitman aroused in other poets and critics in the western world, we might undoubtedly say that his “superior models” worked well, and that they were largely recognized and used as valid creations. For example: his centering as the leading figure in the American Canon by Harold Bloom⁷⁰, and his acknowledgement in other lands by renowned authors such as Fernando Pessoa (1983, p.65), who, through his heteronym Álvaro de Campos, regarded Whitman as his master and model, and to whom he wrote an Ode in 1915; William Michael Rossetti, who was Whitman’s English editor in the nineteenth century, on whom we provide more information in chapter 3; Jorge Luis Borges, whose translation of “Song of Myself” into Spanish was published in 1969⁷¹; and Gilberto

⁷⁰ Whitman is considered by professor and critic Harold Bloom, in *The Western Canon* (1995, pp.247-8), as “Center of the American Canon”. He argues that in literature “No Western poet, in the past century and a half, not even Browning or Leopardi or Baudelaire, overshadows Walt Whitman or Emily Dickinson. [...] Nothing in the second half of the nineteenth century or in our now almost completed century matches Whitman’s work in direct power and sublimity, except perhaps for Dickinson.”

⁷¹ Up to now, we have not been able to acquire a copy of this book. What we have is an article on this subject by Fernando Alegria, “Borges’s “Song of Myself”, included in *The Cambridge Companion to Walt Whitman*, edited by Ezra Greenspan (1995, p.208). Alegria says that Borges’s translation is indeed his [Borges’s] reading of the text, which was done in a free way, with the Argentinean author taking liberties with the text, but with a great “sense of rhythm” (1997, p.209).

Freyre, the Brazilian sociologist, who presented a conference on Whitman in 1947 in Rio de Janeiro. Further, in chapter 3, we will show the relations between Whitman, Pessoa and Freyre. Also in chapter 3, there will be a section on Longfellow, one that deals with the same subject we are discussing here, to show why Whitman's poetry was superior to Longfellow's in portraying the American scene in the 19th century, even though the latter was more popular.

When critics said that he was attacking traditional institutions, against his own statement in the Preface, Whitman wrote the poem "I Hear it Was Charged against Me", which was included, significantly, in "Calamus", which is a sign of his never retreating when confronted by "prudish critics". It was rather the other way around, as his biographer Allen tells us about an episode that had the effect of making "him [the poet] more stubborn than ever" (1955, p.350) about critics⁷²:

I HEAR it was charged against me that I sought to destroy institutions;
 But really I am neither for nor against institutions;
 (What indeed have I in common with them? Or what with the destruction of
 them?)
 Only I will establish in the Mannahatta, and in every city of These States,
 inland and seaboard,
 And in the fields and woods, and above every keel, little or large, that dents
 the water,
 Without edifices, or rules, or trustees, or any argument,
 The institution of the dear love of comrades.
 (WHITMAN, 2002, p.110)

⁷² When living in Washington, Whitman was appointed Government clerk on January 24, 1865, at the Indian Bureau of the Department of the Interior. On June 30, 1865, he received an "official notice" of dismissal. Allen tells us that the new Secretary of the Interior, Senator James Harlan, who had the support of the Methodist Church and of "an influential bishop in Philadelphia", did send a note to the press on the issue of "dispensation" of Department clerks based on "loyalty", "fidelity to duty" and "moral character", but not "economy", the reason allegedly used to dismiss Whitman. In fact, Secretary Harlan had found the copy of *Leaves of Grass* that Whitman was revising and which he left at his office desk. It came to Harlan's hand, and he did read it. The noteworthy aspect is that three poems that were marked for deletion in this copy were retained in the next edition of the *Leaves*, which is a sign of Whitman's never conforming to biased opinions or criticisms. Fortunately, this episode showed that Whitman had "several loyal and influential friends" and he was "shifted to a department in which his service and his literary talents were far more appreciated", and he could continue with his revision, writing, and visiting the hospitals. All these events appeared in the papers at the time. Some papers were against Whitman, calling him "eccentric", "immoral", "shocking", but his friends defended him too. It was at this time that he received a letter from a person who signed himself **A. Van Rensselaer**, from New York, who told him that, while "calling on President Lincoln in the company of a member of Congress, Whitman had strolled past the White House, and Lincoln had asked who he was.", and he explained to the President who Whitman was and mentioned *Leaves of Grass*, which the President had read. This person said that the President kept looking at the poet until he was "quite gone by" and said "pretty loud [...] with emphasis on the words [...] underscored": "Well, *he* looks like a *man*." Whitman always recollected this incident with joy, especially when he was writing his Lincoln elegy "When Lilacs..." and in times of sorrow. After nine years and a half of work, Whitman was dismissed on July 1, 1874 (1955, p.461), and moved to Camden, N.J., where he lived until his death in 1892 (ALLEN, 1955, pp.344-51).

As his editor annotated, the poem was not a “reaction to a specific charge”, it was effectively an act of affirmation of his vast and multifaceted work, which could not be “confined by the institutional” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.110, note 6).

The Adamic innocence referred to above was personified by Whitman, who, according to Lewis, was free from artificiality. Whitman, in “Children of Adam”, which contains his adamic songs, had the “ambition” to “assert nature untroubled by art, to re-establish the natural unfallen man in the living hour” (1955, p.43). Natural man was supposed to be naked, and nakedness is appointed by Lewis as something proper to Adam, for covering came only with the Fall. The verse “Touch me, touch the palm of your hand to my body as I pass” from the last poem in “Children of Adam”, “As Adam Early in the Morning”, demonstrates this nakedness.

However, nakedness for the poet was not something so simple as taking off the clothes, as we can see in the poem “I Sing the Body Electric”, which deals with the sacredness of the body and of the soul, for he treats both as equals, raising them back to an immaculate state previous to the Fall. The last lines of this poem show that: “O I say these are not the parts and poems of the body only, but of the soul, / O I say now these [the parts of the body] are the soul!” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.87). Thus, when he writes about nakedness, this includes nakedness of the soul, so that everyone can lose the fear of appearing in public as one is, without coverings hiding our true selves, honestly, frankly, openly. As he sings in a poem from 1856, “Poem of the Proposition of Nakedness”, later excluded from the *Leaves*, in which he expresses his wish to see all things from a different perspective including all people: “Let us all, without missing one, be exposed in public, naked, monthly, at the peril of our lives! let our bodies be freely handled and examined by whoever chooses!” (2002, p.517). This is more than simply being or seeing unclothed people; he is trying to ask people to show themselves and himself with a naked spirit. His question at the end of this poem asks exactly for that: “What real happiness have you had one single hour through your whole life?” (2002, p.518). Here the poet wants to see naked spirits without the covering shame of social masks. The masks that hide what people do to their own bodies or think of them, as he asks in “I Sing the Body Electric”: “Was it doubted that those who corrupt their own bodies conceal themselves; /And if those who defile the living are as bad as they who defile the dead?” (2002, p.81). Thus he gives the answer to the spirits who want to show themselves without artificialities: “Be not ashamed, women, your privilege encloses the rest,” (p.84); here, he is

talking about body and soul, and their free expansion and expression with no restrictions coming from old customs or dogmas, because the “the human body is sacred” (from the passage quoted above), and no one can blame it.

As we are speaking of innocence, the first man and Whitman’s “Children of Adam”, we must make another inter-textual reference here, for it is definitely not by chance that this cluster received this title: the fifth chapter of the book of Genesis is called “The book of the generations of Adam” or “The Descendants of Adam”. The biblical reference is practically literal: twelve years ago, we translated this title into Portuguese as “Descendentes de Adão” (SARAIVA, 1995, p.60), instead of “Filhos de Adão” to maintain the rhythm and phonetic construction of the English title. However, there is another reference which is also an act of creation. As Adam was formed by God: “And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, & breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soule.” (*The Holy Bible: King James Version*, 2005, Genesis, 2: 7), Whitman, in his act of co-creation (if we are to acknowledge that Creation, in its highest sense of creation of the universe, can only be an act of God), did with poetry what God did with Adam: he formed, or in his own words, “moulded” his poems of the “dust of the ground” available to him: the words of the language, which he used to describe the landscapes of America, its materials and its peoples. But a poet deals with words, his real dust, which leads us back to the idea of language as “fossil poetry,” since it was the first man/the namer/poet who created it in the beginning of time and it is preserved until today under layers of new meanings. Now, if we apply this poetic idea back to God’s Creation, we can understand the poet when he says that the real poems are the people. He is talking about God’s poems/creations. If we think of God as a poet, then, a “true son of God” must be a poet as well, as he sings in “Passage to India”, section 5: “The whole Earth, this cold, impassive, voiceless Earth, shall be completely justified; / Trinitas divine shall be gloriously accomplish’d and compacted by the true Son of God, the poet” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.349).

3 RE-CREATING *LEAVES OF GRASS* INTO PORTUGUESE

3.1 Our purpose

A method is not only a means of accomplishing an end; it is the procedures and techniques that are followed in order to achieve that end. A method is also the path after having learned it, a journey. As such, it can only be described in retrospect. In this manner, we will expound here the method we have used, or the path we have taken, to translate *Leaves of Grass*, explaining its basic features and their origins. In addition, we will give a brief account of the career of the *Leaves* in Brazil up to now with examples from the existing editions. We will also provide samples from the work we have already performed, which includes a detailed description of how we achieved this re-creative translation.

3.2 The method

Haroldo¹ de Campos, one of the most distinguished Brazilian poet translators, who, along with Augusto de Campos and Décio Pignatari, launched the Concrete Poetry Movement in Brazil in the 1950's, states, referring to information conveyed through texts, that while “documentary and semantic information” or denotative information on things and events can be conveyed in various grammatical ways when translated. Since the focus is on the meaning and not its forms, “aesthetic information” can only be transmitted in the form created by the artist². In this manner, unlike denotative subject matter, “aesthetic information is equal to its original codification,”³ which includes gesture, atmosphere, attunement (to bring into harmony with), and feelings related to lived contexts. Therefore, the “fragility of aesthetic information is [...] highest” (CAMPOS, 1992, p.33), as it depends entirely on the particular form conceived by the artist and can not be arranged in any other way without a significant

¹ We will refer to the Campos brothers by their first names, to avoid confusion.

² Our own work is an example of the difference between these two types of transmission of data. For example, the description of our method of re-creating poetry that we are giving here is a way of organizing, translating and conveying “documentary and semantic information” concerning our work and the work of poet-translators, of which we give a summary. As the focus in this part of the work is on the content that we want to expose, we do it according to the form which is most suitable to an academic assignment. For this reason, our knowledge in this field, which has been primarily acquired in our mother tongue, Portuguese, is translated and presented in English. Conversely, the application of this knowledge or the theory put into practice follows the opposite direction: the re-creation of poetry is carried out from English into Portuguese. Therefore, it is not a case of which activity is better, but of knowing that each one has its own useful application.

³ Examples of our work on the re-creation of the “original codification” from *Leaves of Grass* are given in sections 3.7 and 3.9, in addition to translations by other translators, for the purpose of comparison. Apart from these annotated examples, there is chapter 4, which contains the poems re-created in this research.

loss of beauty. As the “aesthetic information is inseparable from its realization“, it can not be disconnected from its original medium, which is, in this case, the specific language the literary work of art was written in.

The problem then appears when a translator needs to render a poetic text from one language into another. In order to be faithful to the meaning of the original, a translator must betray its original form, which is untranslatable, given the syntactical and morphological differences between languages. Thus, the more we are faithful to meaning, the less we are to form, which means that, in the case of poetry, beauty as it is produced by the form of the original will be lost in translation. This does not mean that everything will be lost, because sometimes a literal translation provides a perfect verse in the other language; but most of the time the poetic elements are not re-created. In this sense, from the point of view of literal translation, poetry is quite untranslatable, or at least its form. It occurs to us that this process is like transporting the soul of a poet to a foreign land without his body. It becomes a ghost, because we know that his spirit is there in the text, but we do not know where. So, when the reader is enjoying a great text in translation, the reader may experience the feeling that something is missing. Due to this, the translator, guided by the meaning or content of the original text, becomes a performer of tasks, for where the content points he must follow its tracks, providing means for the sense to manifest itself in another language. With regard to literal translation, this is what has to be done.

However, in this kind of work, when we take creativity into consideration, the translator’s work amounts to almost nothing. He might have an incredibly creative text on his hands, but he will be oppressed by its semantic information. In the sense that he might have something poetically beautiful, but at the same time he will have to express it in a long array of terms that will destroy the beauty as it is seen in the original language, especially when the text is in verse. Sometimes it can be metaphors that he will have to explain rather than re-create, or rhymes or rhythm. This happens even in prose. From our experience, literal translation means basically reading the original and writing down the text in the target language. Consequently, this type of translation involves little imagination and creativity. The translator does not have to create anything, for the task requires basically reading and interpreting. It is similar to translating technical texts, which involves research on specific jargon, such as Law or Medicine. Consequently, the purely literary aspect of the language does not have any effect in this part of the work. And the translator is overwhelmed by the

original, for it allows him at most to be a good reader and linguistic researcher, or a scrivener, who copies a text into another language.

On the other hand, if we want to free the translator's creative mind or imagination, we must avail him the possibility to interact with the text, which will enable him to establish a dynamic relationship with it. In this sense, he will be able to re-create the body of the original, so that when he brings the soul, it will be incarnated in its proper physical form. This physical structure, the poetic re-construction of the linguistic devices used to support the meaning, will show, virtually, where the embodiment of the poet's soul, the materialization of his inspiration into words, was effected at every given moment. Therefore, the action that was impossible to do before, in other words: creativity, can now be achieved, and the translator is granted freedom of movement in his work. Thus, the freedom to re-create the linguistic and poetic/aesthetic beauty of the form of the original text not only does warm up the translator's creative capacity, but also gives him the chance to even find out other correlations of meanings that might only appear when the translator digs deeply into the structures of the text, analyzing it bit by bit, de-constructing it and disassembling it to see its internal workings. In this operation he can learn how to create equivalent parts in the other language, which, when put together, will make the poem sound meaningful and harmonious, literally speaking, it becomes singable; this, of course, is a general statement, for there are cases when the texts intend to do the opposite in order to shock or amaze the reader. Our main idea then is to re-create the form according to its original adequacy to its meaning. Therefore, we think that the component of untranslatability of poetic texts, already mentioned, which could at first appear as an obstacle, actually indicates the solution, which is represented by poetic re-creation.

In fact, the Concrete poets also discussed the idea that the form of the original text "postulates the impossibility of translation", or the "thesis of untranslatability [...] of creative texts" (CAMPOS, 1992, p.34). What is meant by "creative texts" in this case is great poetry, or inventive poetry by already canonized poets, such as Homer, Dante, Provençal poets, Shakespeare, Donne, Blake, Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Pound and the Concrete Poets themselves in Brazil. Also, poetry by poets of the past and present that the translator's attentive eye may find, and some cases of exceptional prose, by writers (1992, p.34) such as James Joyce (*Ulysses*, *Finnegans Wake*), or some Brazilian writers such as Oswald de Andrade (*Memórias Sentimentais de João Miramar*, *Serafim Ponte Grande*; novels mentioned by Haroldo de Campos as "invention-novels" (1977, p.168), Mário de Andrade (*Macunaima*,

defined (CAMPOS, 1992, p.173) as a “pan-folkloric arch-legend”), Guimarães Rosa (*Grande Sertão Veredas*, translated into English as *The Devil To Pay in the Backlands*; Haroldo defines its language as “the movable stage for the metaphysical struggle between man and Evil” (1992, p.59), so ample are the linguistic resources provided by the author), and Paulo Leminski (*O Catatau*).⁴

This concept of creative or inventive texts was set by Ezra Pound (1885-1972) in his book *ABC of Reading* (1987, pp.39-40), in which he establishes the six “classes of persons” who create literature, the two first being (1) “Inventors” (“Men who found a new process,”) and (2) “masters” (“Men who combine a number of such processes, and who use them as well as or better than the inventors.” The others are: (3) “diluters”, the next in line and who do not “do the job quite as well.”; (4) “Good writers without salient qualities.”; (5) “Writers of belles-lettres [...] who specialized in some particular part of writing”; and (6) “The starters of crazes”. We will see, in the last section of this chapter, 3.7, examples of the “proper METHOD for studying poetry and good letters”, which for Pound is “the method of contemporary biologists, that is, careful first-hand examination of the matter, and continual COMPARISON of one ‘slide’ or specimen with another” (POUND, 1987, p.17). In this case, the method is applied to re-creation of poetry, that is, comparison of different translations of the same text.

Based on the problem posed by literal translation, which implies aesthetic loss, we agree with Haroldo when he advances the “thesis of untranslatability [...] of creative texts”. As a result, the “impossibility [...] of translation of creative texts” seems to “engender” “[...] the possibility [...] of re-creation of these texts” (CAMPOS, 1992, p.34), if we want the translator to exercise his creative mind and free his poetic imagination. In this manner, our purpose here, the re-creation of poetry, or more specifically the re-creation of some books and poems from *Leaves of Grass* into Portuguese, is actually contrary to literal translation, which is the sole translation of meaning or content in any form provided by the translator into the target language. We believe that re-creating a poetic text in a different language will re-

⁴ In the article (1992, pp.218-9) “Uma Leminskiada Barrocódélica”, Haroldo calls Leminski a “rhapsode”, to indicate that the frontiers between poetry and prose are “movable”, “rarefied”, subtle, when the prose is so poetic that it seems to be the work of a poet. Leminski is not only a creative writer and poet, but also a great translator. His creative translations include *Giacomo Joyce* (JOYCE, 1985), *Sol e aço* (MISHIMA, 1985), *Satyricon* (PETRONIO, 1985) and *Malone morre* (BECKETT, 1986). Beyond his technical skills and wide imagination, artistically speaking, Leminski has the gift of surprise; he always knows how and when to take the reader by surprise with totally unpredictable rhymes, images, thoughts and combination of words.

construct its aesthetic information in the other language. The meaning will be transmitted, and so will its “physicality, its very materiality (phonic, visual properties),” and its prosody (from Greek *prosōidiā*, or *song sung to music*; *accent*: *pros-*, *pros-* + *ōidē*, *ode / song*; or how the poem sounds, its tone, pitch of voice, its “phonic environment”). Other poetic elements will be re-recreated or re-constructed as well, such as meter: measured arrangement of words in a poem; rhythm: the pattern or flow of sound created by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables in accentual verse as we have in English, or of long and short syllables in quantitative verse (based on the duration of syllables) as in Greek or Latin poetry; or the syllabic patterns, combined with accents, in Portuguese; in a broader sense, the movement of images, thoughts and ideas in a poem characterized by a correlative flow in syntactical structure grammatically marked by a “frequent repetition at regular intervals” (ALI, 2006, p.29) of certain linguistic/poetic patterns or elements. Ali, in his classic book *Versificação Portuguesa (Portuguese Versification)*, observes that this “reiteration”, or frequent repetition, is an “essential condition” (p.29) of the concept of rhythm. There are also rhyme: correspondence of sounds in lines of verses, at initial, medium or terminal positions; alliteration: repetition of sounds, especially consonant sounds; and assonance: repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds; in short, its poetic structure. What we mean is that this type of work is quite different from literal translation, since literal translation transposes the meanings, the significance, the content of a text from one language into another. As we have said above, we will bring some examples of re-created texts and discuss more closely the technical details of our work at the end of this chapter.

When we re-create “creative texts”, also referred to by Haroldo as texts which are “full of difficulties”, in the sense that they are actually “seductive” (CAMPOS, 1992, p.35) to the translator for being polysemantic/polysemous, that is, full of poetic possibilities, there are still other aspects that play important roles in our task, such as the particular “poetic diction” of each poet/writer, their tones, their individual prosody and rhythm, and also of each passage. Re-creating a poetic text (poetry or poetic prose) involves a complex set of actions:

It is as though we disassembled and re-assembled the creating machine, that apparently intangible utterly frail beauty that offers us the finished product in a foreign language. And, which, however, reveals itself susceptible of an implacable vivisection that revolves its guts, to bring it again into light in a diverse linguistic body. This is why translation is criticism. (CAMPOS, 2004, p.42)

It is a way of apprehending the spirit of the artist materialized in his verses in order to discover the many possibilities of significance, as though we were speaking with his soul to decode all the messages inserted in the text. After that, when we are in possession of that meaning, we study the linguistic and poetic structures used to convey that meaning in the original language. Finally, we search in our own language the various possible ways to re-structure that meaning in our vernacular, but keeping in mind that our re-created poem is an “isomorphic re-project of the original poem” (CAMPOS, 1981, p.181). By the way, “Isomorphism”⁵ is a very dear term to Haroldo. Although the term comes from the field of biology (Pound is mentioned above for his use of a biologist’s studying procedure), it is very useful in describing this process of re-recreation of poetic texts, for it gives an exact image, a mirror image, of the end-product. As we know that nature and life are a constant process of transformation, meaning that there is no end-product, rather a “work in progress”, which leads us to the idea that there is no end-product in poetry either, we must say that this expression is used here to refer to poetry as being an updated medium of conveying sense from one human being to another in an era of industrialization. So poetry is not apart from the progress of humanity, and similarly to the products of technology, it must be regularly modernized and updated. Thus, if conceived as a fine product of a man’s intellect made according to his time, it is necessary to re-create its aura, atmosphere, the strong gesture that is implicit in or beyond his words, the same way as we see the beauty and strength of nature, but we do not see what is beyond it, although we know that it is there, the invisible background that generates everything that exists, like the poet’s soul behind his verses. In section 3.4, we will discuss progress in Brazil in more depth and provide more information on author Oswald de Andrade.

In addition, in an article entitled “Comunicação na Poesia de Vanguarda” (“Communication in Vanguard Poetry”), Haroldo gives more information on this idea, and indicates that he borrowed the expression “creative transposition” (1977, p.143) from Jakobson⁶ to define his own work of re-creating poetry as an act of “re-creation” or “trans-creation”, which is more precise in describing the movement of re-creation, as opposed to

⁵ Isomorphism is similarity in form, shape or structure, but in organisms of different ancestry. As we are discussing poetic phenomena, it is interesting to notice that this term is used in Mathematics to define a one-to-one correspondence between the elements of two sets such that the result of an operation on elements of one set corresponds to the result of the analogous operation on their images in the other set. And it is also used to describe a close similarity in the crystalline structure of two or more substances of similar chemical composition. In terms of poetry, the poem in one language becomes the mirror image of the original. It has everything to do with the idea of re-creation, since Haroldo also calls this process “crystallography” (the scientific study of crystals) (CAMPOS, 1981, p.181).

⁶ In Portuguese, the writings by Roman Jakobson appeared in a collection of articles: *Linguística e Comunicação*. São Paulo: Cultrix, 1969.

mere “transcription” of texts (“Trans” is a Latin prefix / noun, meaning “across”, “beyond”, “on the opposite side”; e.g.: transportation, transmission; the corresponding prefixes in Greek are “dia”, “between”: dialogue, diaphanous = transparent, and “meta”, change, as in metamorphosis = transformation, change of form).

Actually, this idea of “trans-creation” of inventive texts is based on a larger concept of the work of the poet translator as “trans-creator” of texts. It comes from the research and practice of the Concrete poets on language and on linguistic criticism, as they did not separate the work of the poet from that of the translator or critic. In the same article, Haroldo describes his “Scheme of verbal communication”, in which he gives us the “Factors and functions of language” (1977, pp.136-143). Briefly explained, the “scheme of communication” is as follows: a sender/emitter sends a message to a receiver/recipient; every message has its sender and receiver/recipient; the message refers to “an object or situation”; naturally, for the message to be sent and understood by the receiver, there must be a “common code” between them and also a contact, a means of connecting them; then, we have in this context the six “factors” operating in the transmission of a message. Each of them originates a “linguistic function”. These functions can appear in various combinations depending on the situation. What really matters to us here are the six functions mentioned: 1. the “emotive” or “expressive” function, because it expresses the emotions and reactions and attitudes of the sender. The sender is also characterized as a “codifier” of messages, since he uses a common code to emit his feelings/thoughts; 2. when the communication activity is “centered upon the recipient”, it is a “conative” function, which means that it expresses desire, volition, impulse towards the second person of speech, the “you”. It is also a kind of “magic or enchanting” function, as it exerts power over the other person; 3. the next function is a “cognitive” one, centered upon a context, a reference point. The message “denotes” (to denote is to mean something literally) concrete things or “conveys knowledge” about a “specific object”; 4. the “phatic function”, which means the expressions used to establish or interrupt communication rather than express ideas; in this function, expressions such as “Hello”, “How are you”, “Alright”, “Okay” are used; 5. the “metalinguistic function”, where the important factor is the “code”, which “is the system that establishes a repertoire of signs [linguistic units linking the signifier, a group of letters, to its signified, the meaning attributed to the signifier] and its rules of combination”. The important fact here is that in this function the message is directed upon another message, like the entries in a dictionary. Also, if combined with the cognitive function, for example, this can be expressed through “literary criticism”, for in this kind of

work the critic is analyzing a work of art in written form. Finally, function 6, which is the “poetic function”, where the message “turns to itself”, to its “sensitive aspect, to its configuration”. Then, in poetry and in creative/inventive prose, this function has a dominant position. When this function is combined with the metalinguistic function, they appear in contexts where the poet or writer is criticizing their own act of writing in creative texts. The theater within the theater in *Hamlet* (SHAKESPEARE, 1992, p.671; “The Mousetrap”, Act 3, scene II) is an excellent example of this. In that scene, Hamlet, as if he were Shakespeare himself, is discussing acting within the acting of the play, while the focus of the work of the dramatist is on “configuring” the “sensitive” aspect of language. The first line of the scene already shows the rhythm and alliterations of the poetic construct / conception (conception as the ability to form concepts or as creation, both apply in this context): “**Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue [...]**”. The bold type highlights the poetic function, to show how the work on language makes it different from its common use in the cognitive function, although sometimes it can naturally occur in normal daily conversation.

3.3 Augusto de Campos, Pignatari, Pound: more lessons in poetic re-creation

To continue our discussion on the poetic aspects of language, we shall now present some of the knowledge in this field that we have acquired from Augusto de Campos (recalling a lesson from Emerson), Décio Pignatari, and Ezra Pound and how they relate to Whitman. Emerson, like Whitman, being a poet, philosopher and critic, practiced the metalinguistic and poetic function of language to a high degree. He received tribute from the concrete poets for his masterful articulation on both levels of language, especially the metalinguistic. Whitman himself and the poets in Brazil echoed his idea of every day language as “fossil poetry.” For instance, Augusto de Campos⁷ (1986, p.101) reminds us of this by quoting Emerson, when he finds solutions for a re-creation of an Omar Khayyám’s “rubai”⁸ from English to Portuguese. Augusto de Campos used Edward Fitzgerald’s English translation of the *Rubaiyat* as his source. So, while digging up the language to find new meanings for old words, or hidden meanings in these words, like a philologist excavating “linguistic mines” in search of “fossil

⁷ Augusto de Campos is Haroldo’s brother. He is also a poet, critic and re-creator of poetry and inventive prose. He has re-created the works of authors such as Dante, Donne, E. Dickinson, Lewis Carrol, Gertrude Stein, etc, into Portuguese. More detailed information (Portuguese/English) on this author and his works readily available at: <<http://www2.uol.com.br/augustodecampos/home.htm>>. Accessed on April 20, 2007.

⁸ A “rubai” is a “quatrain”, a stanza that consists of four lines. In section 3.7, we will compare our re-creation of a couple of quatrains to Augusto’s.

poetry”, he remembered Emerson’s comment on language, which is why he mentions the American poet in his book. In another section of his book *O Anticrítico* (*The Anticritic*, 1986, p.41), he presents one of his philological findings, the anagram SCIENS / NESICIS: “knowing” / “not knowing”, which indicates that one word is in the other. This pair of words was repeatedly used in the “Mandate Sermon”, inserted in Latin sentences, by Father Antonio Vieira (1608-1697), a Portuguese / Brazilian Jesuit, writer and pulpit-orator. This fact had never been noticed by anybody before.

In fact, in his anti-critical book, Augusto mentioned the anagram to mean that many times critics only see the signified (the meaning), but they are not capable of perceiving the signifier, because they are “blind” to the form of the content, being thus oblivious to the fact that poetry is made of words, and that words have a history and have connections beyond what the automatic hurried eye can realize. It means that words are more meaningful when there is a deep link between signified and signifier, content and form, one supporting the other. As poetry is made of words, a poet basically deals with words to express feelings, emotions and thoughts with a profound awareness of what he feels and thinks, which he expresses in writing. Nonetheless, a poet can never forget that his medium is the collection of words called the linguistic code. At this point, we must also mention that this concept of “poetry made of words, not ideas” (CAMPOS, 1977, p.141), which is so dear to the Concrete poets, was borrowed from the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé, the author of *Un Coup de Dés*, which was translated into Portuguese, along with a collection of other poems, by them. The book, simply entitled *Mallarmé*, also presents critical reviews and detailed information on their process of poetical re-creations of Mallarmé’s poems by the Concrete trinity⁹: the Campos brothers and Décio Pignatari (1980). Pignatari was responsible for the *re-design* of “L’après-midi d’un faune” (“A Faun’s summer afternoon”) in our tongue. In fact, *language designer* was exactly the term used by Pignatari (CAMPOS, 1977, p.142) to characterize the poet, comparing him to an “industrial designer” trying to find the best configuration for a projected object, which is similar to the poetic function of the language, where it “turns” to itself, focusing on the “sensitive structure of its message.”, or the object to be produced.

⁹ In the “Introductory note” to the second edition, Haroldo points to the fact that they had been working together for 20 years, and that it was this teamwork that had made it possible for them to face this challenge together. Working in teams was another characteristic of the group.

In order to produce a beautiful object, Augusto de Campos has given the following lesson on the poetic function of the language: when translating, we must do *version*, not *inversion*¹⁰ (1986, p.17), which is the act of grasping the essence of the original text in order to re-create it in an adequate and direct way without turns and twists of the mind. That is, the re-created text needs to be simple or complex according to its original arrangements of elements, especially when it comes to grammar. We must not change the original array. We must not make it more difficult or easier to please one or another type of reader. In particular, this idea applies to the Portuguese language, due to the fact that in our language we can invert the position of the subject and the verb (the main verb), which makes it very easy to produce terminal rhymes when translating poetry. The problem is that this is a source of mental laziness for literary laborers, because they do not use their capabilities to the full (In Portuguese, verbs are arranged in three inflectional groups, or “conjugations”; when we look at the infinitive forms it becomes clear to us how easy it is to rhyme verbs of the same group at the end of a line: the first group ends in **-ar**: *amar, falar, cantar* / to love, to speak, to sing; the second group ends in **-er**: *correr, tremor, ferver* / to run, to tremble, to boil; and the third group ends in **-ir**: *sentir, partir, dormir* / to feel, to leave, to sleep. If there is any difficulty, we only need to insert an infinitive form in the verse, put it at the end of the line, and look for verbs within the same group, rhyming verbs with verbs.). So he advises people who are interested in this activity to remember that they must resist the temptation to resort to this old-fashioned procedure. The “prevalent criterion” is “directness of language”, although sometimes it is necessary to make some grammatical “dislocations” which are present even in the original texts. However, we should not make that a rule. The norm should be the other way around, despite the sometimes tiring effort a translator must make to find satisfactory poetic solutions. When re-creating Dante’s Canto V from “Inferno”, he found out that other translators had made many unnecessary inversions, destroying the beauty of Dante’s aesthetic “cathedral” and straight sentence structure: “e caddi come corpo morto cade”, in Augusto de Campos’ poetic transposition, naturally became “e caí como corpo morto caí” (CAMPOS, 1986, p.35). Longfellow’s version of this verse reads: “And fell, even as a dead body falls”¹¹.

¹⁰ Actually, the idea in Portuguese is “verter, não inverter”, but it is impossible to put this in English as verbs. So we used the pair of nouns: version / inversion. Pound (1968, pp.11-12) said the same about Yeats: “Mr. Yeats has once and for all stripped English poetry of its perdamnable rhetoric. He has boiled away all that is not poetic—and a good deal that is. He has become a classic in his own lifetime and *nel mezzo del cammin*. He has made our poetic idiom a thing pliable, a speech without inversions.”

¹¹ This translation was by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), an American poet. The *Divine Comedy* is available nowadays on the internet on many websites. The following web page is a very good one, because it provides translations of this work into many languages: <http://www.divinecomedy.org/divine_comedy.html>. Accessed on April 20, 2007.

Our suggestion is: “And I fell the way a dead body falls”, which has more tension to it than Longfellow’s, which is more rhetoric than rhythmic. This type of problem made Augusto re-create Canto V from the last verse to the first, to make sure that he would maintain Dante’s straightness of language. In reality, his attitude of criticizing other translators and even other critics by means of offering his own work as an alternative is what we consider to be his greatest lesson to us. One of the ways of doing that is by comparison, by allowing the reader to have access to various versions of the same text and assess freely the quality of these translations by using Pound’s suggested “ideogrammic method” (1987, p.96), as exemplified by our own work in sections 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9.

Due to the intricate mode of original configuration and “isomorphic” reconfiguration of texts, a translator can not be indifferent to what he chooses. Our subject of study will show our vision of the literary tradition. Our choice is revealing, both as an intellectual exercise and as an act of criticism. This means that our translatorial work is not separated from our view of poetry. Our capacity to do our job indicates which type of author we choose. This is a qualitative criterion and the translator-poet, to choose a first-rate author to work on, must be technically prepared and in tune with the best poetry of his time to carry on his task. This is what separates the textual operation defined here as re-creation, which involves “hard labor, devotion, erudition and patience” (CAMPOS, 1981, p.185), from literal translation.

In fact, when asked in an interview about the ample spectrum of the “translation school” created by the Concrete poets, which comprised creation, re-creation, and education¹², Haroldo de Campos said that “trans-creation of poetry from various latitudes and times” was their “preferential transcultural device”, but this activity was accompanied by a critical project to support it, and also criticism and theorizing. However, he emphasized that a “translator of poetry must master the poetic forms of his language”, besides learning other languages, naturally. The study of the “historical contexts” of the texts translated and the “critical discussions” then aroused should not be forgotten, although the translator should not try to reproduce the past in an untouched way, since it is impossible to envisage the past now without the synchronic lens of the present (CAMPOS, 1992, p.266).

¹² This was the pedagogical aspect of the movement, based on the idea that the problem of comprehension of modern poetry would be solved by education, which must update its techniques to make it easier for the student / reader to understand the growing complexities of current literature; in this case, new mass media technologies could help too (CAMPOS, 1977, p.153).

As for translation as a type of criticism, which was advocated and practiced by the Concrete poets, it was inherited from Ezra Pound (1968, p.74-5), who was a poet and critic and exercised his criticism on poetry by translating the best poetry into his own language. He put into practice his theory of organizing knowledge so that his contemporaries or the next generation could rapidly find its living parts and not waste time with unnecessary matters. This is what moved Ezra Pound, “the greatest example of translator” of the twentieth century. The author of *The Cantos* ventured into the field of translation, searching for the best and living part of the literary tradition, in many different languages, this way subjecting his linguistic abilities to them, since he had to learn these languages in order to translate the poems. Therefore, he was putting his capabilities to the test of various “poetic dictions”, while collecting “material for his own poems”, in order to develop a theory of translation and to claim it as an “aesthetic category [...] as creation” (CAMPOS, 2004, p.35). This is what made him translate, for example: “Chinese poems (POUND, 2003, pp. 249-60), Japanese Noh Plays [the classical drama of Japan] [...] (2003, pp.331-477); Provençal troubadours [such as Bernart de Ventadorn (2003, p.1127) and Arnaut Daniel (2003, pp.481-503)]; Guido Cavalcanti, the father of Tuscan poetry (2003, pp.197-227; pp.575-85); French symbolists [such as Laforgue (CAMPOS, 2004, p.36) and Rimbaud (POUND, 2003, pp.1134-7)]; [and] re-write [Sextus] Propertius (CAMPOS, 2004, p.36) [...] and [...] Sophocles” (POUND, 2003, pp.1066-1113), based on what he termed “criticism by translation” (POUND, 1968, p.74).

His task as poet and translator, which is at the same time a “critical and pedagogical” work, brings to the public, be it lovers of poetry or poets, a wide range of “basic poetic products, reconsidered and vivified”. His motto was: “Make it New”, which meant to “give new life to the valid literary past via translation”. He seems to be echoing Whitman’s own words from the 1855 Preface to the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*: “Past and present and future are not disjoin’d but join’d. The greatest poet forms the consistence of what is to be, from what has been and is. He drags the dead out of their coffins and stands them again on their feet” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.623). Although Pound was referring to poetic translation and Whitman to poetic creation, in a broader context both were working on the craft of poetry, for Pound was a poet as well, and was working for the benefit of poetry everywhere.

We must then be aware that Pound, in his undertakings, united his skills as poet, translator, critic and professor in a single act, using his capabilities to organize the literary

knowledge of his time and of previous and ancient times in a way that his contemporaries and future generations could find most rapidly its living parts¹³. It was part of his method of viewing literature and culture at large as a “living organism”, where “translation is also a *persona* through which tradition speaks. In this sense, like parody, it is too a ‘parallel song’, a dialogue not only with the voice of the original [poem], but also with other textual voices” (CAMPOS, 1981, p.191). To show how Pound was interested in other fields of knowledge, it is worth mentioning that he borrowed the term “Paideuma” from Leo Frobenius, the famous German ethnologist and archaeologist¹⁴, to define his work of organizing knowledge so that the current and future generations would not waste time with what is not the product of a fruitful creativity. Re-recreating foreign literature in English was a practical consequence of vivifying literary culture, arousing interest in a literary piece in different languages, injecting life in cultures, language, authors and texts long ignored or forgotten in the western world by mainstream criticism or authors (some of Pound’s works in this respect have been cited above). Pound was so keen on his re-creations that he sometimes even became a “traduttore/traditore” (translator/traitor) of poetry, to use the famous *pun*, a play on words that describes the “betrayal” of the original poetic form or significance in the translation of a poem.

Actually, this play on words is a figure of speech, *paronomasia*, which consists of using similar words or phrases with different meanings for rhetorical or poetical effect, whether humorous or serious (ex.: *aero* = of aircraft / *arrow* = pointed shaft; *affect* = to change / *effect* = result; *ail* = sick / *ale* = beer). It also designates the similarity between words from different languages that come from a common origin (cognates in different languages: *night* (English), *nuit* (French), *Nacht* (German, Dutch), *noite* (Portuguese) all meaning "night" and derived from the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) *nokt-*, "night."; *star* (English), *astre* or *étoile*

¹³ Complete quotation on the second function of criticism (the first one is to “forerun composition”, which has no “use to actual composers”): “[...] The general ordering and weeding out of what has actually been performed. The elimination of repetitions. [...] The ordering of knowledge so that the next man (or generation) can most readily find the live part of it, and waste the least possible time among obsolete issues” (POUND, 1968, p.75).

¹⁴ In 1920, Frobenius founded the *Institute for Cultural Morphology* in Munich. In 1932, he became honorary professor at the University of Frankfurt, and in 1935, director of the municipal ethnographic museum. In 1897/1898 Frobenius defined several "culture areas", cultures showing similar traits that have been spread by diffusion or invasion. With his term *paideuma*, Frobenius wanted to describe a *Gestalt* (A collection of physical, biological, psychological or symbolic entities that creates a unified concept, configuration or pattern which is greater than the sum of its parts.), a manner of creating meaning that was typical of certain economic structures. This was the concept of culture as a living organism. Ezra Pound corresponded with Frobenius in the 1920s, initially on economic topics. The story made its way into Pound's *Cantos* through this connection. (Information available at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Frobenius>; accessed on: April 17, 2007.) (For more information on Frobenius and his work, see: <http://www.frobenius-institut.de/index_en.htm>)

(French), *stella* (Latin, Italian), *estrela* (Portuguese), from the PIE *h₂st_{ér}-*, "star"). Another example is Whitman's dear term, *comrade/camorado*, which he used in poems such as "For You O Democracy" and "The Base of All Metaphysics" from "Calamus", to define the loving base for his dream of an "indissoluble" continent:

A comrade can be socially or politically close, a closeness that is found at the etymological heart of the word *comrade*. In Spanish the Latin word *camara* (Late Latin: *camera*), with its Late Latin meaning "chamber, room," was retained, and the derivative *camarada*, with the sense "roommates, especially barrack mates," was formed. *Camarada* then came to have the general sense "companion." English borrowed the word from Spanish and French (*camarade* = roommate), English *comrade* being first recorded in the 16th century (Greek: *kamarā*).
(Available at <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/comrade>>; accessed on April 17, 2007.)

The political use of the word around the world, up to current times, indicates the precision of his choice, which enriched his poetry, semantically speaking. But *paronomasia* is really used in poetry to refer, in its broadest sense, to a "correlation of sound and meaning" in passages where such similarities suggest new connections and create surprising effects in the poems. So, even when Pound was betraying the original in its literal meaning, especially if he did not do it consciously, but by "gross mistake", even then he was so faithful to the tone of the original that he was capable of re-creating the pieces in a strong and lively way. It is an appropriation of the existing cultural or literary heritage.

Thus, a translator, who might also be a "poet or writer", according to Haroldo de Campos, should "configure" an "active tradition", which will then lead him to a "living criticism" (1992, p.43). That is, the translator's choice is closely connected to his intellectual capabilities, for a "stimulating pedagogy" will be a natural consequence of a good choice. The point here is that the functions of writing, translating, criticizing, teaching, and organizing literary knowledge are not separated. All these activities together are part of a poet translator critic's job of trying to participate actively in the life of the literature of his country and time, creating this bridge between the past and the present. It is a textual dialogue between authors of different times and also of different places.

Whitman, the poet who did not "repel the past" and made the past a living force, also agrees with Pound when he writes that the "greatest poet forms the consistence of what is to be from what has been and is", which is linked to Pound's idea inherited by the Concrete

Poets that we must look for the best poetry in each age. A solid construction must be built upon a solid base, otherwise it will fall down. This is why a translator's choice of an author, according to his idea of an "active tradition", is a clear sign of his position as translator and critic of that tradition.

3.4 Parallelism, enumeration, catalogues; meter

Gay Wilson Allen, who wrote the introduction to the Signet Classic edition and is the author of *The Solitary Singer* (1955), one of the best biographies of Whitman, an infinite source of factual and critical information on the life and career of the American poet, year by year, adds that "Whitman anticipated some of the most vital poetic techniques [...] of the twentieth century" (WHITMAN, 2000, p.xxi) and has "genuine esthetic achievements" (2000, p.xix), such as his "panoramic, unending" (p. xx) flow of images, the "montage" technique that is so typical of modern poetry, based on his "basic prosodic form", and the parallelism of structure, for which the Bible, or "ancient Hebraic verse" (p.xix), which represents in verse his social equalitarianism, is one of the sources. The best thing to do in such cases is to bring the very word of the poet about the matter under discussion, so that we can easily notice the influence of the Bible on his writing. This excerpt from "The Bible As Poetry", from *November Boughs*, will do:

Compared with the famed epics of Greece, and lesser ones since, the spinal supports of the Bible are simple and meagre. All its history, biography, narratives, etc., are as beads, strung on and indicating the eternal thread of the Deific purpose and power. Yet with only deepest faith for impetus, and such Deific purpose for palpable or impalpable theme, it often transcends the masterpieces of Hellas, and all masterpieces. The metaphors daring beyond account, the lawless soul, extravagant by our standards, the glow of love and friendship, the fervent kiss—nothing in argument or logic, but unsurpass'd in proverbs, in religious ecstasy, in suggestions of common mortality and death, man's great equalizers—the spirit everything, the ceremonies and forms of the churches nothing, faith limitless, its immense sensuousness immensely spiritual—an incredible, all-inclusive non-worldliness and dew-scented illiteracy (the antipodes of our Nineteenth Century business absorption and morbid refinement) [...] (WHITMAN, 1996, p.1164).

The montage technique¹⁵ is a juxtaposition of pictures, like a succession of shots in a movie, "as beads, strung on and indicating the eternal thread of the Deific purpose and

¹⁵ Oswald de Andrade, one of the most important modern writers in Brazil, and a leading figure in the 1922 Week of Modern Art, a turning point in Brazilian art and literature, was mentioned above for his two most

power”, which was applied in modern poetry by deleting the linking words and arranging the verses in chains of independent utterances. Allen goes on to point out that this use of parallelism, which is employed also for another purpose, enumeration, comes from the fact that Whitman had a “vicarious [empathic] desire to embrace the physical world” (WHITMAN, 2000, p. xx), incorporating in his poetry the then recent awareness of Americans of their own country, in a time when “everyone was trying to grasp the significance of the continental expanse of the new nation” (p. xx). So, this gigantic “space-consciousness” (p. xx), which could not be conveyed within the fixed forms of traditional poetry, appears in long poems made up of **free verses**, such as those at the beginning of “Out of the Cradle”, along one single sentence of twenty two lines, the poetic equivalent of his “empathy for space and movement” (p. xx) in syntactical structure.

In order to explore this subject more deeply, we will discuss now the use of parallelism of structure for the purpose of enumeration, which was Whitman’s attempt to include the whole of North America in his poems. This led him to the creation of the catalogues in the *Leaves*. Next, we will provide an example of Whitman’s flow of images and a description of meter, or versification, in English and Portuguese, so that we can have an idea of our work of poetic re-creation. As for the catalogues, they are another example of Whitman’s capacity for appropriating ancient symbols or poetic structures to validate his poetry by re-working the past to renew the present, mingling into a single expression the old and the new, and giving them an appropriate place and meaning in his poetic creations. This conscious inclusion of ancient forms of verse shows us that Whitman, although conceiving of himself as a new Adam born in a New Garden, the New World, was no “fool [...] pretending that no poet or man of any kind ever existed before he was born upon the earth” (BLOOM, 1985, p.88). Considering this, there are two reasons for the use of parallelism in his poetry: its use in general as a poetic element which was carefully worked on; and parallelism for the purpose of enumeration, which takes us to the element just mentioned, the catalogues.

The first feature, also called parallel structure, makes speaking and writing easier to understand. Thus, “all items in a series” must be put “in the same grammatical form” (MAURER, 2000, p.252). This means that all verbs in a sentence must be in the same tense

famous novels. He was also an experimental poet, and wrote many books of inventive poetry, in which he excelled in the use of this technique. We will present more information on de Andrade in the next section.

(e.g.: Last week she painted the bedroom, bought furniture and sold the car.), so that the same structure is repeated, and the same applies to any tenses or even nouns (e.g.: He bought a book, a CD, and a shirt.). This use of identical or similar syntactic constructions in clauses or phrases in the *Leaves* is not a pure transposition of rules of grammar into poetry. Actually, Whitman, when working on the poetic function of language, “uses parallelism not as a device of repetition but as an occasion for development” (WRIGHT, 1985, p.96). For his intention is to make the reader aware that he is not a grammarian working to perpetuate the rules of grammar, but a poet who knows what he is doing with the language, so he “lets his images grow, one out of another”. The poems then “show the free growth of metrical laws” and their uniformity and perfect form will “bud from them [the metrical laws] as unerringly and loosely as lilacs and roses on a bush” (1985, p. 91), freely but naturally, with forms and shapes in harmony with their significance, being the flowers and fruits a perfect produce of their tree. This way the poet depicts the modern world possessed of means that are appropriate to it. We will soon provide an example of this process, when we quote the poem “Salut au Monde!”

Now we shall concentrate on the other feature of *Leaves of Grass*: the catalogues. There are two basic sources for the catalogues in *Leaves of Grass*: the Bible and Homer’s epics. They are present in books like Genesis, with the long genealogical descriptions of the ancient families, or the “Song of Solomon” (“Song of Songs”), where all the parts of the body of the bride are mentioned and compared to things (the poem “I Sing the Body Electric” is a catalogue of body parts). These books provided the source, the original idea for the catalogues, which Whitman adapted and recreated according to his own poetical purpose, to include the scenes and peoples from America in particular and from the world at large into his poetry. Whitman himself provides us with information on this subject, in his essay “The Bible As Poetry”, from *November Boughs*. In this essay, he gives an account of how he, the poet, his country, America, and humanity in general have a common root that links us to the past, especially a religious past, for there is a long line of ancestry dating back to ancient times:

Of its thousands, there is not a verse, not a word, but is thick-studded with human emotions, successions of fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, of our own antecedents, inseparable from that background of us, on which, phantasmal as it is, all that we are to-day inevitably depends—our ancestry, our past. (WHITMAN, 1996, p.1166)

And this ancestry is so important to our existence, so fundamental, that in his view not even America could exist today without it. Thus, the long catalogues, which have in times been

criticized, are one of the cornerstones of the *Leaves*, as an honor to the value of the “Bible as a poetic entity”:

Strange, but true, that the principal factor in cohering the nations, eras and paradoxes of the globe, by giving them a common platform of two or three great ideas, a commonalty of origin, and projecting cosmic brotherhood, the dream of all hope, all time—that the long trains, gestations, attempts and failures, resulting in the New World, and in modern solidarity and politics—are to be identified and resolv’d back into a collection of old poetic lore, which, more than any one thing else, has been the axis of civilization and history through thousands of years—and except for which this America of ours, with its polity and essentials, could not now be existing. (WHITMAN, 1996, p.1166)

As our very existence is based on the acceptance of these “fountain heads of song” (1996, p.1167), he confirms his position by saying that “No true bard will ever contravene the Bible” (1996, p.1166). Here we have, revealed in his own words, how Whitman fused the “true bard” with the “true son of God”, the poet. For him, the role of a bard and that of a son of God are not separated, since they are one single entity working to spread the Word of the Lord on earth. The catalogues are one of the ways he found to create this type of ordering of the world in America, and then to formulate it into his songs, establishing the new era on a very solid and fundamental basis. Emerson, upon reading the gift copy of the 1855 *Leaves of Grass* sent to him by the poet, quickly realized that “the solid sense of the book” was “a sober certainty”. Although he “rubbed” his “eyes a little, to see if this sunbeam were no illusion”, he acknowledged that the book had “the best merits, namely, of fortifying and encouraging” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.637). These words from the Sage of Concord to Whitman, greeting him “at the beginning of a great career”, are part of the famous letter the former wrote the latter on 21 July, 1855. As Emerson was himself a minister¹⁶, we might draw the conclusion that he saw nothing offensive to religion in Whitman’s book, including the use of catalogues. On the contrary, he was so delighted and reassured by the *Leaves* that he decided to visit New York to pay his respects to his “benefactor”. Since Whitman had admitted that Emerson was one of the greatest influences on him (ALLEN, 1955, p.242), certainly Emerson was very happy to recognize his teachings embodied in such a book. From this point of view, Emerson was necessarily the best judge for the *Leaves*. In fact, he and Thoreau were the only ones of such high stature to give a warm welcome to it.

¹⁶ Emerson acquired a license to preach in 1826 after taking a course at Cambridge; although successful, he gave up his ministration in 1832, for not being at ease to celebrate Communion.

The other source for the catalogues, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, contains some of them. The most famous one is the "Catalogue of the Ships", a passage in Book 2 of the *Iliad* (2.494-759), which lists the contingents of the Achaean army that were on their way to attack Troy. The catalogue lists the names of the leaders, where each of them came from, sometimes giving an epithet (a descriptive phrase and a noun) to describe parentage and place, and also the number of ships used to transport the men to Troy. After that, there is a "Catalogue of the Trojans" and their allies (2.816-877). The "Argument" of Book II, on "The Trial of the Army, and The Catalogue of the Forces", explains that this section of the epic "[...] gives occasion to the poet to enumerate all the forces of the Greeks and Trojans [...]"¹⁷. Here we have the principal linguistic aspect of the catalogues: enumeration, which leads to grammatical parallelism. Book XVIII of the *Iliad* provides the "Catalogue of the Nereids", a shorter version of the same catalogue that appears in Hesiod's *Theogony* (the poem that describes the origins and genealogies of the gods of ancient Greece). In Book XI of the *Odyssey*, there are two catalogues that are presented during the **nekuia**, Odysseus' visit to the dead, or trip to the underworld: "The Catalogue of the Ladies", when, after speaking to Tiresias, he speaks to a dozen women, who are related by blood to heroes or are favorites of gods; and "The Catalogue of the Condemned"¹⁸, which lists the heroes that died in the Trojan War, and to whom he speaks.

The second topic mentioned above, the flow of images, blossoming and multiplying down the pages of the book, brings together the catalogues and the "free growth of metrical laws". The first section of "Salut au Monde!" shows this growth of images, as an effect of what could be at first supposed to be just a plain use of mere repetitions:

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?
Who are the infants, some playing, some slumbering?

¹⁷ This information is provided by Alexander Pope, in his translation of Homer's *Iliad*, in the "Argument" of Book II. Available at: <<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/h/homer/h8ip/book2.html>>. Accessed on 19 December 2007.

¹⁸ In the translation of Odorico Mendes, into Portuguese, "The Catalogue of the Nereids" appears on page 408 of the *Iliad* (HOMERO, 2005); the other catalogues appear in lines 169-495 of Book XI of the *Odyssey* (HOMERO, 1992).

Who are the girls? who are the married women?
 Who are the groups of old men going slowly with their arms about each
 other's necks?
 What rivers are these? what forests and fruits are these?
 What are the mountains call'd that rise so high in the mists?
 What myriads of dwellings are they fill'd with dwellers?
 (WHITMAN, 1996, p.287)

When we look closely at the poem, we perceive that each verse has its own form, its own music, its own modulation that is the result of the poet's inspiration, feelings, and thoughts conveyed in words in a poetic way. The alliterations, with capital letters to highlight the elements mentioned: "Such SightS and SoundS", which makes us feel as if the "gLiDING WONDerS" were blowing in the wind; the combination of alliteration and assonance in "WhAt WIdens WItthin You WAlT WhItman", with the chain of W's plus the vowel sounds echoing forever as if to mark the spatial expansion inside the poet's body and soul. Also, the use of traditional forms, in this case, a combination of a spondee (two stressed syllables) with two anapests (two unstressed syllables followed by a long one); in the following line we have the same combination: this time, two spondees followed by two anapests: "What CLImes? WHAt PERsons and CIties are HEre?". "What rivers are these?" (spondee and anapest); "What forests and fruits are these?" (a spondee, an anapest and an iamb). The iamb, the metrical foot of two syllables, one unstressed and one stressed, is the basis of the traditional iambic pentameter, the verse that comprises five iambs and is at the core of English poetry; some lines from the famous sonnet 18 by Shakespeare (1992, p.753) will do as an example: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? / Thou art more lovely and more temperate. / Rough winds do shake the darling buds of may, / And summer's lease has all too short a date", which is in the first lines: "O take my hand Walt Whitman"; "Such gliding wonders!". Then a caesura, a pause or break near the middle of the line, and after that, another couple of iambs: "such sights and sounds".

This example of verses takes us now to the third topic mentioned, which is meter, or versification. We know that we could supply more examples of the traditional poetic forms used in *Leaves of Grass*. However, we must make a stop here so that we can introduce the subject that we actually need to discuss: the fact that the poetic system in Portuguese is different from the English one in some respects, as we will see below. The reason for that is that our work here is on the re-creation of Whitman's poetry into Portuguese, and a sole description of the English versification system will not help us much. In reality, what we need

is to know how different or similar they are, so that we can perform our task more perfectly. At this point, we will only complete the information about the most common types of feet in English, in order to move to the next step, the Portuguese meter. So, in English, there is the trochee, which is a metrical foot used in formal poetry. It consists of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one. William Blake¹⁹ provides us an example with two lines of his famous poem “The Tyger”: “Tyger, Tyger, burning bright / In the forests of the night”. The dactyl is a long syllable followed by two short syllables, as determined by syllable weight. In accentual verse, such as English, it is a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables, the opposite of the anapest (two unstressed followed by a stressed syllable). This form uses verses of six feet. There is usually a caesura after the *ictus* (beat, the strongest syllable) of the third foot. Examples: the opening line of the Aeneid (Virgil) is a typical line of dactylic hexameter (here we have an example of quantitative Latin verse translated into accentual English verse): “I sing of arms and the man, who first from the shores of Troy [...]” (“Ármă vîrŭmquĕ cănŏ, // Trŏiă quĭ primŭs ăb ōris”). The first and second feet are dactyls. The third and fourth feet are spondees, with two long vowels, one on either side of the caesura. The fifth foot is a dactyl, with the *ictus* this time falling on a grammatically long vowel. The final foot is a spondee with two grammatically long vowels. The dactylic hexameter²⁰ was utilized in English by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (mentioned below in section 3.5) in his poem *Evangeline*, “which we are told to read as though [it was] written in the classical dactylic hexameter” (WRIGHT, 1985, p.90); Wright is saying that because he knows that Longfellow was a master of the “iambic patterns” with a “grasp of its permissive variations”; but, most importantly, apart from his masterful “grasp” of the techniques, in his opinion, Longfellow had “radical limits”, due to the fact that his mastery drove him away from the “living world”. It is like the designation of the poet in an ivory tower, detached from the physical, practical world, which is known to English, French, American and Brazilian people. The first line of the poem will serve as an example (capitals to indicate stress): “THIS is the / FORest prim- / EVal. The / MURmuring / PINES and the / HEMlocks.”.

¹⁹ Blake (1757 – 1827) was an English poet, visionary, painter, and printmaker, author of famous books such as *Songs of Innocence*, *The Book of Thel* and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Augusto de Campos paid him a tribute in a book called *O Tygre, de William Blake*. São Paulo: author’s edition, 1977.

²⁰ The Beatles song “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” is an example of dactylic tetrameter, also common in classical poetry: “PICTure your SELF in a BOAT on a RIVER with / TANgerine TREE-ees and MARmalade SKII-ii-es.”

When we look at these verses from the perspective of a Brazilian reader, whose cultural and poetic background is based on a different poetic system, we have a different interpretation. In Portuguese, verses have a syllabic base, whereas in English they have an accentual-syllabic one, which is based on its stressed and unstressed syllables and on the number of syllables of each foot and its variations. Poetry in languages like Latin and Greek use quantitative verse: long and short syllables, which means that it is based on duration, the length of time needed to pronounce each syllable. In Portuguese, the verses have a fixed number of poetic syllables per line, counted until the last stressed syllable of the line²¹, with patterns of regular accents. Verses range from one to twelve syllables, thus defined: monosyllables, disyllables, trisyllables, tetrasyllables (or quadrisyllables), pentasyllables, hexasyllables, heptasyllables, octosyllables, eneasyllables, decasyllables (there is the blank or heroic decasyllable, which is not rhymed), hendecasyllables and dodecasyllables, or alexandrines. Longer verses, usually from ten poetic syllables on, have a caesura (a break) that divides the line in two parts called hemistiches, or half lines of verse (which can be marked by punctuation or just the pause between phrases).

The verses of five (with the accent on the fifth syllable and on some other for phonic support) and seven syllables (with varying accents on the second, third, fourth and fifth, and naturally on the seventh), in Portuguese, are called *redondilhas* (TREVISAN, 2001, p.172), which represent the most popular forms, traditionally (minor and major, according to the number of metrical syllables; the word comes from Spanish *redondilla*, a stanza form that consists of four lines, normally of **eight** syllables each, rhyming in *abba*; in Portuguese, we have a different way of counting the syllables from Spanish: all syllables are counted in verses in Spanish scansion, which is why they are heptasyllables in our vernacular). The “*redondilha* major” is the more popular of the two, for its rhythm finds easy expression within our language. We could say that poetry written in verses with an odd number of syllables is more lyric and those written in verses with an even number of poetic syllables are more recitative, more prosaic, although that is not something fixed.

²¹ This is what is stated by traditional scansion in Portuguese, that is, analysis of meter (BECHARA, 1989, p.353); (BILAC; PASSOS, 1930, p.48). Ali, in his book *Versificação Portuguesa (Portuguese Versification)*, argues that counting the syllables only up to the last stressed one is “arbitrary” (2006, p.20), since most of the verses in Portuguese end in words that are paroxytone, that is, words which are stressed on the next to last syllable. Ali presents the more reasonable method of counting all the syllables in a verse line, which would make all verses that end in paroxytones change category; example: a monosyllable would become a disyllable, and so on. Actually, the only thing that changes is the classification of the verses. Nothing changes for the poet or the readers, for the sounds remain the same.

In this manner, when a Brazilian reader, who has acquired some basic knowledge in Brazilian literature, reads the same verses by Whitman from “Salut au Monde!”, he will see the same elements through another aesthetic and linguistic filter, that of the “metrical laws” in Portuguese: “O take my hand Walt Whitman!” is a hexasyllable with accents on the second, fourth and sixth syllables; “Such gliding wonders!” and “such sights and sounds!”, an eneasyllable separated by a caesura after the fifth syllable or two tetrasyllables. “What widens within you Walt Whitman” is an octosyllable, and “What climes? What persons and cities are here?” is a perfect decasyllable, with main accents on the second, fourth and seventh syllables. Even though the approaches to the literary piece are diverse, the final impression on the reader is the same, for the poetic product is the same. Our fruition of poetry, despite being in another language, does not pose a problem. The reader does not need to know which feet are employed in the making of a poem or the patterns of accent or rhyme to have delight in it. The only thing that matters is whether the poem is effective or not, whether it conveys its meanings in an appropriate manner or not. Being ignorant of the metrical laws does not prevent readers from appreciating poetry. Fruition of aesthetic beauty does not rely on previous knowledge of techniques of composition. Otherwise, the common man would never enjoy beauty in any form or shape in which it is presented. Naturally, there is a problem when the specialist, who can be a poet or a critic, reads the piece of writing. In this case, the poet or translator must be aware of the fact that he must study this subject, when he undertakes such a task.

Therefore, the main question is: how to transfer the sounds, the prosody of one language into another? There is a problem imposed to us by the difference between the poetic systems, based on the prosody of each language. The rhythm of the English language is based on this correlation between stressed and unstressed syllables, and also on the duration of sounds. The question of rhythm is important because there are two important factors concerning pronunciation in English: English pronunciation is irregular; that is, stressed syllables vary even within word families (see: **compare**, **comparison**, but **comparable**); and the unstressed syllables are “shortened”, or reduced (GILBERT, 2001, pp.22-25) and have a “muffled” quality, so they are “unclear”. This is phonetically called “schwa”, “the most common vowel sound in English”, whose phonetic symbol is ə. As any teacher of English will know and Gilbert highlights it, only teachers “enunciate every sound clearly in order to

help students understand” (2001, p.25) the language, making it difficult for the native speakers to understand people who speak English applying to it the concept of equal length of syllables (as is the case of Portuguese). A ten-year-experience of teaching English as a foreign language has showed us the difficulty students have with rhythm when learning English. On this topic, Gilbert, a researcher who works with EFL teachers, writes:

[...] syllables are an essential foundation for English rhythm. Rhythm may be the single most important element in learning clear pronunciation. There may also be consequences for grammar. [...] students with an instinct for the rhythm of English seem to have better control of the structure words [articles, pronouns, auxiliary verbs]. An awareness of syllables is important because it helps students: 1. identify the exact syllable for stress marking, which native speakers rely on for clear understanding [...] 2. Notice reduced syllables [...] 3. Become sensitive to English rhythm [...] (GILBERT, 2001, p.1)

Apart from the focus on rhythm, Gilbert advises teachers to use the words “short” and “long” to describe the “duration contrasts” between words like “ship/sheep”, “pull/pool”, “bit/beat”, “sick/seek”, “live/leave” (minimal pairs) and so on, which will help students “produce authentic English rhythm”. But not only these kinds of pairs of sounds can be contrasted in this manner; other words with similar vowel sounds fall within the same category of short and long opposition, according to the sound that comes after the vowel: if the final sound is a “stop” sound like *t*, *d* or *p*, the vowel is short, and if the final sound is a “continuant” sound like *y*, *s*, *n* or *l*, the vowel sound is long: bite/buy, like/lies, mate/main, light/lie, keep/key, light/line, rope/role, boat/bone, food/fool, rude/rule (GILBERT, 1997, pp.25-7). Additionally, he counsels teachers to resort to poems and songs as an excellent aid to mastering English rhythm and sound.

On the other hand, in Portuguese, according to Bechara, a traditional grammarian, “[...] quantity [that is, duration] is little felt and has no noticeable role in the characterization and distinction of words and grammatical forms²²” (1989, p.53). We only lengthen words for emphasis. The most important difference is that in our poetic language the “fundamental units of rhythm” are the syllables (TREVISAN, 2001, p.67). Poetically speaking, we may call them “sounds” to distinguish poetic syllables from grammatical syllables. This is useful because in

²² Pound also made this distinction between languages, emphasizing its importance (1987, p.56): “The quantitative verse of the ancients was replaced by syllabic verse, as they say in the school books. [...] And that fitting [...] of words to tune replaced the supposedly regular spondees, dactyls, etc. The question of the relative duration of syllables has never been neglected by men with susceptible ears. I particularly want to keep off these technical details. The way to learn the music of verse is to listen to it.”

poetry there are elements such as syneresis: the contraction of two vowels into a diphthong; and dieresis: in sound, it is a pause, but linguistically it is a mark placed over the second of two adjacent vowels to indicate that they must be pronounced separately, as in the word *naïve*. Thus, Trevisan defines a “basic principle” for poetry in Portuguese on syllables and their development around a “dynamic center” which is the “stressed syllable”: “The Portuguese verse has stress and the number of syllables as an obligation. They make up the rhythmic groupings [...]” (TREVISAN, 2001, p.68) on which poetry lives, in reality, its material basis. Naturally, in our language we have intonation like any other language, which is necessary to express the speaker’s mind. Bechara asserts that “In Portuguese, [...] the clauses are characterized by intonation, that is, the way they are uttered within a certain melodic cadence” (BECHARA, 1989, p.194). So the clauses are articulated in a way that the “end of a clause is always marked by one of the types of intonation” that exist in the language (1989, p.194). Normally, the words in our mother tongue have stressed syllables, and they are obviously important to correct pronunciation. In poetry, they are used to mark the accents in combination with the number of syllables of the meter being used. To make the verse sound as natural as possible, it is necessary to make the stressed syllable coincide with the poetic accent within the meter chosen.

Bilac and Passos²³ (1930, p.37), in their *Tratado de Versificação (Versification Treatise)*, define verse, or rather “meter”, as “a grouping of words, or even only one word, with forced pauses and a certain number of syllables, which become music”. The two Parnassian poets, famous for their struggle for exactness of form and adherence to classical themes that resulted in detachment from their subjects, advised that “in Portuguese, more than in any other language, [...] syllables and pauses are cultivated.” This poetic school preceded Modernism in Brazil. Although these poets were considered by modernists as antiquated, what they say about the poetic system of our language is true. So, to answer the question presented above, on how to transfer the prosody of one language into another, we may say that we are going to base our work on sounds and rhythm, and, like Whitman, allow his poetry to grow out of the metrical laws in Portuguese. We shall let it sink in within our soul,

²³ Olavo Brás Martins dos Guimarães Bilac (1865-1918) was the most acclaimed poet of the Parnassian school in Brazil, having won a contest for “Prince of Brazilian poets” in 1907. Sebastião Cícero Guimarães Passos, journalist and poet (1867-1909), was Bilac’s friend. Both were founding members of the *Academia Brasileira de Letras (Brazilian Academy of Letters)*, established on July 20th, 1897, whose first and “perpetual” president is Machado de Assis (1839-1908), the most important Brazilian novelist, essayist and short-story writer, historically speaking, who was also a poet and dramatist.

so that it will come up naturally in the Portuguese meter, mixing technique and intuition in the re-creation of *Leaves of Grass* into our vernacular. In the following section we will discuss modernism in Brazil and in some other countries, focusing our attention on the most important writers who are in some way connected to Whitman and the renewal of poetry in the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth.

3.5 Oswald de Andrade, Fernando Pessoa, Aléxis de Tocqueville, Gilberto Freyre

In this section we will address the subject of renewing the craft of poetry through the invention of free verse, and how some poets and writers relate to Whitman. From our standpoint, Oswald de Andrade, already mentioned in the previous section, is the writer who most closely resembles Whitman in Brazil, given his artistic, social and political attitudes. We will also refer to Fernando Pessoa's literary relationship with Whitman, as well as Gilberto Freyre's, who was an admirer of the American bard. We mention these authors in our thesis because they have helped us understand Whitman and his poetry better. We will try to contextualize them and their works properly.

Speaking of re-creating the poet's basic tool, the language, we have to mention Oswald de Andrade, Mário de Andrade and the poets that took part in the Week of Modern Art in 1922 in São Paulo. They started their movement in opposition to the Parnassian school of poetry, which they called "office poetry", because they thought that it was detached from the real life of the Brazilian people and from our natural environment. The modernist poets, especially Oswald and Mário de Andrade, conceived of our country as originally a land of happy and free people, Indians, subjugated by invaders, who, in a process of ritual cannibalism, would metaphorically devour the foreign culture and assimilate it into our own, creating thus a new form of art and culture, liberated from their moulds and pre-fabricated forms. In this sense, we might view the modernist poets not only as artists who promoted a linguistic revitalization of our language, but also as poets who, through this process, made modern artists from other countries better understood here.

One of the key elements in modernist poetics was the invention of free verse, which released poets from "traditional metrical laws" and stanzaic forms. Poets were then free to mix and vary these traditional forms according to their poetical skills, and also according to

the themes and tones used in their writing. Their relation to Whitman is by the fact that he is viewed as one of the inventors of free-verse, together with Arthur Rimbaud²⁴. Trevisan²⁵, a Brazilian philosopher, poet, essayist, and translator, makes this statement in his book *A Poesia, Uma Iniciação à Leitura Poética (Poetry, An Initiation Into Poetic Readership, 2001, p.207)*. He writes that Whitman's 1855 Edition of *Leaves of Grass* was characterized by the "novelty" of verses without a fixed number of syllables and the use of anaphora, as in: "**Twenty-eight** young men bathe by the shore;/ **Twenty-eight** young men, and all so friendly:/ **Twenty-eight** years of womanly life, and all so lonesome.", from section 11 of "Song of Myself" (WHITMAN, 1996, p.197). Trevisan also reminds us that anaphoras are a usual figure in biblical verses, besides parallelism and enumerations (p. 209), which agrees with our argument in the previous section on this aspect of Whitman's poetry. Another example of poem that presents anaphoras is "To a Common Prostitute", from "Autumn Rivulets":

Be composed -- be at ease with me -- I am Walt Whitman, liberal and
lusty as Nature,
Not till the sun excludes you do I exclude you,
Not till the waters refuse to glisten for you and the leaves to rustle for
you, do my words refuse to glisten and rustle for you.

My girl I appoint with you an appointment, and I charge you that you
make preparation to be worthy to meet me,
And I charge you that you be patient and perfect till I come.

Till then I salute you with a significant look that you do not forget me.
(WHITMAN, 1996, p.512)

The poem presents the following anaphoras: "Be", "Not till", "and I charge you", which indicate parallelism, varying meters (which are clearly visualized on the page), wild alliterations, "liberal and lusty", and, above all, a reference to a biblical scene, "The Woman Caught in Adultery", in the book of John (Chap. 8:1-11). The reference to his act of not

²⁴ Rimbaud (1854-1891) is said to be the other inventor of free verse, and a writer who published only one book (RIMBAUD, 2003, p.13) during his lifetime, *Une Saison en Enfer (A Season in Hell)*. In Rimbaud's book *Les Illuminations (Illuminations, 1874)*, not published by him, there are two poems which are considered as the first creations in free verse in France and as the "second decisive moment in the history of free verse" (TREVISAN, 2001, p.208): "Marine" and "Mouvement". As a matter of fact, it was Gustave Kahn (1859-1936), a French Symbolist poet and art critic, who is claimed to be the one who invented the term *vers libre*. Anyhow, he formulated its theory, which included ideas such as: the verse should have semantic and rhythmic unity; this unity should be the shortest line with a pause and complete meaning; there would be no more traditional stanzaic forms and no more inversions or enjambments.

²⁵ Armindo Trevisan, former professor at UFRGS (1973-1986).

excluding the “girl” until nature would might indicate the absence of judgment and condemnation from Jesus towards the woman, who was not stoned by any man because only he who was “without sin” should cast a stone at her. This approach to a prostitute might seem impure, immoral or sinful from a religious point of view, but not for the poet, who treated the prostitute in a respectful way, the same way he would treat any one else, especially those whose voices were not heard. This treatment reflects the poet’s modern attitude of including everyone in his poetry, his act of embracing all, socially speaking, while, at the poetic level, using biblical verse forms and figures.

Another modern poet who is a great writer of free verse is Fernando Pessoa, being also an admirer of Whitman. Pessoa, like Rimbaud, had only one book published²⁶ in Portuguese during his lifetime, *Mensagem (Message)* (1997, p.XLI). Fernando António Nogueira de Seabra Pessoa (1888-1935) was a poet and writer. Like Whitman, he was contradictory and multitudinous. According to José Augusto Seabra, who wrote the introduction to the above mentioned edition, Pessoa’s “contradiction is [...] the core of the mystery in which [the poet] liked to wrap his poetry” (PESSOA, 1997, p. XXVI). His heteronyms²⁷, each one a singular personality with a life of his own, with ideas, tastes, books, feelings of his own, do represent his contradictions. The heteronyms had conflicting aesthetic ideas among themselves²⁸, and the poet was more like a medium for them. The three most famous of them are Alberto Caeiro, Álvaro de Campos, and Ricardo Reis. Of the three, the most emotional is Álvaro de Campos, the one who loved Whitman: he wrote the poem “Salutation to Walt Whitman” in 1915 (PESSOA, 1983, pp.65-71), in which he declares his cosmic love to Walt, singing his desire to walk “hand in hand” (p.65) with the “great epidermic democrat” (p.66).

²⁶ *Mensagem* was published in 1934, his penultimate year in this vale of tears!

²⁷ Harold Bloom referred to Pessoa in *The Western Canon* (1995, pp.452-6) as “Whitman reborn, but a Whitman who gives separate names to “my self,” “the real me” or “me myself,” and “my soul,” and writes wonderful books of poems for all three of them as well as a separate volume under the name of Walt Whitman. The parallels are close enough not to be coincidences, particularly since the invention of the “heteronyms” (Pessoa’s term) followed an immersion in *Leaves of Grass*.” Speaking of the poem “Salutation to Walt Whitman”, Álvaro de Campos’ “fantasia”, Bloom says that the poem “surges on for more than two hundred lines and is accompanied by two longer Whitmanian extravaganzas, “Ode” and the thirty-page *Maritime Ode*, Campos’ masterwork and one of the major poems of the century. Except for the best parts of Neruda’s *Residence on Earth* and *Canto general*, nothing composed in Whitman’s wake compares to *Maritime Ode* as exuberant invention.” Pablo Neruda (1904–1973) is the penname of the Chilean writer and communist politician Ricardo Eliecer Neftalí Reyes Basoalto. Bloom (1995, p.445) considers him to be “Whitman’s truest heir” in Hispanic American Literature, for whom Whitman was “an idealized father, who replaced Neruda’s actual father [...]”

²⁸ For example, there is a note by Ricardo Reis, which functions as an introduction to a book by Álvaro de Campos (*Ficções do Interlúdio/4*). In it, Reis criticizes Campos’ poetry, saying that he actually writes “[...] rhythmic prose with greater pauses marked at certain points for rhythmic purposes, and these points of greater pause are determined by the end of the verses. Campos is a great prose writer, with a great awareness of rhythm, but [...] the rhythm of prose” (PESSOA, 1983, p.12-13).

In the poem “Salutation to Walt Whitman”, Álvaro de Campos calls Whitman “The forever modern and eternal, singer of absolute concretes” (p.65), a poet who deals with the concrete world, the physical world, but never separated from the spiritual world, singing “body and soul”, “Singer of the ferocious and tender brotherhood with everything” (p.66). Álvaro de Campos was so similar to Whitman that he sang: “You know that I am You and you are content with that!” (1983, p.66). He, like Whitman, knew that the world is a mirror that reflects our image to us, which is why he could say that he saw himself in the American poet. This verse by Campos echoes Whitman’s own: “In all people I see myself—none more, and not one a barleycorn less;” from section 20 of “Song of Myself” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.206), with which he defined his position as not being above or below anybody else, not better or worse than anyone, the basis of his brotherhood with everything, and especially with nature: “We are Nature—long have we been absent, but now we return;” a verse in “We Two, How Long We Were Fool’d”, from “Children of Adam” (1996, p.264). In his return to nature, the poet and his companion become “plants”, “fishes”, “hawks”, “suns”, “seas”, “atmosphere”, “rain”, in short, everything that nature is. In fact, the poet sees himself as “Nature without check with original energy.” (section 1, “Song of Myself”, 1996, p.188), the same energy that permeates the poetry of Campos in his search for originality and natural freedom, trying to break away from too much civilized civilization, desperately singing: “Let me take off my tie and unbutton my collar. / One can not have much energy with civilization around one’s neck [...]” (PESSOA, 1983, p.68).

Álvaro de Campos identified himself with Whitman, with the poet of the “absolute concretes”. In this sense, concrete here is the mass formed by the coalescence of particles, the hard material used in building and the action of building as well, which is in accordance with Whitman’s idea of a modern world of great constructions, such as canals, bridges, buildings, ships, and engineers. A world that is seen from a near distance by the poet, which is a concrete world portrayed in verses, as Campos himself does, for he sings: “[...] I, Álvaro de Campos, engineer, / Sensationist poet,” (1983, p.66), showing that humanity, nature and material progress are not apart (In Portuguese, the word “sensacionista” was a neologism as much as “sensationist” is in English.). We could raise a question here: is it possible to unite technology and nature? As we have mentioned these two apparently opposed aspects of the world, with humanity in the middle, we will consider the context of the *Leaves*, to see how they relate to each other. First of all, the title of the book, *Leaves of Grass*, points to nature.

Besides, there are poems and books whose content deal with or address natural life or natural elements, such as “Our Old Feuillage,” *Birds of Passage*, *Sea-Drift*, *Memories of President Lincoln* (whose symbols are the star, the bird, the lilac and death, the natural end to all living beings), “Proud Music of the Storm,” and many individual poems that describe natural scenes. On the other hand, Whitman established from the beginning that all his works are dedicated to the “Old Cause”, which is “the progress and freedom of the race,” specifically chanted in “To Thee Old Cause” and “To a Certain Cantatrice”, both poems from the book *Inscriptions*. In addition, there are other poems dedicated to progress as well, especially material progress in poems such as “Song of the Exposition,” which was written to be read at the opening of the Annual Exhibition in New York City in 1871, which held the most advanced products of technological progress of the time (it was an industrial fair), and “A Song for Occupations,” which sings the labor and also the technology used in it. Unlike the Romantics, who despised industrialization and did not like how modern cities looked, as we have mentioned above in section 2.4, Whitman was as fond of nature as he was of modernity with its entire technological advance. We have also pointed out in the same section how Whitman used technology to favor him, as in the case of photoproduction. At this point he is much closer to Modern and Futurist poets, whom he predicted in his “Poets to Come”, such as Álvaro de Campos himself, than to Romantic poets, with whom he shared some characteristics, as we have been pinpointing throughout this work. However, we must never forget that above all, he chanted the divine soul of men and women. Thus, if there is a possible synthesis between material progress, technology and nature, this synthesis must be operated by humanity, who must be able to connect one thing to the other. One thing for sure we know: the more we distance ourselves from nature, the more we distance ourselves from our own souls. We must develop technology, but not in detriment of our own nature. As we will see below, this idea is present in the life and works of Oswald de Andrade too.

Now we will offer a few more words to complete the discussion about this theme and link the idea from Álvaro de Campos to Oswald de Andrade. Whitman, in his prose work *Democratic Vistas*, in the last paragraphs, corroborated the word of the Portuguese poet/engineer:

[...] We see that while many were supposing things established and completed, really the grandest things always remain; and discover that the work of the New World is not ended, but only fairly begun.

We see our land, America, her literature, esthetics, &c., as, substantially, the getting in form, or effusement and statement, of deepest basic elements and loftiest final meanings, of history and man – [...] - the main thing being the average, the bodily, the concrete, the democratic, the popular, on which all the superstructures of the future are to permanently rest. (WHITMAN, 1996, pp.1017-8)

This book, *Democratic Vistas* (WHITMAN, 1996, pp.953-1018), was originally conceived as a series of three articles, which were written and published in newspapers from 1867 on and finally appeared in book form in 1870. Allen (1955, p.394) refers to it as the “presentation of [Whitman’s] philosophy of a true democratic society.”, which equates Whitman as a poet of vision with his role as journalist and citizen who was in tune with what was happening in his country in his time, always watching and participating in the life of his nation from a near distance. We can see it in the fact that the poet uses the same words in his poetry and in his prose works: “average” (persons), “democratic”, “body”, to refer to what already exist, the “basic elements”, which reminds us of his poem “Poets to Come” (from “Inscriptions”; WHITMAN, 1996, p.175), in which he “expects the main things” from the poets of the future, as well as the citizens and politicians of the future, because the work of the New World was “only fairly begun”, and he saw himself as part of that beginning, acknowledging his life and works as entirely interwoven with the lives and works of the “dear comrades” of his time, building the nation together.

Pound, who was one of the “Poets to Come” predicted by Whitman, one of the “new brood, native, athletic, continental, greater than before known”, wrote (in 1914) about Whitman, who, at his time, could only “write one or two indicative words for the future”, leaving this same future for the new poets “to prove and define it”, “Expecting the main things” (p.175) from them:

Whitman is the best of it [American poetry], but he never pretended to have reached the goal. He knew himself, and proclaimed himself ‘a start in the right direction’. He never said, ‘American poetry is to stay where I left it’; he said it was to go on from where he started it.
(POUND, 1968, p.218)

Synchronically, another poet, this time in Brazil, was using the same word used by Álvaro de Campos, *concrete*, to refer to his artistic work. We refer to Oswald de Andrade, a

journalist, writer, playwright, and poet. Oswald²⁹, one of the leading figures in the 1922 Week of Modern Art, became a poet at the age of thirty-five. Like Pessoa and Whitman, he was not only an author, but also a thinker: he wrote literary criticisms, two theses (a literary and a philosophical one) and edited newspapers and magazines. Like Whitman, who, up to 1849 when he gave up practical politics, had been a member of the Democratic Party and then of the new Republican Party, Oswald was a political activist and became a member of the Brazilian Communist Party in 1931. According to Décio Pignatari, “after Machado de Assis, Oswald is our only thinker-writer”. Pignatari means writer of fiction, naturally³⁰. However, it is in the field of literature that our interest rests: in his “Manifesto Antropófago”, published in “Revista de Antropofagia”³¹, Oswald asserted, among other ideas, that they were “concretists”:

Tupi, or not tupi that is the question. [...]

Against all the importers of canned conscience. [...]

The natural man. [...]

The spirit refuses to conceive of the spirit without the body.

Before the Portuguese discovered Brazil, Brazil had discovered happiness. [...]

The fixation of progress by means of catalogues and television sets. Only machinery. And blood transfusions. [...]

Against Memory source of customs. Personal experience renewed. [...]

We are concretists. Ideas take over, react, burn people in public squares. Let us suppress ideas and other paralysis. In favor of plots. To believe in signs, to believe in tools and the stars. [...]

Anthropophagy. Absorption of the sacred enemy.

Against the social reality, dressed and oppressive, recorded by Freud – reality without complexes, without madness, without prostitutions and penitentiaries of Pindorama’s matriarchate.

Some ideas in the manifesto deserve explanation. First, the ideas were juxtaposed on the page, without linking words, breaking the grammatical organization of the text, which is

²⁹ As there are two remarkable “de Andrades” in our Modernist movement (Oswald de Andrade and Mário de Andrade), we will refer to them by their first names. Despite the same last name, they are not related.

³⁰ This comment is in *Um Homem Sem Profissão (A Man Without Profession)*; (ANDRADE, 1990, p.8).

³¹ This “Anthropophagic Manifesto”, published in the “Anthropophagy Magazine” (the other founding members of the magazine were Raul Bopp and Antônio de Alcântara Machado), was, in Pignatari’s opinion (1990, pp.8-9), the “cultural proposition for the old peoples of new nations [...], turning the nationalistic-romantic indianism inside out”, making eating a sign and making the sign a form of eating. The result was “devoration”, which is, culturally speaking, a ritualistic act of absorbing/devouring the foreign culture to acquire its best features, and then combining these new features with our own best qualities, which would produce poetry for exportation, like Brazil wood, our first export product.

characteristic of the cubist artists. In this way, the sentences are connected to each other by “unexpected links”, as it happens in a “cubist painting, [where] a design reduced to an amplified detail of an eye is sided by a playing card or the body of a guitar” (ANDRADE, 1990, p.38). Haroldo de Campos, who wrote the introduction to this 1990 edition of *Pau Brasil*, compared Oswald’s poetry to painting, in this case, cubist painting, but not for the technique itself. It was more for the search for a “primitive sensitivity” and a “poetics of concreteness” (1990, p.45). Thus, the poet already uses in his manifesto the techniques he is proposing for his poetry, like the montage technique and the repetition of certain words (anaphoras: words like “contra” / “against”, “nunca” / “never”, and “tínhamos” / “we had” are spread throughout the text). Then, the allusion to Hamlet’s “To be or not to be, that’s the question” (SHAKESPEARE, 1992, p.669: this line opens Hamlet’s soliloquy in Act III, scene I) that is devoured and re-coded into “Tupi, or not tupi, that’s the question”, which is a reference to a Native American Indian tribe that lived on the coast of Brazil and their language. Therefore, being authentically Brazilian is the real question, and that must be faced by us all.

Since poetry is not separated from culture, at this point we must make a connection between the linguistic aspect of the modernist poetics with its cultural and social aspect. This is so because the idea behind the poetic manifestation carries a socio-cultural one, which is the attitude against foreign cultural imposition and the acknowledgment of our own nature. This explanation is necessary because we also need to understand the socio-cultural difference between Brazil and the United States in the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. The fact is that, in Brazil, unlike the United States, miscegenation was and is a reality. In this sense, there is much more ethnic integration in Brazil than there is in the United States, even considering all the social problems stemmed from racial discrimination. We could possibly assert that Whitman’s dream of national integration, in ethnical and cultural terms, came true, at least partially, in Brazil, despite all the still existing problems. In order to show this contrast between the two countries, we will resort to quotations from *Democracy in America* (two volumes: 1835 and 1840) by Alexis de Tocqueville, 1805-1859, the French political thinker and historian who also wrote *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (1856), and *Casa Grande e Senzala (The Masters and The Slaves)*, by Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre. First, we will present a quotation from *Democracy in America*, by Tocqueville, whose works depict the social conditions of the individual and the state in western societies. In this book, he addresses this problem in the USA in the nineteenth century:

The human beings who are scattered over this space do not form, as in Europe, so many branches of the same stock. Three races, naturally distinct, and, I might almost say, hostile to each other, are discoverable among them at the first glance. Almost insurmountable barriers had been raised between them by education and law, as well as by their origin and outward characteristics, but fortune has brought them together on the same soil, where, although they are mixed, they do not amalgamate, and each race fulfills its destiny apart. [...] The Indians will perish in the same isolated condition in which they have lived, but the destiny of the Negroes is in some measure interwoven with that of the Europeans. These two races are fastened to each other without intermingling; and they are alike unable to separate entirely or to combine. The most formidable of all the ills that threaten the future of the Union arises from the presence of a black population upon its territory; and in contemplating the cause of the present embarrassments, or the future dangers of the United States, the observer is invariably led to this as a primary fact.³² (Chapter XVIII, on the three races that inhabit the United States)

On the other hand, this impossible racial mixture between the three races, which had “insurmountable barriers [...] raised between them” in the United States, was carried on at every level of contact between the peoples living in Brazil: the Indians, the Portuguese and the Africans brought here³³. Another excerpt from the same chapter from *Democracy in America* indicates that Tocqueville considered that the mixing of races would create a more appropriate environment for the mutual understanding of races forced to live together, as is the case in Brazil, although he recognizes that of “[...] all Europeans, the English are those

³² Tocqueville’s works are available on the internet nowadays on several sites, such as <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc_indx.html>, owned by the University of Virginia. Accessed on May 16, 2007.

³³ Although we are discussing miscegenation, we are not blind to the fact that there was, around 1500, in Brazil, an Indian population ranging from 1 to 10 million individuals, and that these people were gathered in different “societies” and spoke around 1300 different languages, being Tupi one of the main societal and linguistic branches. Nowadays, there are around 460 thousand individuals who speak around 180 languages. However, we prefer to think like the great Chief Seattle, even if official authorities do not validate the document. Thus, we quote here the last section of Chief Seattle’s speech in, presumably, 1854 or 1855: “[...] And when the last Red Man shall have perished, and the memory of my tribe shall have become a myth among the White Men, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe, and when your children's children think themselves alone in the field, the store, the shop, upon the highway, or in the silence of the pathless woods, they will not be alone. In all the earth there is no place dedicated to solitude. At night when the streets of your cities and villages are silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled them and still love this beautiful land. The White Man will never be alone. / Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not powerless. Dead, did I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds.” Data on Brazilian Indians available at: <<http://www.funai.gov.br/>>.

Accessed on: May 3, 2007. Data on Chief Seattle available at: <<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1985/spring/chief-seattle.html>>. Accessed on May 3, 2007.

who have mixed least with the Negroes”, which testifies to the enormous difficulties of Americans in mingling with Native or Afro-Americans:

I have previously observed that the mixed race is the true bond of union between the Europeans and the Indians; just so, the mulattoes are the true means of transition between the white and the Negro; so that wherever mulattoes abound, the intermixture of the two races is not impossible. In some parts of America the European and the Negro races are so crossed with one another that it is rare to meet with a man who is entirely black or entirely white; when they have arrived at this point, the two races may really be said to be combined, or, rather, to have been absorbed in a third race, which is connected with both without being identical with either.

Freyre, in his book *Casa Grande e Senzala (The Masters and The Slaves, 1984)*, originally published in 1933, centers his research on this theme, racial relations in Brazil in the nineteenth century, which was fundamental to him, as he stated in his preface to the book. Based on the fact that the pre-Colombian peoples living in these lands were very receptive (1984, p.89-161; chapter II, on “The Amerindian in the Formation of the Brazilian Family”), the Portuguese people were given to miscegenation, had no rigidity and were heir to a great social flexibility (1984, pp.189-262; chapter III, on “The Portuguese Settler”), and the Africans brought to Brazil were very adaptive, but also persistent in leaving their mark on the culture, body or soul of “every Brazilian” (1984, pp.283-379; on “The Black Slave in Brazilian’s Sexual and Family Life”). If we look more closely at the metaphorical references of “blood transfusions”³⁴ and the “Absorption of the sacred enemy”, the expressions that appear in Oswald’s manifesto and link them with the socio-cultural aspect of our nationality, we can see them as indicators of our multiraciality, represented, for example, by people defined in Brazil with mixed race terms such as: “Caboclo”, a term for white and Amerindian; “Cafuzo”, a word for black and Amerindian; and “Mulato” (mulatto) an admixture of white European and black African ancestry.

In relation to this, Oswald, like Whitman, believed in a harmonic natural life of soul and body, and this harmony in man and with nature is highlighted by the next statement in his manifesto about the discovery of happiness. The meaning of this is that the Indians, before the arrival of the Portuguese conquerors, already lived happily, without the help of the Catholic

³⁴ Though the original phrase reads “blood transfusing machines”, it refers to technology and to donating and receiving blood, which is a process that does not make it possible to identify the blood donor’s skin color.

Church, or the tiring tyranny of foreign religion. Therefore, instead of promoting a conflict within an already multiethnic group, Oswald calls for national unity, and through an element of one of the three cultures involved, the Indian anthropophagic rituals, he struggles for the renewal of our personal, and then collective, experience. This would finally come to the sociological field, fostering a new social reality, a healthy one, stripped of old customs.

For example, the custom of being too much dressed, which was counteracted by the nakedness and daily bathing of the Indians, so that everything would be clearly seen in the light of the tropical sun (nakedness is a topic addressed by Whitman, as we have seen in the last section of chapter 2; “no clothing”, except for ornaments and personal belongings, is listed as one of the characteristics of most of the Indians living in Brazil; 1984, p.97). Besides that there is the old custom that was most embedded in our antiquated mentality: “the patriarchal system of the Portuguese colonization” (FREYRE, 1984, Preface, p. lxii) of our society, the same “pater familias” (p. lxiii), which is the paternal power of life and death over family and slaves, handed down to us from Roman Law that was inherited by the Portuguese. This is the law, mentioned in the manifesto, whose rigidity should be melted by the joy of “Pindorama’s matriarchate”. Curiously, Oswald’s autobiography, *Um Homem Sem Profissão* (*A Man Without Profession*), has an appropriate subtitle: “Sob as Ordens de Mamãe” (“Under Mama’s Orders”).

Our always useful Aurélio³⁵ provides the definition for “pindorama”, which is a word from the Tupi language meaning the “Region or country of palm trees” (FERREIRA, 1999, p.1567). This again sounds like an anthropophagic act, since the expression “palm trees” refers to a common feature of our land and also to one of our most famous poems, “Canção do Exílio” (“Exile Song”), by our first and most renowned “indianist poet” (BILAC; PASSOS, 1930, p.24), Gonçalves Dias, whose lines “My land has got palm trees, / where the *sabiá*³⁶ sings” are repeated throughout the poem, as anaphoras and epiphoras (repetition of words or phrases at the beginning and end of stanzas). Indeed, this culturally cannibalistic attitude had been expressed by Oswald de Andrade in his “Manifesto da Poesia Pau-Brasil”³⁷ (“Brazil

³⁵ Aurélio, in Brazil, has become synonymous with dictionary, for Aurélio Buarque de Holanda Ferreira is the author of the most famous dictionary in our country.

³⁶ *Sabiá* is the Tupi word for a typical Brazilian bird (“tordo”, of the genus *Turdus*) of the thrush family *Turdidae*. In 2002, the “sabiá laranjeira” (*Turdus rufiventris*), was chosen as the symbol-bird of Brazil.

³⁷ This manifesto (1924), altered and reduced, was used as a “program-poem” in the 1925 edition of *Pau-Brasil*, the book of poems that portray our country, with sections such as “History of Brazil” (with passages from historical documents rearranged into poems in a parodic way, such as Pero Vaz de Caminha’s letter to the king

wood Poetry Manifesto”), in which he states that what we need is “A reaction against all indigestions of wisdom”, and strives for “The best of our lyric tradition” and “The best of our modern display”. He said that we must be “Only Brazilians of our own time”, with a sufficient amount of chemistry, mechanics, economy, ballistics, and “all digested”. We should be “practical”, “experimental”, in sum, “poets”. As this type of poetry is for exportation, like the Brazil wood at colonial times, based on “synthesis”, “balance”, “invention”, “surprise”, the “digestion” of past culture and foreign culture was a necessary step, and digestion can only happen after ingestion, that is, eating, devoration. Another aspect of this “digestion”, a word that denotes transformation of matter into bodily absorbable substances that will later be converted into energy, is that it also means, figuratively, “mental absorption”, assimilation.

This, again, is a link between Oswald and Whitman, for absorption was a process that was carried on by Whitman for a long time before publishing his *Leaves*. Allen (1955, p.125) stresses that the poet “read with astonishing application”, and that he considered “reading as a creative activity”, proven by Whitman’s constant re-reading of “extracts from books and magazines” (p.126), collected and annotated by the young journalist. Canby (1943), another biographer of his, writes an entire chapter (III) on this subject in the life of the poet, who was given “a subscription to a circulating library” at the age of eleven by his bosses at a law office. At age twelve, the boy “was apprenticed in a newspaper and printing office”, for “printing, publishing and editing” had been chosen by or for him as a career. At that time, already “Ink was trickling into Whitman’s blood” (1943, p.19), and certainly it would trickle in and out of his veins forever, as he confesses in this leaf, “Trickle Drops”, from the “Calamus” cluster:

TRICKLE, drops! my blue veins leaving!
O drops of me! trickle, slow drops,

of Portugal, and Pero de Magalhães Gandavo’s “História da Província Santa Cruz” / “History of the Province of Santa Cruz”), “Colonization Poems”, “Carnival”, “Mine Paths”, and “Lóide Brasileiro”, which recollects his trip from Europe to Brazil, and whose first poem is a parody of the “Exile Song”, “Canto de Regresso à Pátria” (“Song of Return to the Nation”), with verses like “Minha terra tem palmares / onde gorgeia o mar” (“My land has got “palmares” / where the sea trills” and “Não permita Deus que eu morra / Sem que volte pra São Paulo / Sem que veja a rua 15 / E o progresso de São Paulo” (“I beg God not to let me die / Without returning to São Paulo / Without seeing 15 Street / And São Paulo’s progress”). Indeed, “Palmares” has got three meanings: 1. regions whose vegetation is mostly palm trees, such as the one where the Quilombo dos Palmares was located (Alagoas, Brazil); 2. Quilombo dos Palmares (around 1580-1695), historically the most important “quilombo” in Brazil (a “quilombo” is a refuge of runaway and free-born African slaves fighting for freedom), whose most important and last leader was Zumbi dos Palmares (1655-November 20, 1695); nowadays, november 20th is the Afro-Brazilians’ Black Consciousness Day; 3. individuals living within a “quilombo” (ANDRADE, 1990, p.139).

Candid, from me falling, drip, bleeding drops,
 From wounds made to free you whence you were prison'd,
 From my face, from my forehead and lips,
 From my breast, from within where I was conceal'd, press forth, red drops,
 confession drops,
 Stain every page, stain every song I sing, every word I say, bloody
 drops,
 Let them know your scarlet heat, let them glisten,
 Saturate them with yourself, all ashamed and wet,
 Glow upon all I have written, or shall write, bleeding drops,
 Let it all be seen in your light, blushing drops³⁸.
 (WHITMAN, 1996, p.278)

He spent long years “absorbing passionately human nature behind the scenes [...], scenes of nature, and books” (1943, p.25), so that he could later transform his human and literary heritage and background into something new, for he was always against mere imitation or transplanted foreign models into the literature of his country, and also against the sole description of nature in a naturalistic way, which was also advocated by Oswald in his manifesto. The Brazilian poet was against the naturalistic detail, which for him was only “copying”. The revolution meant “invention”, “surprise”, to “see with free eyes”, without any “previous formulas for the contemporaneous expression of the world”. The expression of Brazil included the “sabiá” or “tordo”, and the Brazilian woods. Our true tropical nature was present in his manifesto, which resounded our indianist poets, properly digested. Another example of this is his poem “Meus Oito Anos” (“At Age Eight”), from *Primeiro Caderno do Aluno de Poesia Oswald de Andrade* (*Poetry Student Oswald de Andrade's First Notebook*), published in 1927, which is a parody³⁹ of another famous poem in our literature, this time by Casimiro de Abreu (1839-1860), a Romantic poet, who used to write very melodious verses,

³⁸ We include here our re-creation of this poem, which is part of our previous work at this University (SARAIVA, 1995, p.85), in a revised version: “VERTEI GOTAS”:

VERTEI gotas! minhas veias azuis vazando!

Ah gotas de mim! vertei, vagarosas gotas,
 Caindo cândidas de mim, pingai, sangrantes gotas,
 De ferimentos feitos para vos libertar donde estáveis presas,

De meu rosto, de minha testa e lábios,
 De meu peito, de dentro onde eu estava oculto, pressionai rubras gotas, gotas de confissão,
 Manchai toda página, manchai toda canção que canto, toda palavra que digo, sangrentas gotas,
 Dai a conhecer vosso calor escarlate, permiti-lhes cintilar,

Saturai-as convosco inteiramente acanhadas e úmidas,
 Fulgi sobre tudo que tenho escrito ou escreverei, sangrantes gotas,
 Que tudo seja visto à vossa luz, enrubescidas gotas.

³⁹ Oswald (1991, p.27) was so keen on parody that he even wrote another poem to make fun of this one, titled “Meus Sete Anos” (“At Age Seven”).

such as Longfellow's (as we will see later on, when we discuss Longfellow's "verbal melody"); de Abreu, who was loved by the readers, died of tuberculosis at the age of 21.

This poem by de Abreu, written in our popular "redondilha major" (heptasyllables), sings of past time, the author's childhood, when he lived happy times "À sombra das bananeiras, / Debaixo dos laranjais!" ("At the shadows of banana trees, / under the orange trees!"). Oswald makes a parody of this piece, with the same title, in the following way: he sings of the "Aurora da minha vida" ("Daybreak of my life"), recollecting his infancy at his home, but then he mentions that he did it "Debaixo **da bananeira** / Sem **nenhum laranjais** (sic)" ("Under the banana tree / With no orange trees"; 1991, p.28). Thus, the "golden dreams" of de Abreu's world, when he lived in the countryside playing under the trees, can not be a reality any more in an urban and modern area. Besides, Oswald, as he emphasized in his "Pau Brasil Manifesto", was also against the morbid and melancholic feelings of some of our romantic poets, particularly the ones who belonged to the "second generation" of romanticism, who suffered from the malady of the soul, for they were pessimistic, sad, and many of them died very young (both Álvares de Azevedo, 1831-1852, and Castro Alves, 1847-1871, died of tuberculosis; Alves, who actually belonged to the "third generation" that focused on social issues and was our last romantic poet, wrote many poems on slavery and became famous as an abolitionist poet).

Paulo Prado⁴⁰, in his preface to Oswald de Andrade's book *Pau-Brasil*, wrote that the growth of a truly national literature was hampered in the nineteenth century by the "romantic malady that, at the birth of our nationality, infected everything and everybody so deeply". Then, praising this new poetry, which is "the first organized effort for the freedom of the Brazilian verse", he expects it to "terminate once and for all one of the great evils of our race – the evil of fat and crawling eloquence." He thinks that, in modern times, poetry should be able to follow the movement of progress, and that in "this age of rapid realizations the tendency is entirely to the rude and naked expression of sensation and feeling, in a total and synthetic sincerity," which is impossible to do with words "extracted from the Portuguese classics" and "old dictionaries" (ANDRADE, 1990, pp.57-9). Although our Romantic

⁴⁰ Paulo Prado (1869-1943) belonged to one of the wealthiest families from the aristocracy of coffee planters from São Paulo. He participated in the 1922 Week of Modern Art as a patron of the arts. He was also interested in Brazilian History and published a book called *Retrato do Brasil (Portrait of Brazil)* in 1928, a study on the sadness of the Brazilian people.

movement has been considered by some critics (CANDIDO & CASTELLO, 1992) of some importance and value for its literary reform and its attempt to release itself from the Portuguese tradition and influence, others are more severe and view our Romanticism more as a copy of foreign writers such as Byron, Musset, Espronceda, Chateaubriand, Cooper and Hugo, even when taken into account that the Romantic movement in Brazil helped to free our literature from a recent classicist past (HOLANDA, 1963), and the honesty and good intentions of its authors. However, Holanda argues that this entire effort of our Romantic generation was not able to grasp the real social life of our country, and eventually, it was more a movement of imagination than of reality, which was ashamed of seeing the “mean and despicable things”(1963, p.156) that were part of our early urban life. This included also Pedro II, the Emperor of Brazil, a man “of his time and of his country”, wrote Holanda (1963, p.158), who was partially responsible for the transformation of an agrarian nobility into an urban aristocracy, which was represented in literature by the writers of the time, including the Romantic poets and authors of fiction. The inconsistency and fragility of this literature is the focus of Prado’s critique, whereas the Modern movement is praised by him as the greatest effort in search for freedom in our verse. Whitman, then, is closer to our Modern poets than to the Romantic ones, as well as the Romantic poets in Brazil are closer to Longfellow, in the United States, as we will see in the next section when we discuss his detachment from the social reality of his time.

For the new times, there should be new poets and new verses. Paulo Prado sounds really like Whitman (2002, pp.621-2) in his 1855 Preface, when the American bard writes that “The poetic quality is not marshal’d in rhyme or uniformity, or abstract addresses to things, nor in melancholy complaints or good precepts, but is the life of these and much else, and is in the soul.” The poet adds that “The fluency and ornaments of the finest poems [...] are not independent but dependent.” He continues: “All beauty comes from beautiful blood and a beautiful brain” and “If the greatneses are in conjunction in a man or woman, it is enough—the fact will prevail through the universe; [...] who troubles himself about his ornaments or fluency is lost.” These ideas seem all to stem from another basic idea noted down by Whitman in one of his notebooks in the late 1940’s, which Allen (1955, p.135) indicates as a “rudimentary” principle on which the poet was trying to develop his “versification”: “Be simple and clear. - Be not occult.”

One example of the morbidity fought by the modernists is expressed by de Abreu's poem "Amor e Medo" ("Love and Fear"), included in his only book *As Primaveras* (*The Springtimes*), in which he sings that the lady is in love and he is afraid. He is afraid of many things, not only of love, as he chants in the third stanza of this poem: "Tenho medo de mim, de ti, de tudo, / Da luz, da sombra, do silêncio ou vozes." ("I am afraid of myself, of you, of everything, / Of light, of shadow, of silence or voices."). Moreover, de Abreu also wrote an "Exile Song", for he lived in Portugal from 1853 to 1857. Premonitorily, in this song he begs God not to let him die soon, although he intuitively feels that he is going to die in his youth, but he still wants to hear the "sabiá" singing!

The presence of a bird as an archetype of the singer or of singing and of coming spring or summer in poetry is a common feature in literature. For instance, we could mention a Shakespearean sonnet, 102 (SHAKESPEARE, 1992, p.763), where the poet mentions Philomel (GRIMAL, 1991, p.348), one of the daughters of the king of Athens (Pandion), who was changed into a nightingale by the gods when she was persecuted by Tereus; thus Philomel became synonymous with the bird: "As Philomel in summer's front doth sing". Besides that, there is the famous passage from *Romeo and Juliet* (SHAKESPEARE, 1992, p.355; Act 3, sc. 5), where Juliet tells Romeo that it was the nightingale that "[...] pierced the fearful hollow of [his] ear;" to mean that he did not have to hurry to go away from her window, because the nightingale sings in the middle of the night to announce that they had plenty of time to spend together. Another example of poem that brings up the figure of a nightingale, this time singing in a divine language, is **rubai**, number VI from the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyám, whose re-creation is included in section 3.8: "And David's Lips are lock't; but in divine / High piping Pelevi, with "Wine! Wine! Wine! / Red Wine!" – the Nightingale cries to the Rose / That yellow Cheek of hers to incarnadine." It is also a bird⁴¹ that appears in Whitman's poetry to represent the singer⁴²: the thrush, in "Starting from Paumanok", and in "When Lilacs...", where the bird announces the spring, and "Solitary, [...] avoiding the settlements, / Sings by himself a song.", the death song sung by the "gray-brown bird", which will remind the poet, with "ever-returning spring", of the one the poet loves so much

⁴¹ The nightingale used to belong in the same family as the thrush, but today it is classed in a different family, the "Muscicapidae".

⁴² In "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking", it is another bird that comes to the rescue of the poet, to help him awaken his own songs, merging the song of the bird, the word from the sea, "death", and his own songs into one single chant: "Which I do not forget [the word from the sea, Death], / But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother [the bird], / 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; [...]"

(President Lincoln). Co-incidentally, the Brazilian “tordo”, or “sabiá”⁴³, which is so honored by our poets as the very symbol of our lyricity, belongs in the same (genus *Turdus*) family (*Turdidae*) as the whitmanian thrush.

As we have mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, now we will try to provide a few hints on how Gilberto Freyre has helped us to understand Whitman and his *Leaves* better. In addition, how all these elements just mentioned are related. We will show, through Freyre’s view, the similarities between the Brazilian and American systems of slavery and patriarchalism. Finally, we will show the relation between Freyre and Whitman, and how poetry, society and culture are all interwoven. In order to do that, we will quote passages from the preface to *The Masters and The Slaves* (1984). In his preface, Freyre reminds the reader of some aspects of a typical Big House⁴⁴, which is “completed by the slave shed”, and “represents an entire economic, social, and political system”. It is a system of “production (latifundiary monoculture)”; of “labor (slavery)”; of “transport (the ox-cart, the hammock, the horse)”; of “religion (family Catholicism)”; of sexual and family life (polygamous patriarchalism)”; and finally, of a “bodily and household hygiene ([...] the banana stalk, the river bath [...])”, and of “politics (**compadrismo**)” (FREYRE, 1984, p. lxiii). “Compadrismo”, in this context, can be translated into English by a slang term: *back-scratching*, which defines a reciprocal beneficial relationship between people, in which land-owners exchanged political courtesy. Nonetheless, our purpose in alluding to these characteristics of the Big House, in the poetic context just described, is to emphasize the presence of the “banana stalk” (the other aspects are addressed by Oswald’s manifestos as well), which appears in the excerpts of poems quoted above, and especially because de Abreu lived on a farm as a boy, since his father and mother were both farmers. He lived on his mother’s farm in the nineteenth century at a time when slavery was a legal institution in this country. Also because around the Big House there usually were a lot of “parrot and birds cages” hanging all around the verandas. Probably there were thrushes in the cages, a fact that

⁴³ In 1968, Tom Jobim composed the song and Chico Buarque (both are Brazilian composers and song-writers) wrote the lyrics for “Sabiá”, which, again, makes a new parody of the “Exile Song”. The lines read: “Sei que ainda vou voltar / Para o meu lugar / Foi lá e é ainda lá / Que eu hei de ouvir cantar / Uma sabiá”; and “Você deitar à sombra / De uma palmeira / Que já não há” (“I know I am going to go back / To my place / It was there and it is still there / That I will hear a thrush / singing”; “I will lie down at the shadow / of a palm tree / that does not exist any more”). The song tells of the song of a female thrush, while the traditional poems picture male birds. It also makes reference to a palm tree that has probably been cut off and almost disappeared from our home land.

⁴⁴ The main house on an estate is called a Manor, or Manor house; however, we use the word Big House because this was the word used in the American translation (FREYRE, 1946).

is pointed out by Freyre as a typical “local feature”, which surprised every foreign visitor. This custom is reflected in Oswald’s “Brazil wood Manifesto”:

The Brazil wood Poetry is a Sunday dining room, with birds singing in the reduced cage woods, a thin fellow composing a waltz for the flute and Maricota reading the newspaper. In the newspaper you can find all the present.

“The present”, or current events, was what both poet-journalists, Whitman and Oswald, portrayed in their writings.

Following the path of interconnected relations that link various cultures, nations and writers, our research took us to *The Masters and The Slaves*, Freyre’s masterpiece, which had its origins in his thesis “Social Life in Brazil in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century”. He submitted this thesis to fulfill the requirements for an M.A. degree in the Faculty of Political Science, Columbia University, 1922. In 1931, he was invited by Stanford University to be one of its visiting professors. The noteworthy events took place after the courses, when he left California for New York, traveling throughout the United States. He went back to New York passing through Arizona, then on to New Mexico, and up to Texas (or down, for he was going to the “deep south”), where he saw landscapes that are quite similar to Brazil’s northern backlands. He observed, in those regions, stretches of land where the “vegetation looks like huge pieces of heavy green broken glass, sometimes sinister, stuck into the dry sand” (1984, p.lvi). Proceeding then to the “old slave-holding South”, he traveled through the “sugar cane fields” of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, the Carolinas, and Virginia, which comprise the “**deep South**”, where he found out that the “patriarchal regime of economy created almost the same type of aristocracy and big house, almost the same type of slave and slave shed as in the north of Brazil and certain parts of the south;” (1984, p.lvi). Finally, he advises those who wish to study Brazilian History:

Knowing the so-called “**deep South**” is an imposition to every one who studies the patriarchal formation and slave-holding economy of Brazil. The same influences of production and labor techniques – monoculture and slavery - united themselves in that English part of America, like in the Antilles and Jamaica, to produce similar social results to the ones observed in our country. Sometimes they are so similar that only the accessories change: differences in language, race and form of religion. (FREYRE, 1984, pp. lvi-ii)

Freyre identified specifically where there was a close link between Brazil and the United States: the patriarchal mentality that pervades our society. Furthermore, when invited to become a writer in English, like Joseph Conrad⁴⁵ had been, after his friends and professors had realized his writing talent when he was still a student at Baylor University and later at Columbia University, he felt that if he had to become a writer, he would do that in Portuguese, his mother tongue, to which he was mystically connected. He wrote in his diary⁴⁶, while thinking of creating a style, but not a fictional style: “Perhaps the continuation of my first efforts of resurrection of a more intimate Brazilian past [...] until this past becomes flesh. Life. Defeat of time”. This idea of reviving the past, bringing it to life and overcoming time is present also in Whitman’s poetic program, stated in his 1855 Preface, as these two excerpts show:

[...] re-examine all you have been told in school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem, and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body [...]

(WHITMAN, 1996, p.11)

[...] Without effort, and without exposing in the least how it is done the greatest poet brings the spirit of any or all events and passions and scenes and persons some more and some less, to bear on your individual character as you hear or read. To do this well is to compete with the laws that pursue and follow time. [...] Past and present and future are not disjoin’d but join’d. The greatest poet forms the consistence of what is to be from what has been and is. He drags the dead out of their coffins and stands them again on their feet. (WHITMAN, 1996, pp.12-3)

Coherently, these ideas appear in his poetry as well, when he calls the body and parts of the body as the real poems, and “what we call poems being merely pictures” (“Spontaneous Me”, WHITMAN, 1996, p.260) of the real poems: men, women, children, nature, and the nation, as he sings in “I Sing the Body Electric”, from “Children of Adam” (1996, pp.250-58).

⁴⁵ Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), Polish-born British novelist. His works include *Lord Jim* (1900), *Heart of Darkness* (1902), and *Nostramo* (1904).

⁴⁶ FREYRE, Gilberto. *Tempo morto e outros tempos: trechos de um diário de adolescência e primeira mocidade (Dead time and other times: passages from a diary of adolescence and beginning youth)*, 1915-1930. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1975. 268p. The Gilberto Freyre Foundation website has been of immense value in providing us with plenty of information that otherwise would be impossible to gather in so tight a time, especially biographical information. It is all available at: <<http://www.bvgf.fgf.org.br/portugues/index.html>>. Accessed on May 3, 2007.

Then, Freyre, similarly to Oswald in literature, was making, with his many friends and collaborators, a revolution in Brazilian sociology and anthropology, bringing Brazil to a new and modern scientific era⁴⁷. Both authors were pointing to the same direction after all: the union of a nation toward a better future, healthier, and free from old fashioned customs that hampered our progress, which can only be achieved by a deep awareness of our multifaceted character of a multiethnic and multicultural country. Speaking of a multifarious society, we must take into account that Freyre made a conference in the city of Rio de Janeiro, at the Society of Friends of America, on the 22nd of May, 1947, called “O Camarada Whitman”⁴⁸ (“Comrade Whitman”). In this conference, Freyre said that

Men who are really great are those who seek or can combine antagonisms, instead of embodying the exclusive ideal or interest of a class, of a race, of a nation, of a sect, of a creed. Whitman was himself an orchestra-man, affected by or through whom diverse and even contradictory ideals were expressed.

This is why Whitman is “a poet still more for today than for his time. It is the American people of today – of all Americas and not only the English one – who are absorbing him today.” We can not say that Freyre was wrong, not even now. On the contrary, now is the right time for *Leaves of Grass* to appear in our language with strength, now is the time for Whitman to come to our land, for the present time in Brazil is still very similar to the United States of the nineteenth century, politically speaking. Besides, we need something more reliable than politics to help us look for a better present and future. Unfortunately, this similarity in politics is from a negative point of view. However, we are not talking about how the political system is organized; we really mean the social damages caused by dishonest conduct by its members and what this misconduct can do to the life of the nation. In 1863, after having lived for a month in Washington, and been visiting and helping wounded soldiers in improvised hospitals around the city, and getting his first job at the Paymaster’s office, the poet could already notice that Washington was a place for procrastination. Although he was

⁴⁷ Freyre wrote in his Preface to *The Masters and The Slaves*: “It was as if everything depended on me and on those from my generation; on our way of solving secular [worldly, temporal] questions. And of Brazilian problems, there was none that troubled me more than that of miscegenation” (1984, p. lvii).

⁴⁸ The complete text of this conference is available at:

<<http://www.bvgf.fgf.org.br/portugues/obra/discursos.html>>; accessed on 7 January 2008.

working “on the top floor of a large building”, as Allen (1955, p.287) describes Whitman’s initial time there, “with a grand view of the Potomac and Georgetown”⁴⁹, the poet “could not enjoy the view for the misery he daily witnessed among the soldiers”, who came from the hospitals to collect their pay only to find that there was no pay for them. The poet, who was working there part time in order to have the rest of his time for his writing and visiting the sick men, using his pay to provide his own livelihood and buy food and writing paper for them, had to see men, who were giving their lives to defend the nation, spend weeks in the capital city of the country and be denied their own income. Unfortunately, he had to witness this large mass of common men become sad, distressed and even sicker, because they were neglected by the Government of which they were servants.

Whitman had gone there in search of his brother George, who had enlisted in 1861, and was wounded in December, 1862. Whitman “did not know” that his “sympathy for the sick and discouraged would make it impossible for him to leave Washington” until the end of the war, and indeed until the following decade (1874, when he moved to Camden, N.J.). Whitman predicted his own future in his 1855 Preface, when he wrote that

[...] This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men, go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young and with the mothers of families [...] (WHITMAN, 1996, p.11)

Another reason for which Whitman is needed in the tropics is that a scene that shows simple people who serve their own country being mistreated by their own Government, which is supported by the tax paid by these same people, is a daily sight in Brazil, especially in the big cities of our homeland. In this sense, we could use Canby’s expression here (1943, p.164), who says that the evils of “national politics” are “malodorous”. Although he was referring to a specific aspect of the American political system, the “presidential convention”, we might use the term to describe the mismanagement of public resources in general, both in the U.S. and Brazil, which leads to unsatisfactory services provided by the State. Apart from the personal and literary record of what the poet felt when he saw the vivid effects of the war on the

⁴⁹ Georgetown is a neighborhood located Northwest of Washington D.C., along the Potomac River waterfront. Historically, it was a separate city, preceding the establishment of the city of Washington and the District of Columbia, which are in fact a single entity. It is like Brasília, the capital of Brazil, which is a Federal District.

American people, he also left a historical and political analysis of the fratricidal events that lacerated the country in a document called “Origins of Attempted Secession” (WHITMAN, 1996, pp.1018-24; included in “Specimen Days and Collect”), in which he shows that both the North and the South⁵⁰ were responsible for the war as much as for slavery, for both sides had interests in it. The importance of this document for the poet’s career is that it demonstrates that he was not a naïve person, nor was his belief in democracy a mere fantasy. Despite the moral horrors that he describes, he ultimately believes that only democracy can offer practical solutions to these problems, for he never lost his faith, especially in the common people. This is why we decided to include a large part of it as an annex to our work. Also to show that even if Whitman was not so interested in practical politics as a close observer after 1860, as he remarks in “Origins of Attempted Secession”, he never lost his ability to see his country critically. His sympathy for the common man is one of the aspects highlighted by Freyre in his conference, but his capacity for inclusion was such that he could never obliterate it in himself, which is also emphasized by our sociologist:

Whitman was one of those in whom the idea or sentiment of synthesis, which will characterize the world of tomorrow, appeared early. He who exalted the “divine average” [...] always opposed, to the democratic

⁵⁰ Whitman’s position agrees with Tocqueville’s, as the latter describes it in Chapter XVIII of *Democracy in America*, in the section titled: “SITUATION OF THE BLACK POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES, AND DANGERS WITH WHICH ITS PRESENCE THREATENS THE WHITES”. Although they are a bit long, it is important to quote these passages here, so that we can have a clear view of both men on the same issue: “As slavery recedes, the black population follows its retrograde course and returns with it towards those tropical regions whence it originally came. [...] Although the Americans abolish the principle of slavery, they do not set their slaves free. To illustrate this remark, I will quote the example of the state of New York. In 1788 this state prohibited the sale of slaves within its limits, which was an indirect method of prohibiting the importation of them. Thenceforward the number of Negroes could only increase according to the ratio of the natural increase of population. But eight years later, a more decisive measure was taken, and it was enacted that all children born of slave parents after the 4th of July 1799 should be free. No increase could then take place, and although slaves still existed, slavery might be said to be abolished.

As soon as a Northern state thus prohibited the importation, no slaves were brought from the South to be sold in its markets. On the other hand, as the sale of slaves was forbidden in that state, an owner could no longer get rid of his slave (who thus became a burdensome possession) otherwise than by transporting him to the South. But when a Northern state declared that the son of the slave should be born free, the slave lost a large portion of his market value, since his posterity was no longer included in the bargain, and the owner had then a strong interest in transporting him to the South. Thus the same law prevents the slaves of the South from coming North and drives those of the North to the South.

But there is another cause more powerful than any that I have described. The want of free hands is felt in a state in proportion as the number of slaves decreases. But in proportion as labor is performed by free hands, slave labor becomes less productive; and the slave is then a useless or onerous possession, whom it is important to export to the South, where the same competition is not to be feared. Thus the abolition of slavery does not set the slave free, but merely transfers him to another master, and from the North to the South.”

principle of average, the somewhat aristocratic principle - in the sense of exaltation of quality – of personality. The creative personality who is aware of its power to create, synthesize, interpret differences and antagonisms.

[...] This was what was let out of Whitman in his books: a personalistic and fraternal sense of life and community that was so intense that sometimes it seemed like crazy homosexuality, when it would only be bisexuality sublimated into fraternalism. There was in Whitman no poet, and even less an impersonal, inhuman, esoteric man of letters, separated from his condition of man, person, politician. Poet, politician and man formed in him a set of inseparable activities and conditions. In this he was like a Hispanic. Hispanics are more like this: whole personalities from whom you can only isolate the writer or artist, the politician or mystic, by killing in the intellectual, in the artist or in the public man the person or private man, such is the way the nerves of one continue in the other. When Whitman said one day in a quite Whitmanlike fashion, characterizing one of his books:

*"Comerado, this is no book
Who touches this touches a man"*

he spoke English that looks like it was translated from Spanish or Portuguese.

Thus, this “whole” Hispanic personality called Whitman who did break away from tradition, but did not deny or forget it, only needed forms and shapes which corresponded to the new world, to the new vision of it, to its dynamics, and especially to its human developments, material progress and geographical expansion. In this manner, developing new poetic forms was the natural consequence for a poet who was not separated from his human and political dimensions. When he spoke of “superior models” in the 1855 Preface, he meant to say these new forms, new approaches to what was new in the world. Although he respected traditional forms of poetry and its themes, they did not seem fit to approach the reality of America in the nineteenth century and to describe American life or see it “one step nearer”, to quote Emerson again. We can exemplify this by quoting (Henry Wadsworth) Longfellow, a “traditional prosodist”, placing him side by side with Whitman, so that we can compare their poetic products (the next section will provide some information about the former).

However, before we do that, we must add a few words about these authors. We believe that is Whitman a “synthesis”, a man, journalist, poet and politician all embedded in one whole indivisible personality, as well as the writers mentioned in this section, Oswald, Pessoa, Tocqueville and Freyre, being Oswald and Freyre considered with especial relevance to our country. These last two should be considered especially for the fact that they are remarkable

Brazilians and for the reason that they are more similar to Whitman in the sense that they express in full our multiculturalism, multi-ethnicity and religiousness. As we are reminded by Tocqueville in the previous quotations, interbreeding or miscegenation is an essential step towards peace between races, which means that cultural blending is an important part of it. Actually, the mixing of cultures is an important aspect of bringing distant races near. This broader view of Whitman and *Leaves of Grass* is what these authors have taught us, showing that we can not separate literature from culture and society. This is the deeper sense of humanity that they all bring us; that we all have a trace of the races that make up our nationality in our soul or in our body, which is the factor that in the end promotes peace within a country. This has an “en masse” effect as well as an effect on the individual, beyond the sole aesthetic value of one’s poetry or prose works. All this work must bring a higher sense to the individual too, as the poet chants in section 50 of “Song of Myself”: “There is that in me—I do not know what it is—but I know it is in me. [...] It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan—it is eternal life—it is Happiness” (WHITMAN, 1996, p.246). As a last word to this section, we will quote a passage by Harold Bloom, on Whitman, this “so considerable a humanist” (1995, p.264):

I remember one summer, in crisis, being at Nantucket with a friend who was absorbed in fishing, while I read aloud to both of us from Whitman and recovered myself again. When I am alone and read aloud to myself, it is almost always Whitman, sometimes when I desperately need to assuage grief. Whether you read aloud to someone else or in the solitude, there is a peculiar appropriateness in chanting Whitman. He is the poet of our climate, never to be replaced, unlikely ever to be matched. (BLOOM, 1995, p.270)

Whitman is the poet of the American climate, however, as pointed out by Freyre, Whitman is not only the poet of the English America, he is the poet of all Americas.

3.6 Longfellow

Longfellow (1807–82), a contemporary of Whitman, though “certainly more universally loved”, even though he did not possess “so colorful a personality” (ALLEN, 1955, p.541), wrote some of the most popular poems in American literature, in which he created a body of romantic American legends. Although a sympathetic and ethical person, Longfellow

was not involved in religious and social issues of the time.⁵¹ However, he did display some interest in the abolitionist cause. He achieved great fame with poems such as *Evangeline* (1847), *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858), and *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863). He used uncommon, old rhythms to weave myths of the American past. Nevertheless, Longfellow was “predominantly an iambic writer”, who included in his poetry variations of this poetic pattern, such as “elisions, the trochaic substitutions, the spondaic effects”, but all within the “regular iambic patterns” (WRIGHT, 1985, p.90).

The main problem, then, is that Longfellow did not penetrate the spirit of America. His mastery of poetry was “of a kind which [forced] him to turn away from the living world and to sing either of Europe or of the American past” (1985, p.90). A quotation⁵² from “Death of Longfellow” (WHITMAN, 1996, pp.941-3) shall provide us with more specific information on the subject:

Camden, April 3, '82.— [...] Longfellow in his voluminous works seems to me not only to be eminent in the style and forms of poetical expression that mark the present age, (an idiosyncrasy, almost a sickness, of verbal melody,) but to bring what is always dearest as poetry to the general human heart and taste, and probably must be so in the nature of things. He is certainly the sort of bard and counteractant most needed for our materialistic, self-assertive, money-worshipping, Anglo-Saxon races, and especially for the present age in America—an age tyrannically regulated with reference to the manufacturer, the merchant, the financier, the politician and the day workman—for whom and among whom he comes as the poet of melody, courtesy, deference—poet of the mellow twilight of the past in Italy, Germany, Spain, and in Northern Europe—poet of all sympathetic gentleness—and universal poet of women and young people. I should have to think long if I were ask'd to name the man who has done more, and in more valuable directions, for America.

I doubt if there ever was before such a fine intuitive judge and selector of poems. His translations of many German and Scandinavian pieces are said to be better than the vernaculars. He does not urge or lash. His influence is like good drink or air. He is not tepid either, but always vital, with flavor, motion, grace. He strikes a splendid average, and does not sing exceptional passions, or humanity's jagged escapades. He is not revolutionary, brings nothing offensive or new, does not deal hard blows. On the contrary, his songs soothe and heal, or if they excite, it is a healthy and agreeable excitement. His very anger is gentle, is at second hand, (as in the “Quadroon Girl” and the “Witnesses.”)

[...]

⁵¹ Longfellow visited Whitman in Camden in the summer of 1879, a fact that Whitman remembered with pride. At the poet's death, Whitman wrote a note for the press, called “Death of Longfellow.” This note was published in *Specimen Days*, which is a book of prose made up of 250 memoranda or short notes (WHITMAN, 1996, p.941-3).

⁵² The text quoted maintains its original punctuation.

To the ungracious complaint-charge of his want of racy nativity and special originality, I shall only say that America and the world may well be reverently thankful—can never be thankful enough—for any such singing-bird vouchsafed out of the centuries, without asking that the notes be different from those of other songsters; adding what I have heard Longfellow himself say, that ere the New World can be worthily original, and announce herself and her own heroes, she must be well saturated with the originality of others, and respectfully consider the heroes that lived before Agamemnon.

It is quite interesting to note that while praising Longfellow by cataloguing his qualities, Whitman at the same time is highlighting the defects, because the very qualities are what prevented Longfellow from being a truly American poet of his time: “almost a sickness, of verbal melody”, “He is certainly the sort of bard [...] most needed for our materialistic, self-assertive, money-worshipping, Anglo-Saxon races, [...] [at] an age tyrannically regulated with reference to the manufacturer, the merchant, the financier, the politician and the day workman [...]”. And for that age and people “he comes as the poet of melody, courtesy, deference—poet of the mellow twilight of the past in Italy, Germany, Spain, and in Northern Europe—poet of all sympathetic gentleness—and universal poet of women and young people.” The problem is that his mellowness, together with his “sickness, of verbal melody”, his gentleness and his saturation with “the originality of others” distanced him from the actual social, political and literary conditions of the New World. His focus on form made him depart from content and especially the source of content from which he was to derive his inspiration, that is, the interaction between the poet and the world before him. His distancing from immediate reality made him stay a step back far from things, to paraphrase Emerson. The poems cited by Whitman in his note may show this more clearly. Although they are a bit long, it is worth quoting them in full in order for us to see this flowering of happy melody, despite the theme sung, which is naturally horrifying:

“Quadroon Girl”

The Slaver in the broad lagoon
Lay moored with idle sail;
He waited for the rising moon,
And for the evening gale.

Under the shore his boat was tied,
And all her listless crew
Watched the gray alligator slide
Into the still bayou.

Odors of orange-flowers, and spice,
 Reached them from time to time,
 Like airs that breathe from Paradise
 Upon a world of crime.

The Planter, under his roof of thatch,
 Smoked thoughtfully and slow;
 The Slaver's thumb was on the latch,
 He seemed in haste to go.

He said, "My ship at anchor rides
 In yonder broad lagoon;
 I only wait the evening tides,
 And the rising of the moon.

Before them, with her face upraised,
 In timid attitude,
 Like one half curious, half amazed,
 A Quadroon maiden stood.

Her eyes were large, and full of light,
 Her arms and neck were bare;
 No garment she wore save a kirtle bright,
 And her own long, raven hair.

And on her lips there played a smile
 As holy, meek, and faint,
 As lights in some cathedral aisle
 The features of a saint.

"The soil is barren,--the farm is old";
 The thoughtful planter said;
 Then looked upon the Slaver's gold,
 And then upon the maid.

His heart within him was at strife
 With such accursed gains:
 For he knew whose passions gave her life,
 Whose blood ran in her veins.

But the voice of nature was too weak;
 He took the glittering gold!
 Then pale as death grew the maiden's cheek,
 Her hands as icy cold.

The Slaver led her from the door,
 He led her by the hand,
 To be his slave and paramour
 In a strange and distant land!

“The Witnesses”

In Ocean's wide domains,

Half buried in the sands,
Lie skeletons in chains,
With shackled feet and hands.

Beyond the fall of dews,
Deeper than plummet lies,
Float ships, with all their crews,
No more to sink nor rise.

There the black Slave-ship swims,
Freighted with human forms,
Whose fettered, fleshless limbs
Are not the sport of storms.

These are the bones of Slaves;
They gleam from the abyss;
They cry, from yawning waves,
"We are the Witnesses!"

Within Earth's wide domains
Are markets for men's lives;
Their necks are galled with chains,
Their wrists are cramped with gyves.

Dead bodies, that the kite
In deserts makes its prey;
Murders, that with affright
Scare school-boys from their play!

All evil thoughts and deeds;
Anger, and lust, and pride;
The foulest, rankest weeds,
That choke Life's groaning tide!

These are the woes of Slaves;
They glare from the abyss;
They cry, from unknown graves,
"We are the Witnesses!"⁵³

The first thing we notice is the divorce between content and form. It is like children merrily chanting the most terrible disgrace, in a state of total unconsciousness. As the poet says in the poem about the slaver: "The voice of nature was too weak". Actually, it was so weak that it was dying, and the poem is a proof of that, since it goes on singing joyfully the disgraceful destiny of the quadroon girl, taken to be the "paramour" (a lover in an adulterous relationship) of the slaver, "pale as death", with "icy cold" hands. It is death anticipated. It is a happy melody describing a deadly situation, which is a symptom of the "sickness" diagnosed by

⁵³ One may read these poems at the Complete Poetical Works of Longfellow available at: <http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/lit/poetry/TheCompletePoeticalWorksofHenryWadsworthLongfellow/Chap1.htm>>. Accessed on July 30, 2007.

Whitman in Longfellow's poetry. We will never deny Longfellow's literary importance, but we can not be blind to his incongruities. Then again, in the second poem, there is a merry voice singing the "woes of Slaves" (misery, misfortune, calamity) crying "We are the Witnesses", while the poet seems to forget what those bones are witnesses to. The impression the poem gives is that the poet is so horrified at those sights that he tries to put curtains to prevent the reader from suffering the real impact the scenes will have on him. This is exactly the opposite of what Whitman was doing, as he stated in the 1855 Preface: "[...] I will not have in my writings any elegance, or effect, or originality, to hang in the way between me and the rest like curtains. I will have nothing hang in the way, not the richest curtains." These curtains he mentions are the artificiality of poetic elements when used to make the poem seem beautiful to the reader's ears and eyes, but which at the same time hide the truthfulness of what is seen, because the poet is not able to "deal hard blows", or is afraid to shock the reader with crude reality. Only a poet who is "Turbulent, fleshy and sensual, eating, drinking and breeding;" and "No sentimentalist" ("Song of Myself", section 24) could sing "notes" that are "different from those of other songsters".

3.7 *Leaves of Grass in Brazil*

As unusual notes from an uncommon singer, we will offer in the body of our work the re-creation in Portuguese of the following books/poems from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*: "INSCRIPTIONS"; "Starting from Paumanok"; "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"; "SEA-DRIFT"; "MEMORIES OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN"; "By Blue Ontario's Shore"; "Proud Music of the Storm"; "Passage to India"; "Prayer of Columbus"; "The Sleepers".

Considering that the *Leaves* was published in England and translated into German (1870) and French still in the nineteenth century, and translated into Italian (*Foglie di Erba*, by Luigi Gamberale) in 1900 (and a reprint in 1907), and into Spanish in 1912⁵⁴, and into

⁵⁴ In the first section of the "Introduction to Walt Whitman, *Poemas*, by Álvaro Armando Vasseur", by Matt Cohen and Rachel Price, in which the authors discuss the presence of Whitman in Latin America and Spain, they state that "Only with Vasseur's [...] 1912 translation did Whitman become available and important to generations of Latin American poets, from the residual *modernistas* to the region's major twentieth-century

many other languages today, receiving acclaim and admiration from authors such as Jorge Luis Borges, Pessoa and Lorca, who are akin to Brazilian writers, it is a mystery why it has not received appropriate attention from Brazilian editors up to now. A few incomplete editions and a popular one are not enough. Moreover, if we take into account that *Leaves of Grass* was only properly published in the U.S. in 1881, we are doing to Whitman today in Brazil what his countrymen did to him in the past, that is, denying him his rightful place among us, especially for what Freyre has said about his being a personality akin to Hispanics and also to Brazilians. This is another reason to make us understand that he is needed in our land: real democracy is lacking in this tropical Republic, which was saluted by Walt Whitman in 1889 at its birth, just after he had received news of a new republic in the Americas (Brazil adopted the republican system on the 15th of November, 1889), with a poem called "A Christmas Greeting" (From a Northern Star-Group to a Southern, in "Good-Bye My Fancy".), translated by us and inserted in our previous work⁵⁵:

WELCOME, Brazilian brother--thy ample place is ready;
 A loving hand--a smile from the North--a sunny instant hail!
 (Let the future care for itself, where it reveals its troubles, impediments,
 Ours, ours the present throe, the democratic aim, the acceptance and the
 faith;)
 To thee to-day our reaching arm, our turning neck--to thee from us the
 expectant eye,
 Thou cluster free! thou brilliant lustrous one! thou, learning well
 The true lesson of a nation's light in the sky,
 (More shining than the Cross, more than the Crown,)
 The height to be superb humanity.

figures, including Peruvian vanguardist César Vallejo, Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, and the Argentine Jorge Luis Borges.” As mentioned before, the text of the Spanish edition is available at <<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/index.html>>. Accessed on May 22, 2007.

⁵⁵ “Uma Saudação de Natal”

De um Grupo-Estelar do Norte a um do Sul. 1889-90.

BEM-VINDO, irmão brasileiro--teu amplo posto está pronto;
 Esta mão carinhosa--um sorriso do Norte--uma instantânea saudação solar!
 (Deixa o futuro cuidar de si mesmo, onde ele revela seus obstáculos, barreiras,
 Os nossos, os nossos a pontada atual, a meta democrática, a aprovação e a fé;)
 A ti hoje nosso braço estendido, nosso pescoço volvente--a ti nosso olho expectante,
 Tu livre de grupo! tu brilhante lustroso! tu aprendendo bem,
 A verdadeira lição da luz de uma nação no céu,
 (Mais luzente do que a Cruz, mais do que a Coroa,)
 A altura para ser a humanidade soberba. (SARAIVA, 1995, p.5)
 (The Library of Congress records this historical fact, which is available at:
 <<http://international.loc.gov/intldl/brhtml/br-1/br-1-6-2.html#track2>>; accessed on May 22, 2007.)

The verses in parenthesis point to a biblical source, not because of the “Cross” in particular, but because the words are an echo of Matthew, 6:34: “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.” Like the prophet, the poet focus and calls attention to the present moment, to the “evils” of today, for now is the right time for action. A change of attitude like the one that took place in Brazil and was hailed by him with joy is what the nation needs. We must not lose memory of our past, to learn the lessons history teaches us; however, every action must be carried out at the present time, otherwise, we will only repeat mechanically the same old mistakes.

As for the part of the “superb humanity” living in Brazil, we must retribute the American bard for his prompt acknowledgment of our new reality, and our work here is our gift of gratitude to him. To show that he deserves more than what he has received up to the present time, we will take a brief look at the publications already produced in Portuguese. The oldest edition is the famous *Folhas das Folhas de Relva* (something like *Leaves from Leaves of Grass*), a collection of poems and fragments translated by Geir Campos, published by Brasiliense in 1983 (9th reprint in 2002; actually, the original edition was published by Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1964). As Geir declares in the afterword (2002, p.140), he did not do a common translation. What he undertook to do was an “over-interpretation of the poems and fragments.” The aim of both “the editor and the translator” was to take Whitman’s poetry to the “unscholarly Brazilian reader”, which led to another “aspect” of this translation: the re-distribution of the whitmanian verses into shorter segments or parts (p.141). Finally, the translator leaves an unanswered question to the reader: whether Whitman’s poetry was intimately linked to the form of his verses. According to what we have presented before, the form of the poems was definitely linked to its content, because that was one of Whitman’s point about creating a new form for the new poetry portraying a new world. A quick example of his work can be seen in the following passage from section 1 of “Salut au Monde”, which will be compared to ours just by placing them one after the other for a visual analysis (the alliterations of “gliDing wonDers” and “SightS and SoundS” are the key elements in this part of the poem, re-created by us as “Prodígios Planantes” and “CenárioS e SonS” – the C sounds like S when it is followed by E and I in Portuguese, and all the words have the same meaning as the original -, which are neglected by Campos; in fact, the word “gliding” disappears from his translation, which breaks the whole phono-semantic sequence: the adjective is replaced by a noun: “desfile”, a word that means “parade”):

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.

GEIR CAMPOS:

Segure minha mão, Walt Whitman!
 Esse desfile de maravilhas!
 Essas vistas e sons!
 Esses elos unidos infinitos
 cada qual enganchado no seguinte,
 cada qual respondendo aos outros todos,
 cada terra com todos partilhando a terra.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Oh segura minha mão Walt Whitman!
 Que prodígios planantes! que cenários e sons!
 Que infindos elos unidos, cada um ligado ao seguinte,
 Cada um bastando a todos, cada um partilhando a terra com todos.

After that, there is another edition by Imago Editora (2000), a literal translation of “Song of Myself” done by André Cardoso. It is a bilingual edition, with a very careful translation, an honest work, without any pretentiousness, yet, a very useful one to attentive (or inattentive) readers, for its fidelity of meaning. Then, there is a bilingual publication by Plano Editora, another selection of poems translated by Ramsés Ramos (2001). It is a literal translation, or almost that. There are changes that make us think it is not so literal. For example, let us compare the last poem from “Children of Adam”, “As Adam Early in the Morning”, which shows that the translator inserted a word not present in the original, “veredas”, which means “paths / ways”, or a green forest in a desert-like region, when the original only means a leafy recess, a cottage, or a retreat; also, there is a change in the third line, which begins in Portuguese with the word “quando” (when), which does not exist in English, and by doing so the translator eliminated the imperative tone of the passage, followed by the inclusion of the expression “por favor” (please). Adam in the poem is self-reliant, he is not begging, he is commanding, because he knows he is the father of humanity, the first man made in the image of God, which is kept in our own re-creation of this piece:

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.

RAMOS:

Feito Adão de manhãzinha
 Abrindo veredas refrescado pelo sono,
 Quando eu passar, por favor, ouça, venha,
 Toque-me, pouse a palma da mão em meu corpo
 - não tenha medo do meu corpo (2001, p.89)

OUR RE-CREATION:

Feito Adão de manhã cedo,
 Saindo do abrigo refeito com o sono,
 Vê-me onde passo, ouve minha voz, aproxima,
 Toca-me, toca a palma de tua mão em meu corpo quando passo,
 Não tenhas medo de meu corpo. (SARAIVA, p.76)

Apart from these, there is another bilingual edition, this time a translation of the 1855 *Leaves of Grass* published by Iluminuras (2005), whose translator is Rodrigo Garcia Lopes, who is also a poet, journalist, and composer. This edition contains everything from the original edition: the preface, the twelve poems accompanied by notes to the poems, a postface, and bibliography. In the postface, the translator gives detailed historical, economic, social and literary information on the United States of the nineteenth century, and discusses Whitman's "basic procedures" of writing, such as borrowing words from other languages, parallelism, free verse, catalogues. In short, it is a good homage to Whitman. We shall also quote a passage to compare to our own work, from what is now section 5:

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 valvèd voice.

LOPES:

Vadie na relva comigo Solte o nó da garganta,
 Nada de palavras música rima alguma nem bons-costumes ou sermões,
 nem mesmo os melhores,
 Só quero sua calma, o zunzum de sua voz valvulada. (p.49)

OUR RE-CREATION:

Vagueia comigo na relva solta a trava da garganta,
 Nem palavras, nem música ou rima quero nem hábito ou palestra, nem
 mesmo os melhores,
 Somente o sossego me agrada, o rumor de tua voz valvulada.
 (SARAIVA, p.12)

In this passage, the first and third verses are, poetically speaking, the most beautiful, because they are based on rhythm and repetition of sounds that make them penetrate our ears smoothly. The relation between "Loafe" and "grass" is re-enacted, in our re-creation, with the combination of the V and G sounds in "Vagueia comigo na relva", although in our vernacular

we lose the F (unvoiced sound), we gain the V (voiced version of the same sound). If the verse is whispered, the V's become F's. Then, there is the L from "relva", to compensate for the lack of it in "Vagueia". In the second hemistich of the line (as speakers of Portuguese, we can not escape our natural ear, which apprehends this line as two verses of six metrical syllables each), the link is between "loose", "stop" and "throat", re-designed in "solta a trava da garganta". The "sol-" from "solta" re-constitutes "loose" anagrammatically. "Trava", which is the stopping element in the throat, carries the T, a stop sound (compare the sounds of "lot of" and "both of"; the TH is a continuant sound, because the sound continues, while T really stops). This T sound appears only at the end of "garganta", fading away, as it does in "throat". We can see that Lopes's translation is not concerned about these aspects of poetry. He inverts the position of the persons in "Vadie na relva comigo" (which should read like "[you, my soul] loafe with me on the grass", that is, we two together on the grass, with nothing between us; on the contrary, the grass will be the third element in this triad, receiving us two on her leafy lap), placing visually the grass between the poet and his soul. In the second part, "solte o nó da garganta" sounds like the opposite of what it means, with a falling note on "nó", and not the ripping out of a stop that is blocking the poet's soul from expressing itself through him. Besides, "solta" is the imperative form of the verb, whereas "solte" is the subjunctive form.

The third verse, again an alexandrine (a verse of twelve syllables), divided into two hemistiches, has wonderful alliterations: the L sounds in "Only the lull I like," and the combination of H and V sounds in "the hum of your valvèd voice". In Lopes's version, almost all of this is lost. He manages to repeat the sounds S and Q/C in "só quero sua calma". "Hum" indicates a low natural sound as from a bee or of singing without opening the lips, although it might indicate busy activity as well. In Portuguese "zunzum" is an onomatopoeic word that means "buzzing" and "rumor" (gossip). The rest is very similar in Portuguese: "voz valvulada". In our work, we re-constructed the chain of L sounds through the use of S sounds: "Somente o sossego me agrada", and the K from like is re-issued in the G sounds (K is voiceless and G is voiced, which is the only difference between them). For the second part, we chose the word "rumor", which means the noise made by things moving but also voices murmuring, which is why we have chosen this one. We preferred "rumor" because it is the sound of voices murmuring and the R sounds like the H in English, keeping the same sequence of sounds of the original: "o rumor de tua voz valvulada".

Finally, there is a popular edition by Martin Claret publishing house of the complete text of the *Leaves (Folhas de Relva, 2005)*, with an introduction by Luciano Alves Meira, the

translator. Meira comments briefly on Whitman and the book, but nothing is said of the operation of bringing the whole *Leaves of Grass* into Portuguese, which must have been a tremendous and long work. Nevertheless, in order to have an idea of what was done, we shall again compare his work to ours. Placing the texts side by side might enable us to figure out its workings. We will analyze the first part of section 22 of “Song of Myself”:

You sea! I resign myself to you also—I guess what you mean;
 I behold from the beach your crooked inviting fingers,
 I believe you refuse to go back without feeling of me,
 We must have a turn together—I undress—hurry me out of sight of the
 land,
 Cushion me soft, rock me in billowy drowse,
 Dash me with amorous wet—I can repay you.

MEIRA:

Tu, ó mar! Eu também me entrego a ti – adivinho o que queres dizer,
 Vejo da praia teus dedos deformados que me convidam,
 Creio que recusas retornar sem antes me sentir,
 Precisamos juntos dar uma volta, eu me dispo, me apresso para fora da vista
 da terra,
 Amortece-me suavemente, embala-me em encapelado adormecimento,
 Espirra-me tua umidade amorosa, eu posso te recompensar. (p.69)

OUR RE-CREATION:

Tu mar! Me entrego a ti também - entendo teu sentido,
 Contemplo da praia teus curvos dedos convidativos,
 Creio que te recusas a recuar sem me sentir,
 Devíamos sair juntos, dispo-me, corro pra longe dos olhos da terra,
 Me acolhe suave, me embala em ondulante modorra,
 Borrifa-me com amorosa umidade, posso te recompensar.

(SARAIVA, p.26)

The most striking difference between the two texts in Portuguese is that Meira’s has more words than ours. Sometimes too many words (“que me convidam” for “inviting”) or too long words (“encapelado adormecimento” has more syllables than our “ondulante modorra”). As Whitman’s verses are direct and precise in depicting the poet talking to the sea, both in meaning and in grammar, the idea is to be as precise as possible in our language, considering that the words in our vernacular have more syllables than in English. This should be a reason to make us look for the shortest words always. Our choice of words shows that even in such situations, there is something we can do to make the poem as efficient as it is in the original. In this sense we can say that this passage is simple, given the choice of words and the sentence structures presented. On the other hand, the content is intense and sensual, it is a romantic scene: an offering and surrender. In verses like these, which are difficult to re-create

because of their intense emotional discharge, we must try to do what the author did: describe everything as accurately as possible. Like Whitman, who worked and re-worked his verses to find the form he wanted them to have⁵⁶, we have to re-work the lines time and again, so that we may achieve the best poetic product. We believe that segments like “entendo teu sentido”, “Contemplo da praia”, “recusas a recuar”, “me embala em ondulante modorra” and “Borrifa-me com amorosa umidade” are good solutions to the challenges faced by us here.

3.8 Some examples of re-creation: Fitzgerald, Joyce, Dickinson

Naturally, no poet can achieve mastery over form without proper exercise, which means studying versification, past and present poetry, and writing and re-writing his works until finding the best form for the content he wants to convey. To revolutionize an artistic mode of expression, it is necessary to know previous and contemporary expressions of these arts and their artists, for the reason that we can not revolutionize something based on nothing, which would then be invention and not revolution. Whitman is an example of that; he knew the poetry he was re-forming. Except for occasions when we are so inspired that poems begin to form into our minds almost entirely ready to be put to paper and we only have to write them down, most of the time they need re-working. A translator who intends to re-create poetry the way we have described must follow the same course. He needs training in this field. Before we give examples from *Leaves of Grass*, we will show some re-creations done by us as a preparation to the *Leaves*.

The general idea is to convey content, or meaning (the signified), as faithfully as possible, and to re-construct, or re-build the structural elements of the poem (signifiers) in our language. As we stated at the beginning, besides the semantic content, our aim is to re-create, as much as possible, the aesthetic elements of the original, their phonic and visual properties, so that we can integrate form and meaning in a single poetic act. However, we always keep in

⁵⁶ In their introduction to *Leaves of Grass and other writings* (WHITMAN, 2002, p. xliii), Bradley and Blodgett assert, about Whitman’s uncollected poems included in this edition, that the poet “[...] wrote with such abundance that he knew selection to be an unceasing problem, as it is indeed that of any artist, but with him a particularly pressing one, for he had a gradually developing schema within which to direct his essential purpose—to celebrate the individual (himself as symbol), the nation, and his intuition of final things. To conform to this purpose, he had worked out through the years, as we have seen, a structure that was essentially complete by 1881. To this he adhered faithfully, but he had much left over [...]. It is a great mistake to think of Whitman as an uncritical genius whose prodigality led him into wastefulness.” A few pages later (p. xlvi), they politely refer to the American poet William Carlos William (1883-1963) as having been “affected by inadequate knowledge” when the latter said that Whitman only knew how to give birth to poems and send them to the world, thus having no capacity to work on their form.

mind that we can not sacrifice one thing to the detriment of the other. That means a transposition of the original significance of the words, without bending or twisting its meaning, and a re-construction of its aesthetic elements in a likewise fashion, so that the work of art does not lose its beauty.

Based on this conception, we started to practice with some poets in particular. Some results of this poetical exercise are what we are going to show and comment from now on. We began with poets whose works are highly elaborate and place great challenges to a translator. The first examples will be from the *Rubaiyat* (word derived from an Arabic word for four; so it means “quatrains”, or stanzas of four lines) of Omar Khayyám (Persian mathematician and astronomer, 1048-1123), a type of poetry that is extremely concentrated (few words to express a lot of meaning), which mixes in a masterful way images and ideas mounted on a melody that flows smoothly, with perfect harmony between signified and signifier. The *Rubaiyat* was translated into English by Edward Marlborough Fitzgerald (1809-1883), who was an English writer and whose translations of about a hundred of the verses were the first (published in 1859) and best known ones in English.

We shall compare a couple of quatrains re-created by us to the English version and also to Augusto de Campos’s (1986, p.103) and Haddad’s translation (1964). Our standpoint is that Campos’s work and ours have been able to re-issue in Portuguese the beauty of Fitzgerald’s great work, although he may be accused of taking too much liberty with the original and using his creativity to make the translation poetically better than the original. The fact is that his own re-creation rendered a beautiful product in English. This reminds us of Pound’s infidelity to the form of the original but faithfulness to its tone. We shall see now if the difficulties posed by the quatrains were satisfactorily met. Even though the language in which the *Rubáiyát* was written, Persian, has a greater power of concision than western languages, as typical of oriental languages (HADDAD, 1964, p.17), and English being more concise than Portuguese, we have been able to be faithful to Fitzgerald’s precision. On the other hand, Haddad kept the quatrains, but stretched the verses to twelve metrical syllables, or alexandrines, and changed the rhyme scheme to aabb, thus making the verses more rhetorical and breaking the beautiful density, workmanship and surprise of Fitzgerald’s brilliant work. This **rubai** is especially beautiful because of its appeal to the enjoyment of life. The first line, with “make the most of”, is a reference to the Latin expression **Carpe Diem**, which means

“Seize the Day”, or catch, gather, pluck or live for the day, enjoying the current moment, for we do not know if tomorrow we will be alive. This idea first appeared in an Ode (I, 11) by roman poet Horace (65 - 8 AC), which reads: “*Carpe diem quam minimum credula postero*” (“Gather the day, for in the future you can believe the minimum”):

FITZGERALD:

XXIII

“Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust Descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer and—sans End!”

OUR RE-CREATION:

XXIII

“Prove todo o prazer que ainda vem,
Antes que Empurrem-nos ao Pó também:
Pó entre Pó e sob Pó, postados,
Sem Canção, sem Cantor, sem Vinho, e - sem!”

CAMPOS:

XXIII

Ah, vem, vivamos mais que a Vida, vem,
Antes que em Pó nos deponham também;
Pó sobre Pó, e sob o Pó, pousados,
Sem Cor, sem Sol, sem Som, sem Sonho – sem.

HADDAD:

XXV

VAMOS GOZAR o Amor! Provar cada Alegria
Que a vida possa dar! Seremos Poeira um dia:
Poeira a jazer na Poeira e sob a Poeira e assim
Sem Vinho e sem Amor, sem Música e sem fim!

Speaking of rhythm, in the English version, the first two lines and the fourth one are written in iamb feet, that is, as explained before, a metrical foot (in accentual syllabic verse) comprising an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one. The third line begins with a trochee (the opposite of an iamb) and continues with iambs. Campos is able to re-construct these iamb feet in the first and last line. However, this is an exception in Portuguese, where verse is syllabic, with accents on specific metrical syllables, and words tend to be mostly longer than in English, making it almost impossible to re-build this versification in our vernacular. In our recreation, the first and the last lines have accents on the third, sixth and tenth syllables, while the second and third lines have accents on the first, fourth, eighth and tenth syllables. Campos uses this pattern in his third line and another variant, this time with an accent on the seventh syllable, in the second line. We both maintain the rhyme scheme aaba; in both cases the chain

of D's from "dust" was kept with the use of the P's of "Pó"; the S sounds of "sans" remained in the S sounds of "sem", and the M's of "make" and "most" were recovered by the P sounds of "prove" and "prazer". We think our re-creation has got more beat to it because of the T's of "entre", "postados" and "Cantor", which sound like shots, added to the already deadly sounds of the plosive P's. (Plosive refers to a speech sound produced by complete closure of the oral passage and then release accompanied by a burst of air, as in the sound of p: pay, pie, port; and d: day, done, dim).

The next quatrain is another shining example of Fitzgerald's genius. Again Campos and we have been able to give it two different but efficient versions. Especially because Campos called our attention to the anagrammatic correlations between the words life/flies, life/lies, and finally the visual blowing of the flower in the last line: "*the F-L-O-W-E-R that once has b-L-O-W-n F-O-R e-V-E-R dies*" (1986, p.97), which shows the meaning of the words being graphically visible in its signifiers. This kind of poetry is what the Concrete poets called "inventive" poetry, in which there is an intricate connection between all the elements involved in the transmission of the poetic message: the sense is meaningful; it is beautiful, concise, precise, and visually designed on the letters of the word and heard in their sounds. Again as an exception in our language, both Campos and we were able to re-construct the "tu-TUM" of the iambic feet, while Haddad extended the verses to a tiring and crawling beat:

FITZGERALD:

LXV

Of threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain – This Life flies;
One thing is certain and the rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

OUR RE-CREATION:

LXV

Inferno ou Paraíso! uma voz soa:
Só há uma coisa certa – A Vida voa;
Uma coisa é certa e todo o resto é Loá;
Na Flor que se abre logo a cor escoa.

CAMPOS:

LXV

Inferno ou Céu, do beco sem saída
Uma só coisa é certa: voa a Vida,
E, sem a Vida, tudo o mais é Nada.
A Flor que for logo se vai, flor ida.

HADDAD:

LXV

O PARAÍSO e o Inferno! A Esperança e a Ameaça!
 Só uma coisa é certa – A nossa Vida passa;
 Só uma coisa é certa e é Falso tudo o mais:
 Flor que desabrochou não abrirá jamais!

We will give two other examples from the *Rubaiyat*, to demonstrate the development of our technique of poetic re-creation through the years. The first, **rubai XXVIII**: apart from the beautiful beat of the quatrain, the interesting aspect here is the internal or middle rhymes, especially between “Doctor”, “evermore” and “door”, (“DouTOR”, “FORa” and “POR”); and “About” and “out” (“tAL” and “umbrAL”). Haddad tried to do something similar, but he stopped after the second line, splitting the stanza, phonically, into two parts and losing the rhythm:

FITZGERALD:

XXVIII

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
 Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
 About it and about: but evermore
 Came out by the same door where in I went.

OUR RE-CREATION:

XXVIII

Eu quando jovem freqüentei com gosto
 Doutor e Santo e vi o Assunto posto
 De tal maneira e tal: mas como sempre
 O mesmo Umbral fora por mim transposto.

HADDAD:

XXVIII

EU MESMO freqüentei nos meus tempos de môço
 Muito Doutor e Santo e, cheio de alvoroço,
 Ouvi suas razões sobre o universo para
 Pela porta sair por onde eu, crente, entrara.

And now, as a final gift from the *Rubaiyat*, we offer **rubai VI**, which refers to the nightingale, the bird that is the symbol of singers. Although we find our re-recreation quite good, we know that it is impossible to insert all the information from the English **rubai** into Portuguese. It is too compressed to be expressed in decasyllables in our language (wine is repeated four times). We show it here only as homage to the Nightingale:

FITZGERALD:

VI

And David's Lips are lock't; but in divine
 High piping Pelevi, with "Wine! Wine! Wine!
 Red Wine!"--the Nightingale cries to the Rose
 That yellow Cheek of hers to 'incarnadine.

OUR RE-CREATION:

VI

Calaram os Lábios de Davi; do ninho,
 Piando em divino Pélevi, com "Vinho!
Tinto Vinho!" - o Rouxinol à Rosa
 Roga: faça encarnado o seu Rostinho.

Now we will quote two poems by James Joyce⁵⁷, one from *Chamber Music* and one called "Ecce Puer". Actually, Joyce is not famous for his poems, considered by some as minor work, or just a joke⁵⁸. James Augustine Aloysius Joyce (1882-1941) was an Irish writer, definitely one of the most influential writers of the 20th century. His best known works are his novels *Ulysses* (1922), *Finnegans Wake* (1939), and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). He is also the author of a short story collection, *Dubliners* (1914), some poems: "Ecce Puer", "Gas from a Burner", and "The Holy Office", and two books of poems: *Chamber Music* (a collection of 36 poems) and *Pomes Penyeach* (thirteen poems⁵⁹). Though neglected as second class literature when compared to his major works, we enjoy his poems and have almost finalized the translation of *Chamber Music*, from which we quote poem XVIII as homage to this great writer. We do think of them as small pearls, very well polished, and of soft lyricism. We tried to render them in our language as beautifully as possible, to maintain the tone and the concision of expression, and also the rhymes. In Portuguese, all verses have five metrical syllables (in English, they alternate between five and four), except for the last one, which has only three, like the original. Another aspect of the poem is the division of themes: the first two stanzas is the lover's complaint about false friends; the other two describe his finding consolation at his Sweetheart's bosom:

⁵⁷ Nowadays, James Joyce's Works are all available on the Internet. The website we have used as source is: <<http://joycean.org/>> Accessed on May 30, 2007.

⁵⁸ For more information, please, see article "But What Of The Poems?", by Gabriel Rosenkoetter, at the website essays page: <<http://joycean.org/>>.

⁵⁹ *Pomes Penyeach* was written from 1904 to 1924 and sold for the price of one shilling (12 old pence) or twelve francs. The title is a play on "poems" and "pomes" (the French word for apples). It was a custom in Ireland and England to offer thirteen items as a dozen, like the English "Baker's dozen" (thirteen loaves of bread instead of twelve). The first poem of *Pomes Penyeach*, "Tilly" is the bonus poem. Curiously, in 1856, the year after the publication of the first *Leaves*, "Whitman and his mother told everyone [...] that he had no occupation except "making pomes," and so far as known, this was literally true" (ALLEN, 1955, p.207).

XVIII

O Sweetheart, hear you
 Your lover's tale;
 A man shall have sorrow
 When friends him fail.

For he shall know then
 Friends be untrue
 And a little ashes
 Their words come to.

But one unto him
 Will softly move
 And softly woo him
 In ways of love.

His hand is under
 Her smooth round breast;
 So he who has sorrow
 Shall have rest.

OUR RE-CREATION:

XVIII

Ah Querida, escuta,
 Teu amante fala;
 Terá mágoa um homem
 Se amigos falham.

Saberá que eles
 Desleais serão
 Virar poucas cinzas
 Suas palavras vão.

Mas uma para ele
 Suave se move
 Suave e cortês
 Com amor comove.

Sob teu redondo
 Seio sua mão jaz;
 E ele que tem mágoa
 Terá paz.

In the article mentioned previously, “But What Of The Poems?,” by Gabriel Rosenkoetter, he says of “Ecce Puer”: “The poem, written upon the birth of his grandson and shortly after the death of his father, explains how the poet is torn between happiness at the birth and sorrow at the loss.” Indeed, the author makes a reference to the Gospel according to St. John, 19:5, which says “And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man!”, which in Latin reads “Ecce Homo”. And to John, 19:26-27, when Jesus, already on the cross, looking where

his mother was, he “saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! [Mulier, ecce filius tuus] / Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.” Likewise, Joyce says of his son: “Ecce Puer”, which means “Behold the boy”. Our purpose was to preserve the small structure of the verses, the rhymes and the economy of language, being as concise as the original in the balance of “joy and grief”.

“Ecce Puer”

Of the dark past
A child is born;
With joy and grief
My heart is torn.

Calm in his cradle
The living lies.
May love and mercy
Unclose his eyes!

Young life is breathed
On the glass;
The world that was not
Comes to pass.

A child is sleeping:
An old man gone.
O, father forsaken,
Forgive your son!

OUR RE-CREATION:

“Eccer Puer” (“Eis o Menino”)

Do baço passado
Um menino nasce;
Alegria e mágoa,
Meu peito desfaz-se.

Sereno em seu berço
Ressona o vivente.
Que Amor e Clemência
Seus olhos des-fechem!

A infância respira
Na vidraça;
Mundo que não era
Vem e passa.

Um menino dorme:
Um velho se foi.
Ah, pai sem amparo,

Seu filho perdoe!

Before giving examples from *Leaves of Grass*, we must pay a tribute to another poet who is always a source of hard and inventive work for any translator: Emily Dickinson (1830–86), who died at the age of 55, an American poet who was practically unknown during her lifetime. She lived almost all of her secluded life in Amherst, a town in Hampshire County, Massachusetts, United States. Her poetic craft produced 1775 poems, but only ten of them were published during her lifetime. Augusto de Campos (1986, pp.108-9), who re-created ten of her poems, included in the book *The Anticritic*, believes her poetic revolution is more radical than Whitman's. This is perhaps the reason why the Concrete poets never translated the latter. Campos compares Dickinson to Whitman, Emerson and Poe, and states that the “density of her poetic language” makes her more modern than the other poets, for her “concentration of thought”, “syntactic disruption” and her liberation from formal punctuation, characteristics of twentieth century poets. Bloom calls this feature of her poetry “formidable intensity” (1995, p.273), and says that, according to one of his requirements for including an author in the Canon, “strangeness”, Dickinson can be placed next to Dante, Milton and Whitman. Thus, we offer here the result of our work over poem XI from *Complete Poems*, Part One: Life⁶⁰ (published in 1924; actually, the complete edition of her works was done only in 1954). The main objective, aesthetically, was to bring the whispering atmosphere into our language, the S sounds, and her sharp notions sculpted on precise sentences that convey her knowledge of long observations of society from afar.

XI
 Much madness is divinest sense
 To a discerning eye;
 Much sense the starkest mad-
 ness.
 'T is the majority
 In this, as all, prevail.
 Assent, and you are sane;
 Demur, - you're straightway dan-
 gerous,
 And handled with a chain.

OUR RE-CREATION:

XI
 Muita demência é diviníssimo
 Senso pra um olho discernente;
 Muito senso demência in-

⁶⁰ Bartleby website offers 597 poems by Emily Dickinson, including this one, at: <<http://www.bartleby.com/113/>>. Accessed on June 10, 2007.

tensa.
 Nisso, como em tudo, a
 Maioria prevalece.
 Consente, e tu és são;
 Duvida, e já és da-
 noso,
 E preso num grilhão.

Although Campos says that Dickinson's poetic revolution was more radical than Whitman's, we must not forget the other aspects of his genius, as Freyre reminded us in his conference "Comrade Whitman" about the fact that in Whitman the poet, the man and the politician can not be separated. Perhaps Dickinson's capacity for breaking the limits of conventional language was really more brilliant than Whitman's, and surely her disposition to lead a solitary life was greater, but the other aspect or aspects of a public figure were lacking in her. We could say that Whitman's position in society, that is, literarily, personally and politically, is the opposite of hers, because he was a public person, he was in touch with the movements of the world. He was a person in the world, an observer who was close to it, taking part in it, as he sings in section 4 of "Song of Myself": he was "Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it."; he was playing the game of the world, but at the same time he was critically observing it, and reasoning about it, and not being a mere naturalistic observer who was just portraying it from outside, while she was an observer who was literally invisible to the world, although definitely not a naturalistic one, either! However, like the lady in section 11 of "Song of Myself", with "Twenty-eight years of womanly life, and all so lonesome.", who "[...] hides, [...], aft the blinds of the window.", and who stays "stock still" in her room, being just the "unseen hand" that passes over the body of the world, watching the world as a voyeur does, she never left her position as such. She never left the position behind the curtains to go there to touch and see the world in motion, feeling all its odors, sorrows and joys, being in close contact with the stuff that makes the world, sharing in it and actively taking a stand in it.

We could say then that they both did similar works in literature, both were revolutionaries. However, while one carried out a public revolution, the other did a private one. One fought openly on the field. The other did it from behind the trenches of privacy. Both are coherent in their behavior. Traditionally, they can be seen as archetypes of the human Male and Female. Nevertheless, they still are the two greatest geniuses of North American poetry, and still remain two great literary mysteries and endless sources for literary

students. As Professor Warren⁶¹ points out about Whitman's revolution in the following passage:

The poems Whitman published from 1938 to 1850 are mainly exercises in iambic tetrameter quatrains, with rhymed second and fourth lines. Archaisms and conventional poetic formulas dominate the diction, especially in the earliest poems. [...] With very little warning, then, the 1855 *Leaves* marks an abrupt departure from Whitman's previous style and an absolute discontinuity with the traditions of English verse. (WARREN, 1997, p.46)

This discontinuity has been shown by us when we compared Whitman's style to Longfellow's, indicating the poetic re-molding performed by the first, departing from the mellowness of traditional songbirds. Naturally, this withdrawal from traditional forms had its basis on them, which became, now transformed, made new, adapted to a new era, the alchemy of old poetry into modern singing. Dickinson followed the same procedure. Though she has her own way into poetry, as Bloom (1995, p.276) puts it: "Literary originality achieves scandalous dimensions in Dickinson, and its principal component is the way she thinks through her poems.", for her originality is "cognitive" (1995, p.272). Regarding this aspect she can be compared to Shakespeare, Dante, Blake and Whitman. Although "Her own obvious affinity is with Emerson's poetry, but her immediate precursors, like his, are the English High Romantics, and her underground affiliations are surprisingly Shakespearean." Like Whitman, she has a relationship with the past, which she does not deny. It is rather the other way around, for "The immense legacy of the male tradition was a singular advantage for her, since she had an original relation to that literary cosmos" (1995, p.276). This attitude toward the past is shared by Whitman, which is signaled by Warren in this passage:

The model of revolutionary style reveals a more varied and complex sense of Whitman's relationship to tradition than the totalizing critical narrative suggests. [...] "Song of Myself," although utterly revolutionary in style and theme, also pays ample tribute to the past. (WARREN, 1997, p.47)

3.9 Passages from *Leaves of Grass*

⁶¹ WARREN, James Perrin. "Reading Whitman's Postwar Poetry". In: GREENSPAN, Ezra. *The Cambridge Companion to Walt Whitman*. Cambridge University Press, 1997, p.46. (James Perrin Warren is Assistant Professor of English at Washington and Lee University.)

Thus, we shall begin now to quote some passages from *Leaves of Grass*, reminding ourselves and the reader of Whitman's "abrupt departure" from traditional poetic forms. Even though we have brought here examples of creative literary works by Fitzgerald, Joyce and Dickinson, in terms of specific poetic invention we have to say that Whitman's poetry takes a slightly different path, which is that of re-modeling traditional prosody and forms. What we mean is that, like him, we first learned how to write and translate poetry in the traditional way, and only after we had repeated exercises in this field, we started to work on the free verses of *Leaves of Grass*. So the kind of poetry shown earlier especially Fitzgerald's and Joyce's is not a common feature of the *Leaves*.

On the other hand, there are some features of the *Leaves* that certainly must be faced by any translators in order to re-create the content and revolutionary form of the original. The *Leaves* places two problems that become one: an illusory facility and a real difficulty. As it is a poetic work written in free, or blank, verse, which means the lines are not rhymed, apparently the translator's work is softened. However, free verses are not exempt from some of the main elements of poetry: rhythm and meter. This is the illusory facility we have spoken of, since it looks like simple poetry, like a free flow of thoughts and feelings, without poetic or aesthetic elements that maintain it. We do not need to go too far in translation to realize the mistake. The brief examples of translations quoted above by Geir Campos, Ramos, Lopes and Meira are enough to show that it is not easy to grasp the aura of the *Leaves*, that distinctive quality that makes the *Leaves* so beautiful and inspiring, which makes the readers re-read it time and again. As the poet sings in section 4 of "I sing the Body Electric", from "Children of Adam", pointing to this ineffable, indescribable energy: "There is something in staying close to men and women, and looking on them, and in the contact and odor of them, that pleases the soul well; /All things please the soul—but these please the soul well." He completes the idea in section 5, when he chants the Female: "This is the female form; / A divine nimbus exhales from it from head to foot; / It attracts with fierce undeniable attraction!". What he says of women can be said of his poetry. It has attracted readers with this force, like a magnet. It is part of the translator's job to grasp this energy that permeates the *Leaves*, so that we can inject it in the veins of the poems in Portuguese. Without it, the *Leaves* are dead.

Apart from this spiritual work of feeling or catching this pervading energy that circulates through the book like "[...] circling rivers the breath, and breathing it in and out" (section 9), we must be careful not to lose track of semantic content, besides the structural

ones. We must do this because the only poetic feature that is not always present in *Leaves of Grass* is the rhymes at the end of the lines (tail or end rhyme). The other aesthetic elements are there, as shown by Whitman's critics and biographers cited in this work. In this manner, what we have called an illusory facility becomes the second and same problem: the real difficulty to translate the *Leaves*. For the poet de-constructs the form and content of past and even contemporary poetry to achieve the new model according to his close view of the world, modulating into his poetry the voices and events of his time, bringing into it the world observed outside of his internal space, mixing his feelings and thoughts with those of the common men, the masses. These voices and masses are present in the *Leaves* via the catalogues, through the long enumerations of people, places and things, or simply of them, as in this passage from section 24 of "Song of Myself":

Through me many long dumb voices,
 Voices of the interminable generations of prisoners and slaves,
 Voices of the diseases'd and despairing, and of thieves and dwarfs,
 Voices of cycles of preparation and accretion,
 And of the threads that connect the stars, and of wombs and of the father-
 stuff,
 And of the rights of them the others are down upon,
 Of the deform'd, trivial, flat, foolish, despised,
 Fog in the air, beetles rolling balls of dung.

Through me forbidden voices,
 Voice of sexes and lusts—voices veil'd, and I remove the veil,
 Voices indecent, by me clarified and transfigur'd.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Através de mim muitas vozes longamente mudas,
 Vozes das gerações intermináveis de prisioneiros e escravos,
 Vozes dos doentes e desesperados e de ladrões e anões,
 Vozes de ciclos de preparação e acreção,
 E dos fios que conectam as estrelas, e de ventres e da matéria paterna,
 E dos direitos daqueles que estão por baixo,
 Dos deformados, triviais, molengas, tolos, desprezados,
 Névoa no ar, besouros rolam bolas de bosta.

Através de mim vozes proibidas,
 Vozes de sexos e luxúrias, vozes veladas e removo o véu,
 Vozes indecentes por mim clareadas e transfiguradas.

Speaking of spiritual work, Whitman's words indicate the transfiguration of the voices he hears. That means he is changing the evil in those voices to good. As a Christ, he too has his transfiguration, emanating his energy through his *Leaves*, to re-direct his followers to the

Light of God, as a true Son of God must do. The Gospels record this event with little variance between them: Mark, 9:1-3 (see also Mt. 17.1-13; Lk. 9.28-36):

1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

The Transfiguration

2 And after six days Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. (*The Holy Bible*, King James Version, 2005)

In section 46 of “Song of Myself”, Whitman describes a similar experience⁶². The passage is a bit long, but it is worth quoting it in full, so that we can see his shining energy illuminating the eyes of his followers:

[...]

I have no chair, no church, no philosophy,
I lead no man to a dinner-table, library, or exchange,
But each man and each woman of you I lead upon a knoll,
My left hand hooking you round the waist,
My right hand pointing to landscapes of continents and the public road.

Not I, not any one else can travel that road for you,
You must travel it for yourself.

[...]

This day before dawn I ascended a hill and look'd at the crowded heaven,
And I said to my Spirit *When we become the enfolders of those orbs, and
the pleasure and knowledge of everything in them, shall we be fill'd
and satisfied then?*

And my Spirit said *No, we but level that lift to pass and continue beyond.*

[...]

Sit a while, dear son,

[...]

Long enough have you dream'd contemptible dreams,

Now I wash the gum from your eyes,

You must habit yourself to the dazzle of the light and of every moment of
your life.

⁶² The poem “Whoever You are, Holding Me now in Hand”, from “Calamus”, depicts a like scene, in which Whitman is even more explicit in what he wants. He has no time to lose, for the message he brings is definitive; so he tells the person: “You would have to give up all else, I alone would expect to be your sole and exclusive standard, / Your novitiate would even then be long and exhausting, / The whole past theory of your life, and all conformity to the lives around you, would have to be abandon'd.”

He is so sure of what he is doing that he performs a miracle, as is recorded of Jesus in the Bible⁶³, washing the “gum” from the eyes of his “son”, who is blind to the truth the Son of God is showing him, that is, he is literally giving the person the light. At this point, the question whether Whitman’s attitude is blasphemous or reverent is not an issue. He shows no disrespect for the Holy Scriptures or to Jesus Christ (the Son) or God (the Father). As he is claiming to be the “true Son of God”, who is also the poet, he could not be more devotional, for his poetry is a means to convey the Word of God to mankind. Everyone is sacred for him, for every body is sacred, as he expresses in section 6 of “I Sing the Body Electric”:

The man’s body is sacred and the woman’s body is sacred,
No matter who it is, it is sacred—is it the meanest one in the laborer’s
gang?
Is it one of the dull-faced immigrants just landed on the wharf?
Each belongs here or anywhere just as much as the well-off, just as much as
you,

As we are discussing this distinctive quality of *Leaves of Grass*, this magnetic energy that pervades it, coming from the poet’s heart, the best thing is to place here our re-creations of the passages above, so that we can see whether our work was efficient. After these excerpts, we shall look at some more examples. We will see from nearer the methodological procedures in practice. First, the passage from section 46 of “Song of Myself”:

Não tenho cadeira, nem igreja, nem filosofia,
Não conduzo homem algum a uma mesa de jantar, biblioteca, câmbio,
Mas cada homem e cada mulher de vós conduzo a um outeiro,
Minha mão esquerda enlaçando vossa cintura,
Minha mão direita apontando paisagens de continentes e a via pública.

Nem eu, nem ninguém mais pode percorrer essa via por vós,
Devei percorrê-la por si mesmos.

[...]

Hoje antes da aurora escalei uma colina e contemplei o céu repleto,
E disse ao meu espírito *Quando nos tornarmos os invólucros desses orbes, e
o prazer e conhecimento de cada coisa neles, estaremos completos e
satisfeitos então?*

⁶³ The Gospels narrate the story of Jesus healing a blind man in a similar fashion. For example, in John, 9: 1-7, we have: “**Jesus Heals the Man Born Blind** 1 And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, 7 and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Silo’am, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing” (*The Holy Bible*, King James Version, 2005).

E meu espírito disse *Não, só nivelamos essa subida para passar e ir além.*

[...]

Senta-te um momento caro filho,

[...]

Há tempos tens sonhado sonhos vis,

Agora lavo a goma de tuas vistas,

Deves habituar-te ao fulgor da luz e de cada momento de tua vida.

In this scene, where the poet is taking the part of the Father, talking to a “dear son”, for if the Son and the Father are One, the Father and the Son must be One too (using a principle of equality), then, he can be the Father too, and show the way to the son, giving him the gift of free will with his “[...] right hand pointing to [...] the public road.”, which he can not travel for the son, for he “[...] must travel it for” himself. Poetically speaking, these verses are very difficult to re-create, for example: “no chair, no church”, or the sequence of D’s in “This day before dawn I ascended [...] crowded [...]” and the last section. Fortunately, what we lose aesthetically in one part, we might gain in another, or if we can not re-issue the same string of sounds, we compensate for it with another sequence, as in: “Hoje antes da aurora escalei uma colina e contemplei o céu repleto”, with O, C, P and T sounds. The last four lines, with the M, N, V, O and A sounds, make these verses very clear and shining. Finally the “dazzle of the light”, re-designed in “fulgor da luz”, which embodies the “dazzle” in “da luz”; we lose the impact of the “DAZZ”, but at least we maintain the L’s and the D, and the Z in “luZ”. The end rhymes, completely natural, show the way from bad to good, the “lift” from “contemptible” dreams, through the opening of the eyes and then to “life, the “subida” (“lift”): “vis” / “vista” / “vida”. As for the other passage above, about the sacredness of the human body, from section 6 of “I sing the Body Electric”, we give its translation below. We think that the core of this segment is the first half of the second line: “No matter who it is, it is sacred”, for its directness, which establishes the criterion that encompasses all humanity, and which kept its original beat: “Não impORta quem SEja, é saGRAdo”, with the syneresis (a drawing together or blending) of the ending vowel of “Não” and the beginning vowel of “importa”, so that the accent is on the second sound, “-POR-“, as in “No MATter”. The rhythm of this part has a perfect flow, with another syneresis between “seja” and “é”:

O corpo do homem é sagrado e o corpo da mulher é sagrado,
 Não importa quem seja, é sagrado—é o mais sórdido da malta de operários?
 É um dos sombrios imigrantes recém-aportados no cais?
 Cada um pertence aqui ou a qualquer lugar tanto quanto os favorecidos,
 tanto quanto tu,

We show now more passages from *Leaves of Grass* re-created in our vernacular. The second part, or stanza, of the first poem of “Inscriptions”, “One’s Self I Sing” (“Eu Canto um Eu”), reads:

WHITMAN:

Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse,
I say the Form complete is worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Não só fisionomia nem só cérebro é digno da Musa,
digo que a Forma completa é muito mais digna,
A Feminina igualmente com a Masculina canto.

IRINEU MONTEIRO:

Pois, nem só a fisionomia, nem só o cérebro
tem valor para a Musa, e afirmo que
a Forma completa é mais valiosa,
E por isso, eu canto igualmente a Fêmea como o Macho. (1984)

We took advantage of the Latin cognates to maintain the M, N, and F sounds (“fisionomia”, “Musa”, “Forma completa”, “Feminina”, “Masculina”). As for the rhythm, although the lines are long, they are internally divided into shorter sections according to the accents. In comparison to Monteiro’s translation, there is an issue to be debated: the original text does not contain the expressions “Pois” (“Since”; conjunction) and “E por isso” (“And therefore”; conjunction and adverb). For us, literal translation is the faithful transposition of meaning from one language to another, which necessarily involves aesthetic loss. When there is an insertion of elements in the target language which were not present in the original text, the result is not a literal translation, understood as a word for word translation, but a free translation, since the translator does what he wants at will. Our point is that either we do a re-creation of the texts or a literal translation, when it is not possible to do the first. Sometimes, a literal translation is so perfect that it is not necessary to spend more time searching for any other textual arrangement. This is what we did with the first verses of *Leaves of Grass*.

WHITMAN:

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

OUR RE-CREATION:

Eu celebro a mim mesmo, e canto a mim,
E o que assumo, tu deves assumir,
Pois todo átomo que pertence a mim também pertence a ti.

The two first lines and the first half of the third are natural decasyllables in Portuguese; the second half of the third line, “as good belongs to you”, three iambs, also received in our language perfect equivalence: “tamBÉM perTENCE a TI” (with a syneresis of “pertence” and “a”). The only difference is that in English the second line has nine metrical syllables, according to the Brazilian poetic system. Despite looking for this perfect correspondence between the languages, we know that it is not the rule, especially because the words in Portuguese tend to have more syllables than in English. Besides, we have the extra difficulty that most two-syllable words in English are stressed on the first syllable (GILBERT, 1997, p.67), and the fact that English pronunciation is irregular. In Portuguese, we have a different classification for word stress. The words are classified according to the syllable which is stressed (BECHARA, p.54): words with stress on the last syllable are linguistically called *oxitone*: “gambá, tatú, tambor” (opossum, armadillo, drum), etc.; words with stress on the penultimate syllable are *paroxitone*: “casa, canto, beira” (house, corner, edge); and words accented on the antepenultimate syllable are called *proparoxitone*: “sólido, rápido, pílula” (solid, rapid, pill).

We have here another example of a literal translation that will work perfectly well for this line: “And I know I am solid and sound”, from section 20 of “Song of Myself” (1855 Edition; in the Deathbed edition, “And” was omitted). This is an anapestic trimeter, that is, a meter with three anapests per line (anapest: two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed one; in quantitative verse, two short syllables followed by a long one). We have this type of verse in Portuguese with the designation of eneasyllable, a verse of nine syllables, with accents on the third, sixth and ninth syllables. In this case, the meters in the two languages coincide, despite the difference in naming. This verse was translated by Lopes (2005, p.70), as “Só sei que sou saudável e robusto.”. He maintained the number of syllables, but the accents are on the first, sixth and ninth ones, which broke the rhythm, with the added damage of eliminating the alliteration of “solid and sound” and introducing in our language a word that was not in English, “Só”, to replace “And”. Our translation: “E eu sei que sou sólido e saudável”, keeps all the elements of the grammatical structure, the rhythm, and even extends the alliteration: “sei [...] sou sólido [...] saudável”. Also, it re-creates the same sounds of the original: “SOLid and SOUnd” in “SÓlido e SAUdável”. We would even have another solution for this alliteration in “firme e forte”, if we chose to make it a verse of seven syllables: “E sei que sou firme e forte”. However, the other one is much more beautiful.

The line “The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul”, from section 30 of “Song of Myself”, also became five natural “anapests” in Portuguese in a literal translation: “O sereno da noite penetra mais fundo em minha alma.” (Capital letters to indicate the accents: “O seREno da NOItE peNEtra mais FUNdo em minh’ALma.”; syneresis in “fundo em” and “minha alma”). The sequence of D’s is re-issued via the N’s, M’s, R’s, T’s. Compare Lopes’s version (2005, p.85): “O rocio da noite cala fundo em minha alma.” (“O roCIO da NOItE CAla FUNdo em minh’Alma.”). The double D, which describes a profound feeling inscribed by plosive sounds, “drives deeper”, is lost in “cala fundo”. In our work, the D’s are replaced by the T’s of “noiTE peneTRA”; in English we have voiced sounds, in Portuguese, unvoiced, which is the only difference between D’s and T’s.

As *Leaves of Grass* is written in free verse and does not have fixed stanzaic forms with end rhymes, except for a couple of poems such as “O Captain! My Captain!” from “Memories of President Lincoln”, and “Eidólons”, from “Inscriptions”, we take advantage of these characteristics to modulate our re-creations according to the tone of the passages and also to adapt the poems to the prosody of our language, specially this transition from the accentual syllabic system of English to the syllabic base of Portuguese. In rare occasions when they coincide, we make a point of it. As we have shown that the structure of our language is less synthetic than English: our language has more verbal tenses than English; for example: for the Simple Past in English, Indicative Mood (I sang), there are three tenses in Portuguese: 1. *Pretérito Perfeito / Perfect Past: Eu Cantei*; 2. *Pretérito Imperfeito / Imperfect Past: Eu cantava*; 3. *Pretérito Mais que Perfeito / More than Perfect Past: Eu cantara*. Besides, each verb in Portuguese has six forms for each tense in general, one for each person (the first, the second and third persons), singular and plural (I, You, He/She/it; We, You, They) (BECHARA, p.128). Whereas each verb in English has at most three forms: present, simple past, past participle. Another grammatical aspect is that verbs in our vernacular indicate person (first, second, third), number (singular, plural), tense (present, past, future) and mood (indicative, subjunctive, imperative) in its form. Taking the verb “cantar” (“to sing”) as an example: “(Eu) cantei”: first person (I sang), singular, Perfect Past, Indicative; “(Nós) cantamos”: first person (We sang), plural, Perfect Past, Indicative. The most important feature here is the fact that we may omit the pronouns in Portuguese with no damage to meaning, something which is practically impossible to do in English: if we omit the pronouns, we do not know who is speaking. If we say “sang”, we do not know who did it. This will lead to a

discussion whether we may or not do it in translating *Leaves of Grass*. We have chosen to omit the personal pronouns in general, since they become excessive repetition of inherent information, particularly because there are sections where there is a repetitive use of the first person (in catalogues), which makes its use extremely tiring to the reader in our language. However, we kept the pronouns whenever its use is necessary to remove ambiguity or to emphasize the poet's voice. Thus we allowed ourselves this flexibility in linguistic use in search of the best expression for the text.

The next excerpt demonstrates this kind of sensibility to suit the tone of the passage. The line is from section 11 of "Song of Myself", about the lady who is behind the curtains of her window observing the boys bathing by the shore, dreaming of touching them. The poet tells her that he sees her innermost desire: "You splash in the water there, yet stay stock still in your room." "Splash" means to move through fluid or fall into it, or to scatter fluids in flying masses, so one can splash in or through the water (pool, river or sea). This verb conveys the lady's emotional disturbance, which comprises two states: a physical and a spiritual one. Her state of mind is agitated, like the boys' agitation in the water, for she wishes she were there amid them, while physically she is unmoving, "stock still" in her position. In this manner, the two contradictory states of the lady, the desire to jump in the water and its impossibility, are expressed by the phono-morphological structure of the verse. The S and L (a liquid consonant) of splash carry the meaning of movement. The chain of T's of "yet stay stock still", like the beating of her heart, indicates her bodily outer stillness, and the inner perturbation of the lady. We have been able to re-construct the verse with the same sounds as the original, maintaining the vibration of L and the T, A, and O sounds, mixing the vowel opening and consonant closing movements: "Tu te espalhas lá na água, contudo, estás estática em tua sala."

Now, two lines from section 21 of "Song of Myself": "Night of south winds—night of the large few stars! / Still nodding night—mad naked summer night." (in this section, the poet speaks to people, night, earth and sea). The most important element of these verses is the combination of "ar" in "large few stars", where one sound echoes the other. The meaning of "large [...] stars" points to an ample whole, the all-embracing orbs with their burning energy that sustains planets like our own. Whitman was very fond of astronomy (ALLEN, 1955, p.124), the branch of science he knew more (he used to study and attend lectures on it), however, we do not know if he was aware of the fact that around sixty percent of all stars are

twins, or binaries, which means that most of the solar systems in the universe have two suns⁶⁴ (sometimes, there are even systems with three suns). The fact is that solar systems with double suns are more stable and last more, and systems with an only sun are not the rule. Notwithstanding, it was very difficult to re-create this double sound. First we tried with "as" in "vastos astros", but it sounded too obvious. Later we looked for a compensation for the double "ar", re-constituted in "raras" (rare), an oblique version of "few", while "poucas", the literal translation, did not harmonize very well with the rest of the line. We even experimented with "vastas estrelas raras", with double "as" and "ar", to configure the nocturnal "atmosphere". Finally, we arrived at "noite das grandes estrelas raras", with three pairs of double sounds: "as" (das, raras), "ra", "es". As for the second line, the chain of N's and M's is the main feature to be preserved, with the added internal rhymes in "ventos", "serena", "pendente", "demente". In sum, it reads like this: "Noite dos ventos sul – noite das grandes estrelas raras! / Serena noite pendente–noite de estio nua demente."

This time we will bring a passage from section 24 of "Song of Myself": "To behold the day-break! / The little light fades the immense and diaphanous shadows, / The air tastes good to my palate." Here we concentrated on the smaller segments, sub-dividing the verses to better work on them. We did like this: "To behold / the day-break". The problem is the short words in English and the mirror sounds in "Behold" and "Day-Break". After many years, we could find this pair of opposites not in consonants, but in vowels: "COntemplAR" and "AurORA". The choice is a perfect hexasyllable in our language, with accents on the third and sixth syllables. Then we went on to the next line, using the same method: "The little light / fades the immense / and diaphanous shadows". There was less difficulty in this part, except to find the solution for "little", solved by "frágil", which does not carry exactly the same meaning, although a light that is little must be fragile, too. And to find "desfaz" (undo) as a near meaning for "fades" (actually, almost an anagram). In this context, in which the "light fades" the "shadows", it conveys this significance of undoing them. The other words were practically literal translations. The last line, "The air / tastes good / to my palate", an octosyllable, became a decasyllable in Portuguese, in a literal translation, with the "air" ("AR") rhyming with "palate" ("paladAR"). It goes as follows: "Contemplar a aurora! / A frágil luz desfaz as imensas e diáfanas sombras, / O ar tem gosto bom a meu paladar."

⁶⁴ The NASA webpage might be helpful in this case, providing more information on this issue; available at: <<http://jpl.nasa.gov/news/spitzer-starwars.cfm>>. Accessed on 13 June 2007.

Another beautiful passage that deserves quoting here is the poem “For You O Democracy”, from “Calamus”. By making use of his extreme power to unite the nation, in his disillusionment with politics, he establishes the energy which will make this union. He indicates the solidity of his construction, which will be “indissoluble”; the brightness given by the sun, to shine upon this race of heroes; the height reaching the divine, and the “life-long” duration of this union based on (meta) physical love. The poem does have a definite physical quality, interwoven through its chains of sounds, deeply connected. In English, there is a long series of L’s in the five lines and also one of nasal sounds, and D’s. They did not pose a big problem, with the exception of the word “love” in the last two verses, which in Portuguese means “amor”, with no L’s. Consequently, we would not be able to keep the same sequence, for “love” is irreplaceable! So we had to alter the phonic arrangements to harmonize with “amor”, in order to re-build the consistency of the stanza. The word “duradouro” was our solution for “life-long”, because it is made of two words: the verb “durar” (to last) plus “-douro” (a suffix that means “capable of”), then, it means “to last long”. Luckily, “camaradas”, a literal translation of “comrades”, has got an M, an A and an R, and the verb “amar” (to love) in the middle of it: “cAMARadas”. The element that permeates the idea of a united democratic race is inscribed in the very word that designates its members. This is the gold found while we were digging the mines of *Leaves of Grass* to re-create this temple of love in our language: “duradOURO” has in itself the word for gold in Portuguese:

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.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Vem, tornarei o continente indissolúvel,
Farei a mais esplêndida raça que o sol já iluminou,
Farei terras divinas magnéticas,
 Com o amor de camaradas,
 Com o duradouro amor de camaradas.

The poetic power of languages is amazing. The first verse, “Vem, tornarei o continente indissolúvel”, is a dodecasyllable with accents on the first, fourth, eighth and twelfth syllables; “Farei terras divinas magnéticas” and “Com o duradouro amor de camaradas” are perfect decasyllables. “Com o amor de camaradas” is a heptasyllable. These verses were formed naturally, without much rearrangement of its constituent parts. Nevertheless, the most

important thing in all this work of poetic re-creation is to “Listen to the sound that it makes”. As Pound (1987, pp.192-201) said about Whitman, the best part of Whitman’s production, his “real writing”, was when his predecessor got rid of all the “barbed wire” of meter and forms and concentrated only on letting poetry flow, like a river, without constraints.

4 THE POEMS

This section contains the books and poems from *Leaves of Grass* on which we have been working up to now. After much re-working, we believe they are now ready to be presented to public appreciation. As we know, a translator's work is never finished, for every time we revise the texts we find new errors that were invisible before. However, we can at least present the text now at its current final version. Naturally, they will be re-worked whenever we go back to them, as we have done with the books translated for our Master's thesis. As we continue our work, we will also add new foot-notes and comments when we think they are convenient or necessary to a better understanding of their content. By the way, the poem "Do Berço Infundamente Embalando" ("Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking") had appeared as an annex in our Master's thesis (SARAIVA, 1995, p.162), since it was referred in that work as an expression of Whitman's love for opera, of which this poem is an example. The poet himself said that he was greatly indebted to opera, and even stated that he would not have written *Leaves of Grass* without having been "saturated" by this musical experience. Consequently, there are traces of this experience in his poems, especially in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking", which formally is an aria. Whitman especially admired Marietta Alboni (1826-1894), "the greatest coloratura soprano [and contralto] in the history of opera", whose performances in New York were all attended by him; Geremia Bettini, the tenor; and Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901), the composer. Naturally, as an opera lover, he loved Gioachino Rossini, too (1792-1868), who was Verdi's master. In his New York years, the poet was driven to tears by these wonderful artists, a fact that he remembered with joy in his old age (ALLEN, 1955, pp.113-5). As a matter of fact, these artists are mentioned by Whitman in another poem, "Proud Music of the Storm", which resembles an "operatic overture" (a prelude), in which Alboni is depicted as "The lustrous orb, Venus contralto, the blooming mother, / Sister of loftiest gods" (WHITMAN, 2002, pp.339-45). As we have proposed in the Introduction, we have been able to re-create this poem as well. Actually, all the *SEA-DRIFT* cluster has been re-created.

If there is an aspect of Romanticism that was shared by Whitman without the shadow of a doubt, it must be the love for music. We have discussed Whitman's relation or reaction against some Romantic features, such as morbidity and its lack of involvement with social problems, yet, in the field of music, the situation is exactly the opposite. Not that Whitman agreed with the Romantics that music was "the most romantic of all arts" (SCHENK, 1979,

p.201), but because he believed in the “music’s power to stir up” feelings and emotions, that is, music had for him an “incomparable appeal to the emotions”, even though the Romantics “in general preferred to live as it were in the past or the future” and “music constituted the sphere in which the present could be best experienced in a kind of enchanting dream” (1979, pp.231-2). The following passage from section 26 of “Song of Myself” will illustrate the point:

I hear the violoncello, ('tis the young man's heart's complaint,)
I hear the key'd cornet, it glides quickly in through my ears,
It shakes mad-sweet pangs through my belly and breast.

I hear the chorus, it is a grand opera,
Ah this indeed is music—this suits me.

A tenor large and fresh as the creation fills me,
The orbic flex of his mouth is pouring and filling me full.

I hear the train'd soprano (what work, with hers is this?)
The orchestra whirls me wider than Uranus flies,
It wrenches such ardors from me, I did not know I possess'd them,
It sails me, I dab with bare feet, they are lick'd by the indolent waves,
I am cut by bitter and angry hail, I lose my breath,
Steep'd amid honey'd morphine, my windpipe throttled in fakes of death,
At length let up again to feel the puzzle of puzzles,
And that we call Being. (WHITMAN, 2002, p.49)

We insert here our revised re-creation of this passage, with special emphasis on the “ardors” that the poet did not know that he possessed. This is in accordance with the power of music stressed by the Romantics, which makes music a truly divine art, showing to ourselves what was previously unknown in ourselves:

Ouço o violoncelo, (é a queixa do coração do jovem,)
Ouço a corneta afinada, ela desliza veloz pelos meus ouvidos,
Ela provoca doce-doidas pontadas no meu abdome e peito.

Ouço o coro, é uma ópera dramática,
Ah isto de fato é música – isto condiz comigo.

Um tenor grandioso e recente como a criação me preenche,
A esférica flexão de sua boca extravasa e me preenche plenamente.

Ouço a soprano preparada (que é este trabalho junto ao dela?)
A orquestra me lança mais longe que o vôo de Urano,
Ela arranca uns ardores de mim que eu não sabia que possuía,
Ela me singra, agito os pés descalços, eles são lambidos pelas ondas
indolentes,
Sou cortado por amargo e raivoso granizo, perco o fôlego,

Imersa em melosa morfina, minha traquéia sufocou nas voltas¹ da morte,
Por fim afrouxou de novo para sentir o enigma dos enigmas,
E a isso chamamos Ser.
(SARAIVA, 1995, pp.30-1)

Paraphrasing Whitman's words on the 1891-92 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, we shall let the world judge what we present here; as for ourselves, we are content with what we have done. And very glad to have been granted the opportunity to do it. By the way, we are following here the text of the 1891-92 edition published by Norton Critical Editions (WHITMAN, 2002).

¹ Voltas da corda em volta do pescoço.

4.1 INSCRIÇÕES

INSCRIÇÕES

Eu Canto Um Eu

Eu canto um eu, uma pessoa simples separada,
Porém profiro a palavra Democrático, a palavra En-Masse².

Fisiologia dos pés à cabeça canto,
Não só fisionomia nem só cérebro é digno da Musa,
digo que a Forma completa é muito mais digna,
A Feminina igualmente com a Masculina canto.

Da Vida imensa em paixão, pulso e poder,
Jovial, formado para a ação mais livre sob as leis divinas,
O Homem Moderno canto.

Quando Ponderei em Silêncio

Quando ponderei em silêncio,
Repensando meus poemas, considerando, delongando,
Um Fantasma surgiu ante mim com descrente aspecto,
Terrível em beleza, idade e potência,
O gênio de poetas de antigas terras,
A mim volvendo feito flama seus olhos,
Com dedo apontando muitas canções imortais,
E voz ameaçadora, *Que cantas tu?* disse,
Não sabes que há somente um tema para bardos persistentes?
E esse tema é o da Guerra, o destino das batalhas,
O preparo de soldados perfeitos.

Que assim seja, então respondi,
Eu também altiva Sombra também canto guerra, e uma mais longa e maior que todas,
Mantida em meu livro com vários destinos, com fuga, avanço e recuo, vitória adiada e
hesitante,
(Porém acho certo, ou tanto quanto certo, por fim,) o campo o mundo,
Pela vida e morte, pelo Corpo e pela Alma eterna,
Vê, também vim, cantando o cântico das batalhas,
Eu acima de tudo promovo valentes soldados.

Em Navios com Cabines no Mar

Em navios com cabines no mar,
O infinito azul se expandindo por toda parte,
Com ventos sussurrantes e música das ondas, das grandes ondas imperiosas,
Ou algum brigue solitário animado na densa marinha,
Onde alegre fervoroso, içando velas brancas,

² Do francês: Em Massa, em grupo, em conjunto, juntos.

Ele rompe o éter entre a fásca e a espuma do dia, ou sob muita estrela à noite,
 Por marinheiros jovens e velhos quiçá serei, uma reminiscência da terra, lido,
 Em completa afinidade afinal.

*Eis nossos pensamentos, pensamentos de viajantes,
 Aqui a terra, terra firme, não aparece só, possa então por eles ser dito,
 O céu arqueia aqui, sentimos o ondulante convés sob nossos pés,
 Sentimos a longa pulsação, fluxo e refluxo do impulso infinito,
 Os tons de mistério oculto, as vagas e vastas sugestões do mundo salgado, as sílabas líquido-
 fluentes,
 O perfume, o ténue ranger do cordame, o ritmo melancólico,
 A visão ilimitada e o distante e escuro horizonte estão aqui,
 E este é o poema do oceano.*

Então não vacila Oh livro, cumpre teu destino,
 Tu não só uma reminiscência da terra,
 Tu também como um brigue solitário rompendo o éter, tencionado não se sabe aonde, porém
 sempre fervoroso,
 Associa-te a todo navio que veleje, veleja!
 Leva a eles incluso meu amor, (queridos marinheiros, para vós o incluo aqui em cada folha;)
 Acelera meu livro! Iça tuas velas brancas meu pequeno brigue contra as ondas imperiosas,
 Canta, veleja, leva sobre o azul infinito de mim a todo mar,
 Esta canção para marinheiros e todos seus navios.

A Terras Estrangeiras

Ouvi dizer que pediste algo para testar este quebra-cabeça o Novo Mundo,
 E definir a América, sua atlética Democracia,
 Por isso te envio meus poemas para que vejas neles o que quiseres.

A um Historiador

Tu que celebras águas passadas,
 Que exploraste o externo, as superfícies das raças, a vida que se exibiu,
 Que trataste do homem como a criatura da política, agregados, regentes e padres,
 Eu, habitante dos Alleghanies³, tratando dele como ele é em si mesmo em seus próprios
 termos,
 Tomando o pulso da vida que raramente se exibiu,
 (o grande orgulho do homem por si mesmo,)
 Cantor da Personalidade, esboçando o que está ainda pra ser,
 Projeto a história do futuro.

A Ti Velha Causa⁴

³ Grafia correta original: "Alleghenies", que são as montanhas mais antigas dos Estados Unidos. A grafia com "a" é invenção do Whitman, bem como da palavra "habitan", provavelmente derivada de "habitant" (habitante da Louisiana ou um canadense de linhagem francesa), ou de "inhabitant" (habitante).

⁴ Veja abaixo o poema "A Uma Certa Cantatrice", que contém a idéia da "Velha Causa", que é o "progresso e a liberdade da raça".

A ti velha causa!
 Tu boa causa, sem par, apaixonada,
 Tu doce idéia, severa, sem remorso,
 Imortal pelas eras, raças, terras,
 Após uma estranha triste guerra, grande guerra por ti,
 (Acho que toda guerra pelos tempos foi realmente lutada, e sempre será realmente lutada, por ti.)
 Estes cantos por ti, tua eterna marcha.

(Uma guerra Ah soldados não só por si mesma,
 Muitos, muitos mais ficaram aguardando em silêncio atrás, para agora avançar neste livro.)

Tu orbe de muitos orbes!
 Tu fervente princípio! tu germe bem tratado, latente! tu centro!
 Ao redor de tua idéia a guerra girando,
 Com todo seu jogo raivoso e veemente de causas,
 (Com vastos resultados por vir por três vezes mil anos,)
 Estes recitativos por ti, -- meu livro e a guerra são um,
 Fundidos em seu espírito eu e o meu, como a luta dependeu de ti,
 Como uma roda gira em seu eixo, este livro inconsciente de si mesmo,
 Ao redor de tua idéia.

Ídolos⁵

Conheci um vidente,
 Passando os matizes e objetos do mundo,
 Os campos da arte e estudo, prazer, sentido,
 Para compilar ídolos.

Põe em teus cantos, disse ele,
 Não mais a hora confusa ou dia, nem segmentos, partes, pões,
 Põe primeiro como luz para tudo e canção de estréia de tudo,
 A dos ídolos.

Sempre o sombrio começo,
 Sempre o crescimento, o circundar do círculo,
 Sempre o ápice e a fusão por fim, (pra certamente iniciar de novo,)
 Ídolos! ídolos!

Sempre o mutável,
 Sempre materiais, mudando, se esboroando, re-aderindo,
 Sempre os ateliês, as divinas fábricas,
 Lançando ídolos.

Vê, eu ou tu,
 Ou mulher, homem, ou estado, conhecido ou desconhecido,

⁵ Eidólon(s): simulacro, fantasma, imagem, espectro, aparição, uma imagem do ideal, modelo. Do grego eidōlon, de eidos, *forma*. A palavra ídolo (imagem usada para adoração, um deus falso) tem a mesma origem.

Parecendo sólidos riqueza, força, beleza erigimos,
Mas realmente erigimos ídolos.

O evanescente aspecto,
A essência do ânimo de um artista ou longos estudos de um erudito,
Ou labutas do guerreiro, mártir, herói,
Para moldar seu ídolo.

De toda vida humana,
(As unidades reunidas, fixadas, nem um pensamento, emoção, ação, omitidos,)
O todo ou grande ou pequeno somados, adicionados,
Em seu ídolo.

O velho, velho ímpeto,
Baseado nos pináculos antigos, vê, pináculos mais novos, mais altos,
Da ciência e do moderno ainda impelido,
O velho, velho ímpeto, ídolos.

O presente agora e aqui,
O turbilhão ativo, fértil, complexo, da América,
De agregado e segregado para só então liberar,
Os ídolos de hoje.

Estes com o passado,
De terras desvanecidas, de todos os reinos de reis pelo mar,
Velhos conquistadores, velhas campanhas, viagens de velhos marinheiros,
Unindo ídolos.

Densidades, crescimento, fachadas,
Estratos de montanhas, solos, rochas, árvores gigantescas,
Nascidos ao longe, morrendo ao longe, vivendo muito, para partir,
Eternos ídolos.

Exaltê⁶, transido, extático,
O visível exceto seu útero de nascimento,
De tendências órbicas para moldar, moldar e moldar,
O poderoso ídolo-terra.

Todo espaço, todo tempo,
(As estrelas, as terríveis perturbações dos sóis,
Inchando, ruindo, findando, cumprindo sua função completa,)
Repletos de ídolos apenas.

As miríades silenciosas,
Os oceanos infinitos onde os rios deságuam,
As incontáveis identidades livres separadas, como a visão,
As verdadeiras realidades, ídolos.

⁶ Do francês, exaltado.

Não isto o mundo,
 Nem estes os universos, eles os universos,
 Sentido e fim, sempre a permanente vida da vida,
 Ídolos, ídolos.

Além de tuas palestras culto mestre,
 Além de teu telescópio ou espectroscópio agudo observador, além de toda matemática,
 Além da cirurgia, anatomia do médico, além do químico com sua química,
 As entidades das entidades, ídolos.

Infixos porém fixos,
 Sempre serão, sempre foram e são,
 Varrendo o presente ao futuro infinito,
 Ídolos, ídolos, ídolos.

O profeta e o bardo,
 Ainda se manterão, em estágios ainda mais altos,
 Mediarão ao Moderno, à Democracia, interpretarão ainda para eles,
 Deus e ídolos.

E tu minha alma,
 Júbilos, exercícios incessantes, exaltações,
 Tua ânsia saciada amplamente por fim, preparada para conhecer,
 Teus parceiros, ídolos.

Teu corpo permanente,
 O corpo oculto dentro de teu corpo,
 O único sentido da forma que és, o eu mesmo real,
 Uma imagem, um ídolo.

Tuas próprias canções não em tuas canções,
 Nenhuma tensão especial para cantar, nenhuma por si mesmo,
 Mas resultando do todo, se elevando por fim e flutuando,
 Um ídolo redondo esférico.

Por Ele Canto

Por ele canto,
 Elevo o presente no passado,
 (Feito alguma árvore perene em suas raízes, o presente no passado,)
 Com tempo e espaço eu o dilato e fundo as leis imortais,
 Para fazê-lo por elas a lei sobre ele.

Quando Li o Livro

Quando li o livro, a biografia famosa,
 E é isto então (disse eu) o que o autor denomina a vida de um homem?
 E assim irá alguém quando eu estiver morto escrever minha vida?
 (Como se alguém realmente soubesse algo de minha vida,
 Ora até eu mesmo freqüentemente penso que pouco ou nada sei de minha vida real,

Só algumas dicas, alguns sinais tênues difusos e dissimulações
Busco traçar aqui para meu próprio uso.)

Iniciando Meus Estudos

Iniciando meus estudos o primeiro passo me agradou tanto,
O mero fato consciência, estas formas, o poder do movimento,
O menor inseto ou animal, os sentidos, visão, amor,
O primeiro passo digo me entusiasmei e agradou tanto,
Mal tenho ido ou desejado ir adiante,
Mas paro e vagueio o tempo todo para cantá-lo em canções extáticas.

Iniciadores⁷

Como eles são sustentados na terra, (aparecendo em intervalos,)
Como são queridos e terríveis para a terra,
Como se habitam a si mesmos tanto quanto a outros—que paradoxo parece sua época,
Como as pessoas reagem a eles, sem conhecê-los no entanto,
Como há algo implacável em seu destino o tempo todo,
Como o tempo todo escolhem mal seus objetos de adulação e recompensa,
E como o mesmo preço inexorável deve ainda ser pago pela mesma grande compra.

Aos Estados

Aos Estados ou qualquer um deles, ou qualquer cidade dos Estados,
Resiste muito, obedece pouco,
Uma vez obediência incontestada, uma vez totalmente escravizados,
Uma vez totalmente escravizados, nenhuma nação, estado ou cidade desta terra, jamais
retomam depois sua liberdade.

Em Viagens pelos Estados

Em viagens pelos Estados começamos,
(Sempre pelo mundo, instigados por estas canções,
Navegando doravante a toda terra, a todo mar,)
Nós animados aprendizes de tudo, professores de tudo e amantes de tudo.

Temos observado as estações se distribuindo e prosseguindo,
E dito, Por que um homem ou mulher não poderiam fazer tanto quanto as estações, e verter
tanto quanto?

Pausamos um pouco em toda cidade e município,
Atravessamos o Canadá⁸, o Nordeste, o vasto vale do Mississippi, e os Estados Sulinos,
Outorgamos em condições iguais com cada um dos Estados,
Nos julgamos e convidamos homens e mulheres para ouvir,
Dizemos a nós mesmos, Lembra, não teme, sê cândido, proclama o corpo e a alma,
Pausa um pouco e prossegue, sê copioso, temperante, casto, magnético,

⁷ Também no sentido de inovadores, fundadores. Notar que este poema e o anterior tratam do mesmo tema, ou seja, o poeta se inclui entre os iniciadores de movimento.

⁸ Whitman gostava de escrever palavras com *k* (kosmos, etc).

E o que vertes pode então retornar como as estações retornam,
E pode ser tanto quanto as estações.

A Uma Certa Cantatrice⁹

Olha, pega este presente,
Eu o estava reservando para algum herói, orador, ou general,
Alguém que devia servir à velha e boa causa, à grande idéia, ao progresso e liberdade da raça,
Algun bravo confrontador de déspotas, algum rebelde ousado;
Mas vejo que o que eu estava reservando pertence a ti tanto quanto a qualquer outro.

Eu Imperturbável

Eu imperturbável, à vontade na Natureza,
Mestre de tudo ou mestra de tudo, apumado no meio de coisas irracionais,
Impregnado como elas, passivo, receptivo, silencioso como elas,
Achando meu emprego, pobreza, notoriedade, fraquezas, crimes, menos importante que eu
pensava,
Eu rumo ao mar mexicano, ou em Mannahatta ou no Tennessee, ou no norte distante ou no
interior,
Um ribeirinho, ou um homem dos bosques ou das fazendas destes Estados ou da costa, ou dos
lagos ou do Kanadá,
Eu onde minha vida for vivida, Ah ser auto-equilibrado para casualidades,
Confrontar noite, tormentas, fome, ridículo, acidentes, repulsas, como fazem as árvores e os
animais.

Savantism¹⁰

Nessa direção olho e vejo cada resultado e glória se retraçando e se aninhando, sempre
obrigados,
Nessa direção horas, meses, anos—aonde comércios, pactos, estabelecimentos, até mesmo o
menor,
Nessa direção vida diária, fala, utensílios, política, pessoas, posses;
Nessa direção nós também, eu com minhas folhas e canções, confiante, admirativo,
Como um pai a encontrar seu pai leva seus filhos com ele.

O Navio Partindo

Vê, o imenso mar,
Em seu seio um navio partindo, içando velas, levando até suas velas rápidas,¹¹

⁹ Cantatriz, cantora, cantora profissional, cantora de ópera. Neste caso, Whitman se refere a Marietta Alboni, mencionada na introdução a este capítulo.

¹⁰ Esta palavra aponta para uma sabedoria de ver a relação entre as formas e o fundo espiritual que as gera; vem de “savant”, do francês, sábio.

¹¹ No original, “moonsails” (“velas lunares”), termo que possui três sinônimos em inglês: “moonraker” (“explorador da lua”), “hopesail” (“vela da esperança”) e “hope-in-heaven” (“esperança no céu”). Estas velas, que são extremamente raras, são colocadas bem no topo do mastarêu do sobrejoanete, acima das velas de cutelo, em navios velozes, como era o caso dos veleiros. Até o momento não encontramos uma tradução apropriada para o termo.

O galhardete está voando alto quando ele acelera ele acelera tão altivo—abaixo ondas ávidas se apressam,
Elas rodeiam o navio com movimentos curvo-cintilantes e espuma.

Ouço a América Cantando

Ouço a América cantando, os variados cantos ouço,
Os dos mecânicos, cada um cantando o seu como devia ser jubiloso e forte,
O marceneiro cantando o dele ao medir sua tábua ou viga,
O pedreiro cantando o dele ao se preparar para o trabalho, ou cessar o trabalho,
O barqueiro cantando o que pertence a ele em seu barco, o taifeiro cantando no convés do barco a vapor,
O sapateiro cantando ao sentar-se em seu banco, o chapeleiro cantando ao ficar de pé,
A canção do lenhador, a do lavrador no caminho de manhã, ou no intervalo do meio-dia ou ao poente,
O cantar delicioso da mãe, ou da jovem esposa no trabalho, ou da garota cosendo ou lavando,
Cada um cantando o que lhe pertence e a mais ninguém,
O dia o que pertence ao dia—à noite o grupo de rapazes, robustos, simpáticos,
Cantando de bocas abertas suas impetuosas canções melodiosas.

Que Lugar é Sitiado?

Que lugar é sitiado, e em vão tenta findar o sítio?
Vê, envio a esse lugar um comandante, rápido, valente, imortal,
E com ele cavalaria e infantaria e parques de artilharia,
E artilheiros, os mais mortíferos que já dispararam armas.

Ainda Assim Aquele que Eu Canto

Ainda assim aquele que eu canto,
(Um, todavia de contradições feito,) dedico à Nacionalidade,
Deixo nele revolta, (Oh direito latente de insurreição! Oh fogo inextinguível e indispensável!)

Não Fechai Vossas Portas

Não fechai vossas portas a mim orgulhosas bibliotecas,
Pois o que estava faltando em todas as vossas estantes repletas, contudo mais precisado, eu trago,
Emergindo da guerra¹², um livro fiz,
As palavras do meu livro nada, o sentido dele tudo,
Um livro separado, não ligado ao resto nem sentido pelo intelecto,
Mas vós ó latências inenarráveis vibrareis com cada página.

Poetas por Vir

Poetas por vir! oradores, cantores, músicos por vir!
Hoje não é para me justificar e responder a que venho,
Mas vós, uma nova progênie, nativa, atlética, continental, maior que tudo conhecido,

¹² Este poema foi originalmente publicado em *Drum-Taps*.

Desperta! pois deves me justificar.

Mal escrevo uma ou duas palavras indicativas para o futuro,
Mal avanço um momento só para girar e correr de volta pra escuridão.

Sou um homem que, passeando sem parar totalmente, dá uma olhada ocasional em vós e a
seguir desvia o rosto,
Deixando que vós o provais e definis,
Aguardando as coisas principais de vós.

A Ti

Estranho, se passando me encontras e desejas falar comigo, por que não deverias falar
comigo?
E por que eu não deveria falar contigo?

Tu Leitor

Tu leitor palpitas vida e orgulho e amor como eu,
Por isso para ti os seguintes cânticos.

4.2 Partindo de Paumanok¹³

Partindo de Paumanok

1

Partindo da pisciforme Paumanok¹⁴ onde nasci,
 Bem-gerado, e criado por uma mãe perfeita,
 Após percorrer muitas terras, amante de calçadas movimentadas,
 Habitante em Mannahatta¹⁵ minha cidade, ou em savanas sulinas,
 Ou um soldado acampado ou levando minha mochila e arma, ou um mineiro na Califórnia,
 Ou rude em meu lar nos bosques de Dakota, nutrido de carne, bebendo da fonte,
 Ou retirado para cismar e meditar em algum recanto profundo,
 Longe do clangor das aglomerações intervalos passando encantados e contentes,
 Atento ao fluido Missouri doce disposto doador, atento ao vasto Niágara,
 Atento aos rebanhos de búfalos pastando nas planícies, ao touro hirsuto e robusto,
 À terra, pedras, perito em flores de Maio, estrelas, chuva, neve, meu assombro,
 Tendo estudado os tons do tordo e o vôo do falcão montês,
 E ouvido de manhã o inigualável, o tordo ermitão nos cedros do pântano,
 Solitário, cantando no Ocidente, lanço meu canto para um Mundo Novo.

2

Vitória, união, fé, identidade, tempo,
 Os acordos indissolúveis, riquezas, mistério,
 Progresso eterno, o kosmos e os informes modernos.

Isto portanto é vida,
 Eis o que veio à tona após tantas angústias e convulsões.

Tão curioso! tão real!
 Sob os pés o divino solo, acima o sol.
 Vede girando o globo,
 Os continentes ancestrais ao longe agrupados,
 Os continentes presentes e futuros norte e sul, com o istmo no meio.

Vede, vastos espaços sem rastros,
 Como num sonho mudam, velozmente se completam,
 Incontáveis massas emergem neles,
 Eles são agora cobertos pelas pessoas, artes, instituições mais conhecidas.

Vede, projetada no tempo,
 Para mim uma platéia interminável.

¹³ Este poema teve o título original de “Premonition” (“Premonição”) e depois “Proto-Leaf” (publicado na edição de 1860; “Proto-Folha”, ou seja, a folha ancestral, primeva); é um poema que apresenta os temas principais e o propósito do poeta. Por isto ele foi colocado logo depois de “Inscriptions”, livro que abre *Folhas de Relva*.

¹⁴ “Paumanok” é uma mutação de uma palavra indígena/aborígine (“Paumanake” ou “Paumanack”) para “Long Island” (“Ilha Comprida”).

¹⁵ Nome original da ilha, por causa dos Índios Manahata que lá residiam.

Com passo firme e regular avançam, nunca param,
 Sucessões de homens, Americanos¹⁶, cem milhões,
 Uma geração fazendo seu papel e prosseguindo,
 Outra geração fazendo seu papel e prosseguindo por sua vez,
 Com os rostos virados de lado ou para trás para me ouvir,
 Com olhos retrospectivos para mim.

3

Americanos! conquistadores! marchas humanitárias!
 Primordiais! marchas do século! Libertad!¹⁷ massas!
 Para vós um programa de cânticos.

Cânticos das pradarias,
 Cânticos do longuíssimo Mississippi, e descendo até o mar mexicano,
 Cânticos de Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin e Minnesota,
 Cânticos saindo do centro do Kansas, e daí eqüidistante,
 Brotando em pulsações de fogo incessante para vivificar tudo.

4

Leva minhas folhas América, leva-as ao Sul e ao Norte,
 Recebe-as bem em todos os lugares, pois elas são tua própria prole,
 Circunda-as Leste e Oeste, pois elas te circundariam,
 E vós precedentes, conectai ternamente com elas, pois elas conectam ternamente convosco.

Eu decorei o tempo antigo,
 Me sentei estudando aos pés dos grandes mestres,
 Agora se apropriado Oh que os grandes mestres possam retornar e me estudar.

Em nome destes Estados devo desdenhar a antiguidade?
 Ora estes são os filhos da antigüidade para justificá-la.

5

Poetas mortos, filósofos¹⁸, padres,
 Mártires, artistas, inventores, governos desde então,
 Modeladores de línguas em outras praias,
 Nações outrora poderosas, agora reduzidas, retraídas, ou arruinadas,
 Não ousou prosseguir até que eu respeitosamente credite o que deixastes soprado em nossa
 direção,
 Eu perscrutei isto, admito que é admirável, (me movendo um pouco em seu meio,)
 Acho que nada jamais pode ser maior, nada jamais pode merecer mais que isto merece,
 Considerando tudo atentamente por muito tempo, e então o descartando,
 Me posto em meu lugar com meu próprio tempo aqui.

¹⁶ Esta palavra se encontra nesta forma no original; ela faz parte dos empréstimos que Whitman fez ao espanhol.

¹⁷ Do espanhol, liberdade, livre arbítrio, independência, autonomia.

¹⁸ No original, Whitman usa o termo “philosophs”, uma variação do francês “philosophe”, que designa os eruditos do Iluminismo Francês do século XVIII. Ele também costumava emprestar palavras do francês.

Eis aqui terras femininas e masculinas,
 Eis aqui o herdeiro e a herdeira do mundo, eis a chama dos materiais,
 Eis aqui espiritualidade a tradutora, a abertamente reconhecida,
 A sempre-vigilante, o finale¹⁹ das formas visíveis,
 A mitigadora, após devida longa espera avançando agora,
 Sim aqui vem minha mestra a alma.

6

A alma,
 Para sempre e sempre—mais tempo que o do solo castanho e sólido—mais tempo que a água
 encha e vaz.

Farei os poemas de materiais, pois penso que devem ser os poemas mais espirituais,
 E farei os poemas de meu corpo e da mortalidade,
 Pois penso que me ofertarei então os poemas de minha alma e de imortalidade.

Farei uma canção para estes Estados que nenhum Estado possa em qualquer circunstância ser
 sujeitado a outro Estado,
 E farei uma canção para que haja cortesia dia e noite entre todos os Estados e entre quaisquer
 dois deles,
 E farei uma canção para os ouvidos do Presidente, cheia de armas com pontas ameaçadoras,
 E atrás das armas incontáveis rostos insatisfeitos;
 E uma canção farei daquela Uma formada de todos,
 Aquela Uma colmilhada e rutilante cuja cabeça está acima de todos,
 A bélica resolvida Uma²⁰ inclusora e sobre todos,
 (Quão alta a cabeça de qualquer outro aquela cabeça está acima de todos.)

Reconhecerei terras contemporâneas,
 Trilharei toda a geografia do globo e saudarei cortesmente toda cidade grande e pequena,
 E empregos! Porei em meus poemas que convosco há heroísmo em terra e mar,
 E narrarei todo heroísmo de um ponto de vista americano.

Cantarei a canção do companheirismo,
 Mostrarei o que por si deve finalmente agregá-los,
 Creio que estes devem fundar seu próprio ideal de amor varonil, indicando-o em mim,
 Por isso soltarei minha flama os fogos ardentes que estavam ameaçando me consumir,
 Erguerei o que há muito tem contido esses fogos fumarentos,
 Lhes darei entrega completa,
 Escreverei o poema-evangelho de camaradas e de amor,
 Pois quem mais devia entender o amor com toda sua aflição e alegria?
 E quem mais devia ser o poeta de camaradas?

7

Sou o crédulo homem de qualidades, épocas, raças,
 Progrido do povo em seu próprio espírito,

¹⁹ Na verdade, a palavra correta é “finale,” que é a seção final de uma composição musical.

²⁰ Ele se refere à bandeira americana, que representa a união de todos os estados.

Eis o que canta fê irrestrita.

Omnes! omnes!²¹ que outros ignorem o que quiserem,
Também faço o poema do mal, também comemoro essa parte,
Eu mesmo sou tão mau quanto bom e minha nação é—e digo de fato não existe mal,
(Ou se há digo que é tão importante para ti, para a terra ou para mim, como qualquer outra
coisa.)

Eu, também, seguindo muitos e seguido por muitos, inauguro uma religião, adentro a arena,
(Pode ser que eu esteja destinado a proferir os gritos mais altos lá, os brados estrondosos do
vencedor,
Quem sabe? eles podem se elevar de mim ainda, e pairar sobre tudo.)

Cada um não é pelo seu próprio bem,
Digo que toda a terra e todas as estrelas no céu são pelo bem da religião.

Digo que nenhum homem já foi sequer meio devoto,
Nenhum já adorou ou venerou sequer pela metade,
Nenhum começou a pensar quão divino ele é, e quão certo o futuro é.

Digo que a grandeza real e permanente destes Estados deve ser sua religião,
Do contrário não há nenhuma grandeza real e permanente;
(Nem caráter nem vida digna de nome sem religião,
Nem terra nem homem ou mulher sem religião.)

8

O que estás fazendo jovem?
És tão sincero, tão devotado à literatura, ciência, arte, casos amorosos?
Estas realidades ostensivas, política, fatos?
Tua ambição ou negócio qualquer que seja?

Está bem—contra tais não digo uma palavra, também sou seu poeta,
Mas vê! tais velozmente cedem, consumidos pelo bem da religião,
Pois nem toda a matéria é combustível para aquecer, chama impalpável, a vida essencial da
terra,
Não mais que tais são para a religião.

9

O que buscas tão pensativo e taciturno?
O que precisas camarada²²?
Caro filho achas que é amor?

Escuta caro filho—escuta América, filha ou filho,
É uma coisa dolorosa amar um homem ou mulher ao excesso, e no entanto isso satisfaz, é
ótimo,

²¹ Do latim, todos, ou o todo.

²² No original, Whitman usa uma forma antiga desta palavra em inglês, “camerado”, que não é nem a do francês “camarade”, nem do espanhol, “camarada”.

Mas há algo mais muito grande, faz o todo coincidir,
Isto, magnífico, além dos materiais, com mãos contínuas abarca e provê a todos.

10

Saibas, somente para largar na terra os germes de uma religião maior,
Os seguintes cânticos cada um para sua espécie eu canto.

Meu camarada!
Para compartires comigo duas grandezas, e uma terceira se elevando inclusiva e mais
resplendente,
A grandeza do Amor e da Democracia, e a grandeza da Religião²³.

Minha própria melange²⁴, o invisto e o visto,
Oceano misterioso onde os riachos deságuam,
Espírito profético dos materiais cambiando e oscilando ao meu redor,
Seres vivos, identidades agora sem dúvida perto de nós no ar que desconhecemos,
Contato diário e contínuo que não me liberará,
Selecionando estes, estes em sinais exigidos de mim.

Ele com um beijo diário desde a infância me beijando,
Não enredou e trançou ao meu redor aquilo que me liga a ele,
Não mais do que sou ligado aos céus e todo o mundo espiritual,
Após o que fizeram comigo, sugerindo temas.

Oh tais temas—equidades! Oh divina média!
Gorjeios sob o sol, guiados como agora, ou ao meio-dia, ou poente,
Frases musicais fluindo pelas eras, agora chegando aqui,
Me entrego a vossos acordes afoitos e complexos, contribuo com eles, e alegremente os passo
adiante.

11

Como fiz no Alabama meu passeio matinal,
Vi onde a fêmea do tordo sentou-se em seu ninho nas sarças chocando sua ninhada.

Também vi o macho,
Me detive para ouvi-lo bem de perto inflando sua garganta e cantando alegremente.

E durante esta pausa me ocorreu que a razão real de seu cantar não estava só lá,
Não por sua consorte nem só ele, nem tudo retornado pelos ecos,
Mas sutil, clandestino, longe além,
Um encargo transmitido e oculto presente para os que estão nascendo.

12

Democracia! bem perto de ti uma garganta está se inflando agora e cantando alegremente.

²³ Aqui estão três temas centrais em *Folhas de Relva*, conforme assinalamos na nota ao título deste poema.

²⁴ No original, em francês, que significa mistura, miscelânea, que ele descreve neste trecho.

Ma Femme!²⁵ pela prole além de nós e nossa,
 Aos que aqui pertencem e aos que virão,
 Eu exultante para estar pronto pra eles agora agitarei cantos mais fortes e altivos do que já
 tenham sido ouvidos sobre a terra.

Farei as canções de paixão para abrir-lhes caminho,
 E vossas canções infratores proscritos, pois vos perscruto com olhos análogos e vos carrego
 comigo como a qualquer outro.

Farei o verdadeiro poema das riquezas,
 Para ganhar para o corpo e a mente tudo que adere e avança e não é suprimido pela morte;
 E fundirei egotismo e o mostrarei subjazendo a tudo, e serei o bardo da personalidade,
 E mostrarei de macho e fêmea que um é só o igual do outro,
 E órgãos sexuais e atos! concentraí em mim, pois estou determinado a contar-vos com voz
 clara corajosa para provar que sois ilustres,
 E mostrarei que não há nenhuma imperfeição no presente, e não pode haver nenhuma no
 futuro,
 E mostrarei que o que acontecer a qualquer pessoa pode ser transformado em belos resultados,
 E mostrarei que nada pode acontecer mais bonito que a morte,
 E urdirei um fio por meus poemas para que tempo e eventos sejam compactos,
 E que todas as coisas do universo são milagres perfeitos, cada um tão profundo quanto os
 outros.

Não farei poemas com referência a partes,
 Mas farei poemas, canções, pensamentos, com referência ao conjunto,
 E não cantarei com referência a um dia, mas com referência a todos os dias,
 E não farei um poema nem a menor parte de um poema que não tenha referência à alma,
 Porque tendo olhado os objetos do universo, vejo que não há nem um nem uma partícula de
 um que não tenha referência à alma.

13

Alguém estava pedindo pra ver a alma?
 Vê, tua própria forma e semblante, pessoas, substâncias, feras, as árvores, os rios correntes, as
 rochas e areias.

Tudo contém alegrias espirituais e depois as libera;
 Como pode o corpo real morrer e ser enterrado?

Do teu corpo real e do corpo real de qualquer homem ou mulher,
 Item por item ele eludirá as mãos dos limpa-defuntos e passará às esferas adequadas,
 Levando o que adveio a ele do momento do nascimento ao momento da morte.

Os tipos do impressor não retornam a impressão, o sentido, a preocupação principal,
 Não mais que a substância e vida de um homem ou a substância e vida de uma mulher
 retornam no corpo e na alma,
 Indiferentemente antes da morte e depois da morte.

²⁵ Do francês, “minha mulher”.

Vê, o corpo inclui e é o sentido, a preocupação principal e inclui e é a alma;
Quem sejas, quão superior e divino é teu corpo, ou qualquer parte dele!

14

Quem sejas, a ti infindáveis proclamações!

Filha das terras esperaste por teu poeta?
Esperaste por alguém com uma boca fluida e mão indicativa?
Ao macho dos Estados, e à fêmea dos Estados,
Palavras exultantes, palavras para as terras da Democracia.

Terras interligadas, produtoras de alimento!
Terra do carvão e ferro! terra do ouro! terra do algodão, açúcar, arroz!
Terra do trigo, carne de boi, de porco! terra de lã e cânhamo! terra da maçã e da uva!
Terra das planícies pastoris, dos gramados do mundo! terra dos odoríficos intermináveis
platôs!
Terra do rebanho, do jardim, da saudável casa de adobe²⁶!
Terras onde o noroestino Columbia²⁷ serpenteia e onde o sudoestino Colorado serpenteia!
Terra do Chesapeake oriental! terra do Delaware!
Terra do Ontário, Erie, Huron, Michigan!
Terra das Antigas Treze! terra de Massachusetts! terra de Vermont e Connecticut!
Terra dos litorais! terra de serras e cumes!
Terra de barqueiros e marinheiros! terra de pescadores!
Terras inextricáveis! dos grudados! dos apaixonados!
Do lado a lado! dos irmãos mais velhos e mais jovens! dos ossudos!

Terra das grandes mulheres! do feminino! das irmãs experientes e das irmãs inexperientes!
Terra de longo hausto! escorada no Ártico! da brisa Mexicana! do diverso! do compacto!
Do Pensilvano! do Virginiano! do duplo Caroliniano!
Oh todos e cada um bem amados por mim! minhas nações intrépidas! Oh de qualquer maneira
vos incluo todos com amor perfeito!
Não posso ser excluído por vós! nem por um nem por nenhum outro!
Oh morte! Oh por tudo isso, eu ainda sou teu não visto nesta hora com amor irrepressível,
Percorrendo a Nova Inglaterra, um amigo, um viajante,
Chapinhando meus pés descalços na beira das ondulações de verão nas areias de Paumanok,
Cruzando as pradarias, morando de novo em Chicago, morando em toda cidade,
Observando espetáculos, nascimentos, melhorias, estruturas, artes,
Ouvindo oradores e oradoras em salões públicos,
Dos e pelos Estados como durante a vida, cada homem e mulher meus vizinhos,
O Louisianiano, o Georgiano, tão perto de mim, e eu tão perto dele e dela,
O Mississippiano e Arkansiano ainda comigo, e eu ainda com qualquer um deles,
Ainda nas planícies a oeste do rio medular, ainda em minha casa de adobe,
Ainda retornando ao leste, ainda no Estado Litorâneo ou em Maryland,
Ainda Kanadiano alegremente enfrentando o inverno, a neve e gelo bem-vindos a mim,

²⁶ Tijolo cru, ou seja, bloco de argila, que pode ser feito misturado com palha, secado ao sol.

²⁷ Columbia (ou Colúmbia) e Colorado são rios; Chesapeake é o maior estuário dos Estados Unidos; Delaware é rio e baía; Ontário, Erie, Huron, Michigan são referidos aqui como lagos; e as “Antigas Treze” são as treze colônias originais dos Estados Unidos, que se rebelaram contra o Império Britânico e proclamaram sua independência em 4 de julho de 1776; Massachusetts, Vermont e Connecticut fizeram parte dessa rebelião.

Ainda um verdadeiro filho ou do Maine ou do Estado do Granito, ou do Estado de
 Narragansett Bay, ou do Estado do Império²⁸,
 Ainda navegando a outros litorais para anexar também, ainda recebendo todo irmão novo,
 Aqui aplicando estas folhas aos novos assim que eles se unem aos antigos,
 Vindo entre os novos eu mesmo para ser seu companheiro e igual, vindo pessoalmente a ti
 agora,
 Dirigindo-te a atos, personagens, espetáculos, comigo.

15

Comigo com pulso firme, contudo te apressa, te apressa.

Por tua vida adere-te a mim,
 (Posso ter que ser persuadido muitas vezes antes de consentir a dar-me a ti realmente, mas e
 daí?
 Não deve a Natureza ser persuadida muitas vezes?)

Delicado dolce affettuoso²⁹ não sou,
 Barbudo, bronzeado, de pescoço grisalho, agreste, eu vim,
 Pra ser combatido quando passo pelos sólidos prêmios do universo,
 Pois tais confiro a quem pode perseverar em ganhá-los.

16

Me detenho um momento em meu caminho,
 Eis aqui pra ti! e eis aqui pra América!
 Ainda o presente elevo alto, ainda o futuro dos Estados prenuncio contente e sublime,
 E para o passado pronuncio o que o ar possui dos vermelhos aborígenes.

Os vermelhos aborígenes,
 Deixando naturais haustos, sons de chuva e ventos, chamados como de pássaros e animais nos
 bosques, nos silabaram nomes,
 Okonee, Koosa, Ottawa, Monongahela, Sauk, Natchez, Chattahoochee, Kaqueta, Oronoco,
 Wabash, Miami, Saginaw, Chippewa, Oshkosh, Walla-Walla,
 Deixando tais aos Estados eles fundem, partem, impregnando a água e a terra com nomes.

17

Expansivos e velozes, doravante,
 Elementos, raças, ajustes, turbulentos, rápidos e audaciosos,
 Um mundo primitivo de novo, vistas de glória incessantes e ramificantes,
 Uma raça nova dominando as anteriores e mais grandiosas, com novas disputas,
 Nova política, novas literaturas e religiões, novas invenções e artes.

Estas, minha voz anunciando—não mais dormirei mas me erguerei,
 Vós oceanos que estavam calmos dentro de mim! como vos sinto, insondáveis, instigando,
 preparando ondas e tempestades sem precedentes.

²⁸ Estado do Granito é New Hampshire; o Estado de Narragansett Bay é Nova Inglaterra; e o Estado do Império é o Estado de Nova York.

²⁹ Estas palavras italianas são utilizadas em música para indicar o modo de execução da peça.

18

Vede, vapores navegando por meu poemas,
 Vede, em meus poemas imigrantes continuamente vindo e desembarcando,
 Vede, no passado, a cabana indígena, a trilha, a choupana do caçador, a chalana, a folha de milho, a alegação, a cerca rude e a aldeia do sertão,
 Vede, num lado o Mar Ocidental e no outro o Mar Oriental, como avançam e recuam em meus poemas como em suas próprias praias,
 Vede, pastos e florestas em meus poemas—vede, animais selvagens e domésticos—vede, além do Kaw³⁰, incontáveis rebanhos de búfalo se nutrindo na baixa e crespa relva,
 Vede, em meus poemas, cidades, sólidas, vastas, interiores, com ruas calçadas, com edifícios de ferro e pedra, veículos incessantes e comércio,
 Vede, a prensa a vapor de muitos cilindros—vede, o telégrafo elétrico se estendendo pelo continente,
 Vede, nas profundezas de Atlântica³¹ pulsos americanos alcançando a Europa, pulsos da Europa devidamente retornados,
 Vede, a forte e ligeira locomotiva quando parte, ofegante, soprando o apito a vapor,
 Vede, lavradores arando fazendas—vede, mineiros cavando minas—vede, as inúmeras fábricas,
 Vede, mecânicos ocupados em seus bancos com ferramentas—vede de entre eles juízes superiores, filósofos, Presidentes, emergem, trajados em trajes de trabalho,
 Vede, vagueando pelas lojas e campos dos Estados, eu bem-amado, agarrado pelo dia e pela noite,
 Eis aí os altos ecos de minhas canções—lede os sinais vindos por fim.

19

Oh cordial camarada!³² Oh eu e tu afinal, e só nós dois.
 Oh uma palavra para limpar o caminho adiante sem fim!
 Oh algo extático e indemonstrável! Oh música selvagem!
 Oh agora triunfo—e tu também;
 Oh de mãos dadas—Oh prazer saudável—Oh mais um desejador e amante!
 Oh para se apressar de pulso firme—se apressar, apressar comigo.

³⁰ Tribo indígena, cujo nome foi utilizado para nomear o Estado do Kansas. Há também um rio com esse nome em Kansas.

³¹ Grafia que Whitman utilizou para se referir a Atlântida.

³² No original, “camerado close.” Cordial e afetuoso são sinônimos de íntimo; preferi cordial pela aliteração com camarada.

4.3 Saudação ao Mundo!

Salut au Monde!

1

Oh segura minha mão Walt Whitman!
 Que prodígios planantes! que cenários e sons!
 Que infindos elos unidos, cada qual ligado ao seguinte,
 Cada qual bastando a todos, todos compartilhando a terra com todos.

O que se expande em ti Walt Whitman?
 Que ondas e solos exsudam?
 Que climas? que pessoas e cidades se aproximam?
 Quem são esses infantes, alguns brincando, outros dormitando?
 Quem são as moças? as mulheres casadas?
 Quem são os grupos de velhos vagando abraçados?
 Que rios são estes? que florestas e frutos são estes?
 Qual o nome das montanhas que se erguem tão altas nas névoas?
 Que miríades de moradias repletas de moradores?

2

Em mim a latitude se expande, a longitude se alonga,
 Ásia, África, Europa, a leste—a América é preparada a oeste,
 Cintando o bojo da terra enreda o tórrido equador,
 Curiosamente norte e sul invertem as pontas dos eixos,
 Dentro de mim o dia mais longo, o sol gira em círculos oblíquos, ele não se põe há meses,
 Estendido no tempo certo dentro de mim o sol da meia noite só se levanta acima do horizonte
 e afunda de novo,
 Em mim zonas, mares, cataratas, florestas, vulcões, grupos,
 Malásia, Polinésia, e as grandes ilhas antilhanas.

3

O que ouves Walt Whitman?

Ouçó o operário cantando e a esposa do fazendeiro cantando,
 Ouçó ao longe os sons de crianças e de animais de manhã cedo,
 Ouçó gritos rivais de Australianos perseguindo cavalos selvagens,
 Ouçó a dança espanhola³³ com castanholas à sombra do castanheiro, à rabeça e ao violão,
 Ouçó ecos contínuos do Tâmisia,
 Ouçó ferozes canções francesas de liberdade,
 Ouçó do remador italiano o recitativo musical de velhos poemas,
 Ouçó os gafanhotos na Síria quando atacam grão e grama com saraivadas de nuvens terríveis,
 Ouçó o refrão Cóptico³⁴ ao poente, caindo melancolicamente no seio da mãe negra vasta e

³³ A formulação do verso em inglês: “I hear the Spanish dance with castanets”, devido à estrutura do inglês, pode ser interpretado de duas maneiras. Pode ser tanto “Ouço a dança espanhola com castanholas” quanto “Ouço os espanhóis dançar com castanholas”. Ao imaginar a cena, me senti ouvindo o som de um grupo de pessoas dançando, mais do que dançarinos individuais, daí minha preferência pela primeira versão.

venerável o Nilo,
 Ouço o chilro do almocreve mexicano, e os guisos da mula,
 Ouço o almuadem árabe chamando do topo da mesquita,
 Ouço os padres cristãos nos altares das igrejas, ouço susceptíveis baixo e soprano,
 Ouço o brado do Cossaco e a voz do marujo fazendo-se ao mar em Okotsk³⁵,
 Ouço o arquejar do comboio³⁶ quando os escravos avançam, quando as roucas³⁷ turmas
 passam em duplas e trios, acorrentados por cadeias e grilhões,
 Ouço o hebreu lendo seus relatos e salmos,
 Ouço os mitos ritmados dos gregos, e as sólidas fábulas dos romanos,
 Ouço a estória da vida divina e da morte sangrenta do belo Deus o Cristo,
 Ouço o hindu ensinando a seu pupilo predileto os amores, as guerras, os provérbios,
 transmitidos a salvo até hoje de poetas que escreveram três mil anos atrás.

4

O que vês Walt Whitman?
 Quem são os que tu saúdas, e que um a um te saúdam?

Vejo uma magna maravilha redonda rolando pelo espaço,
 Vejo fazendas diminutas, aldeias, ruínas, campos-santos, cadeias, fábricas, palácios,
 choupanas, cabanas de bárbaros, tendas de nômades sobre a superfície,
 Vejo a parte sombreada de um lado onde os adormecidos dormem e a parte ensolarada no
 outro lado,
 Vejo a mudança curiosa e rápida de luz e sombra,
 Vejo terras distantes, tão reais e próximas de seus habitantes quanto minha terra é para mim.

Vejo águas profundas,
 Vejo picos de montanhas, vejo as serras dos Andes onde se alinham,
 Vejo claramente os Himalaias, Chian Sahas, Altays, Ghauts,
 Vejo os pináculos gigantes de Elbruz, Kazbek, Bazardjusi,
 Vejo os Alpes da Estíria e os Alpes de Karnac,
 Vejo os Pirineus, Balcãs, Cárpatos, e ao norte os campos de Dofra, e ao mar o monte Hecla,
 Vejo o Vesúvio e o Etna, as montanhas da Lua, e as montanhas vermelhas de Madagascar,
 Vejo os desertos líbio, árabe e asiático,
 Vejo imensos e medonhos icebergs Árticos e Antárticos,
 Vejo os oceanos superiores e inferiores, o Atlântico e o Pacífico, o mar do México, o mar do
 Brasil e o mar do Peru,
 As águas do Indostão, o Mar da China, e o golfo da Guiné,
 As águas do Japão, a bela baía de Nagasaki abrigada em suas montanhas,
 A extensão dos litorais báltico, cáspio, bósnio, britânico e a baía de Biscaia,
 O ensolarado Mediterrâneo e de uma a outra de suas ilhas,
 O mar Branco, e o mar ao redor da Groenlândia.

Contemplo os marinheiros do mundo,
 Alguns em tormentas, alguns à noite de guarda na gávea,

³⁴ A linguagem litúrgica da Igreja Coptica do Egito e da Etiópia, escrita em alfabeto grego.

³⁵ Colônia e porto russos na costa do Pacífico.

³⁶ “Comboio de escravos”; uso apenas “comboio” pra não repetir a palavra “escravo”.

³⁷ O original, “husky”, significa, no contexto, “de garganta seca”, “rouco” e “robusto”. A escolha foi baseada na harmonia sonora com outras palavras do verso.

Alguns desamparadamente à deriva, alguns com doenças contagiosas.

Contemplo a vela e os navios-a-vapor do mundo, alguns em frotas no porto, alguns em viagens,
 Alguns dobram o Cabo das Tormentas, alguns Cabo Verde, outros os cabos Guardafui, Bon, ou Bajadore,
 Outros o pontal de Dondra, outros cruzam o estreito de Sunda, outros cabo Lopatka, outros o estreito de Behring,
 Outros o cabo Horn, outros navegam o golfo do México ou em Cuba ou Haiti, outros a baía de Hudson ou a baía de Baffin,
 Outros cruzam o estreito de Dover, outros penetram o Wash, outros o estuário de Solway, outros circundam Cabo Claro, outros o Finisterra,
 Outros atravessam o Zuyder Zee ou o Scheld,
 Outros em idas e vindas em Gibraltar ou em Dardanelos,
 Outros asperamente abrem caminho pelas geleiras geladas do norte,
 Outros descem ou sobem o Obi ou o Lena,
 Outros o Níger ou o Congo, outros o Indo, o Buranpooter e o Camboja,
 Outros esperam fumegando prontos para partir nos portos da Austrália,
 Esperam em Liverpool, Glasgow, Dublin, Marselha, Lisboa, Nápoles, Hamburgo, Bremen, Bordéus, Haia, Copenhague,
 Esperam em Valparaíso, Rio de Janeiro, Panamá.

5

Vejo os trilhos das ferrovias da terra,
 Vejo-os na Grã-Bretanha, os vejo na Europa,
 Vejo-os na Ásia e na África.

Vejo os telégrafos elétricos da terra,
 Vejo os filamentos de notícias das guerras, mortes, perdas, ganhos, paixões da minha raça.

Vejo os longos riscos de rios da terra,
 Vejo o Amazonas e o Paraguai,
 Vejo os quatro grandes rios da China, o Amour³⁸, o Rio Amarelo, o Yangtse e o Pérola,
 Vejo onde o Sena corre, e onde o Danúbio, o Loire, o Ródano e o Guadalquivir correm,
 Vejo as espirais do Volga, do Dnieper, do Oder,
 Vejo o toscano descendo o Arno, e o veneziano ao longo do Pó,
 Vejo o marujo grego zarpando da baía de Egina.

6

Vejo o sítio do velho império da Assíria, e o da Pérsia, e o da Índia,
 Vejo a queda do Ganges sobre a alta orla de Saukara³⁹.
 Vejo o lugar do desígnio da Deidade encarnada por avatares em formas humanas,
 Vejo os locais das sucessões de padres na terra, oráculos, imoladores, brâmanes, sabianos⁴⁰,

³⁸ Grafia usada por Whitman para o nome do rio asiático “Amur”.

³⁹ Provável grafia whitmaniana para “Sankara”/“Shankara”, ou “Shiva”, de onde o Ganges brota.

⁴⁰ Embora a palavra seja parecida com Sabeus, eles não o são. Não encontramos o termo em Português, por isso escolhemos sabiano(s); no original em inglês, “sabians”, para indicar este povo pré-maometano.

lamas⁴¹, monges, muftis⁴², exortadores,
 Vejo onde druidas andaram pelos bosques de Mona, vejo o visgo e a verbena,
 Vejo os templos das mortes dos corpos dos Deuses, vejo os velhos significantes.

Vejo Cristo comendo o pão de sua última ceia no meio de moços e velhos,
 Vejo onde o jovem forte e divino Hércules labutou leal e longamente e depois morreu,
 Vejo o local da rica vida inocente e da sina infeliz do belo filho noturno, o lembrado Baco,
 Vejo Kneph⁴³, em flor, trajado de azul, com a coroa de penas na cabeça,
 Vejo Hermes, insuspeito, moribundo, bem-amado, dizendo ao povo *Não choreis por mim,*
Este não é meu verdadeiro país, tenho vivido banido de meu verdadeiro país, agora volto pra
lá,
Retorno à esfera celestial onde cada um vai por sua vez.

7

Vejo os campos de batalha da terra, a grama cresce neles e florações e milho,
 Vejo as trilhas de expedições antigas e modernas.

Vejo as construções anônimas, mensagens veneráveis dos eventos desconhecidos, heróis,
 relatos da terra.

Vejo os locais das sagas,
 Vejo pinheiros e coníferas lacerados por rajadas boreais,
 Vejo penedos e penhascos de granito, vejo verdes prados e lagos,
 Vejo monumentos funerários de guerreiros escandinavos,
 Vejo-os erguidos com pedras na orla de oceanos inquietos, que os espíritos dos homens
 mortos quando se entediaram com seus calmos túmulos possam subir pelos morros e
 fitar os vagalhões encrespados, e ser refrescados por tormentas, imensidade, liberdade,
 ação.

Vejo as estepes da Ásia,
 Vejo os túmulos da Mongólia, vejo as tendas de Kalmucks e Baskirs,
 Vejo as tribos nômade com rebanhos de bois e vacas,
 Vejo as chapadas entalhadas de ravinas, vejo as selvas e os desertos,
 Vejo o camelo, o corcel selvagem, a betarda, a rabigorda ovelha, o antílope e o lobo entocado.

Vejo os planaltos da Abissínia,
 Vejo rebanhos de cabras se alimentando e vejo a figueira, o tamarindo, a datileira⁴⁴,
 E campos de trigo da Abissínia e locais de verdor e ouro.

Vejo o vaquero⁴⁵ brasileiro,
 Vejo o boliviano subindo o monte Sorata,
 Vejo o Wacho⁴⁶ cruzando as planícies, vejo o cavaleiro incomparável com seu laço em seu

⁴¹ No original “llamas”, que é o animal llama ou alpaca, mas pelo contexto o sentido é de lama, um mestre budista tibetano.

⁴² Guia ou líder espiritual do Islamismo.

⁴³ Um deus que tem cabeça de carneiro e corpo de homem, na mitologia Egípcia.

⁴⁴ Também conhecida por tamareira ou o fruto, a tâmara.

⁴⁵ “Vaquero” (deixei como está no original, em espanhol); em português, vaqueiro ou boiadeiro.

⁴⁶ Membro de uma tribo indígena do Texas que habitava as planícies.

braço,
Vejo nos pampas a caça ao gado selvagem por causa do couro.

8⁴⁷

Vejo as regiões de neve e gelo,
Vejo o perspicaz Samoiede e o finlandês,
Vejo o perseguidor de focas em seu barco suspendendo seu arpão,
Vejo o siberiano em seu trenó ligeiro de tração canina,
Vejo os caçadores de boto, vejo os baleeiros do Pacífico sul e do Atlântico norte,
Vejo os penhascos, geleiras, torrentes, vales, da Suíça –noto os longos invernos e o isolamento.

Vejo as cidades da terra e me faço ao acaso uma parte delas,
Sou um verdadeiro parisiense,
Sou um habitante de Viena, São Petersburgo, Berlim, Constantinopla,
Sou de Adelaide, Sidney, Melbourne,
Sou de Londres, Manchester, Bristol, Edimburgo, Limerick,
Sou de Madri, Cádiz, Barcelona, Oporto, Lyons, Bruxelas, Berna, Frankfurt, Stuttgart,
Turim, Florença,
Pertença a Moscou, Cracóvia, Varsóvia, ou ao norte em Cristiânia ou Estocolmo, ou no Irkutsk siberiano, ou em alguma rua da Islândia,
Deço sobre todas essas cidades, e ascendo delas de novo.

10

Vejo vapores exalando de países inexplorados,
Vejo os tipos selvagens, o arco e a flecha, a tala envenenada, o fetiche e a obi⁴⁸.

Vejo cidades africanas e asiáticas,
Vejo Argel, Trípoli, Derne, Mogadore, Timbuktu, Monróvia,
Vejo os enxames de Pequim, Cantão, Benares, Delhi, Calcutá, Tóquio,
Vejo o Krumano⁴⁹ em sua cabana, e o daomeano e o axanti em suas cabanas,
Vejo o turco fumando ópio em Aleppo,
Vejo as multidões pitorescas nas feiras de Khiva e nas de Herat,
Vejo Teerã, vejo Muscat e Medina e as areias interferentes, vejo as caravanas labutando,
Vejo o Egito e os egípcios, vejo as pirâmides e os obeliscos,
Contemplo histórias esculpidas, registros de reis conquistadores, dinastias, talhadas em lajes de arenitos, ou em blocos de granito,
Vejo em Memphis sarcófagos com múmias embalsamadas, enfaixadas com linho, jazendo lá muitos séculos,
Contemplo o tebano caído, os grandes olhos arredondados, o pescoço pendente para o lado, as mãos dobradas sobre o peito.

⁴⁷ Da seção 8 se vai para a 10; seção 9 não existe na versão final de *Folhas de Relva*, pois Whitman excluiu a antiga seção 8 e a seção 9 se transformou em seção 8, sendo o número 9 eliminado da seqüência. Algumas edições, como a da Signet Classic (2000), dividem a seção 8 em duas partes, inserindo um 9 antes do verso “Vejo as cidades da terra [...]”.

⁴⁸ Grafia alternativa de “Obeah”, termo usado para se referir a magia ou práticas religiosas de origem africana, como vodu, santeria, etc. No Brasil, “obi” é um termo vulgar para se referir ao gênero Cola, um tipo de árvore de origem também africana.

⁴⁹ Elemento pertencente a uma tribo da Libéria, África Ocidental.

Vejo todos os criados da terra, laborando,
 Vejo todos os prisioneiros nas prisões,
 Vejo os corpos humanos defectivos da terra,
 Os cegos, os surdo-mudos, idiotas, corcundas, lunáticos,
 Os piratas, ladrões, traidores, assassinos, escravizadores da terra,
 Os infantes indefesos, e os velhos e as velhas indefesos.

Vejo macho e fêmea em todos os lugares,
 Vejo a serena irmandade de filósofos,
 Vejo a construtividade de minha raça,
 Vejo os resultados da perseverança e diligência de minha raça,
 Vejo graus, cores, barbarismos⁵⁰, civilizações, ando entre eles, mesclo-me
 indiscriminadamente,
 E saúdo todos os habitantes da terra.

11

Tu quem quer que sejas!
 Tu filha ou filho da Inglaterra!
 Tu das poderosas tribos e impérios Eslavos! tu Russo na Rússia!
 Tu divino-animado Africano, preto, de escura descendência, grande, de fina cabeça, de nobre
 forma, soberbamente destinado, de igual para igual comigo!
 Tu Norueguês! Sueco! Dinamarquês! Islandês! tu Prussiano!
 Tu Espanhol da Espanha! tu Português!
 Tu Francesa ou Francês da França!
 Tu Belga! tu amante da liberdade dos Países Baixos! (tu semeias de onde eu mesmo
 descendo⁵¹);
 Tu robusto Austríaco! tu Lombardo! Huno! Boêmio! fazendeiro da Estíria!
 Tu vizinho do Danúbio!
 Tu operário do Reno, do Elba, ou do Weser! Tu operária também!
 Tu Sardenho! tu Bávaro! Suábio! Saxão! Valaquiano! Búlgaro!
 Tu Romano! Napolitano! tu Grego!
 Tu ágil matador na arena de Sevilha!
 Tu montanhista vivendo ilegalmente no Taurus ou no Cáucaso!
 Tu Bokh⁵² observando bando eqüino tuas éguas e ganhões pastando!
 Tu persa de belo corpo a toda velocidade na sela atirando flechas no alvo!
 Tu Chinês ou Chinesa da China! tu Tártaro da Tartária!
 Vós mulheres da terra subordinadas às vossas tarefas!
 Tu judeu vagando em tua velhice correndo risco para se postar uma vez no solo Sírio!
 Vós demais judeus aguardando em todas as terras por vosso Messias!
 Tu pensativo armênio ponderando à beira de algum curso do Eufrates! Tu espiando entre as
 ruínas de Nínive! tu galgando monte Ararat!
 Tu peregrino de pés doloridos dando boas-vindas à centelha distante dos minaretes de Meca!
 Vós xeques pelo estreito de Suez a Bab-el-mandeb governando vossas famílias e tribos!

⁵⁰ Barbárie; o erro lingüístico (de pronúncia, grafia, etc) tb é chamado de barbarismo; mantive barbarismo por causa do duplo sentido.

⁵¹ A mãe de Whitman, Louisa Van Velsor, era de ascendência holandesa.

⁵² Refere-se a Bokhara ou habitante desse lugar, que é uma cidade no Uzbequistão a oeste de Samarqand. É uma das mais antigas cidades da Ásia.

Tu cultivador de oliveiras cuidando teus frutos nos campos de Nazaré, Damasco, ou lago Tiberíade⁵³!

Tu mercador tibetano no amplo interior ou pechinchando nas lojas de Lassa!

Vós japoneses homem ou mulher! tu vivente em Madagascar, Ceilão, Sumatra, Bornéu!

Todos vós habitantes dos continentes da Ásia, África, Europa, Austrália, indiferente de lugar!

Todos vós nas ilhas inumeráveis dos arquipélagos do mar!

E vós dos séculos adiante quando me ouvis!

E vós cada um e em todo lugar a quem não especifico, mas incluo do mesmo modo!

Saúde! boa vontade a vós todos, enviados por mim e pela América!

Cada um de nós inevitável,

Cada um de nós ilimitado—cada um de nós com seu direito sobre a terra,

A cada um de nós concedidos os teores eternos da terra,

Cada um de nós aqui tão divinamente quanto qualquer um aqui.

12

Tu Hotentote com estalante palato! vós hordas carapinhadas!

Vós pessoas possuídas pingando gotas de suor ou gotas de sangue!

Vós formas humanas com os insondáveis sempre comoventes semblantes de brutos!

Tu pobre koboo⁵⁴ que o mais mesquinho entre os demais despreza por tua linguagem lampejante e espiritualidade!

Tu diminuído Kamtschatkan, Groenlandês, Lapão!

Tu negro Austral, nu, rubro, enfarruscado, com lábio protuberante, rastejante, buscando tua comida!

Tu Caffre⁵⁵, Berbere⁵⁶, Sudanês!

Tu beduíno inculto, magro, áspero,

Vós enxames de pragas em Madras, Nanquim, Cabul, Cairo!

Tu ignorante nômade da Amazônia! tu Patagônio! tu Fijiano!

Não prefiro outros mais que vós,

Não digo uma palavra contra vós, aí onde estais,

(Avançareis na hora certa para o meu lado.)

13

Meu espírito circulou toda a terra em compaixão e determinação,

Tenho procurado por iguais e amantes e os encontrei prontos para mim em todas as terras,

Acho que uma divina afinidade me equiparou a eles.

Vós vapores, acho que me elevei convosco, me afastei para distantes continentes, e me prostrei por lá, por alguma razão,

Acho que soprei convosco, ventos;

Vós águas toquei toda praia convosco,

Tenho corrido por onde corre qualquer rio ou estreito do globo,

Assumi minha posição nas bases das penínsulas e nas rochas encravadas no alto, pra gritar de

⁵³ Também chamado de “Mar da Galiléia”.

⁵⁴ Kubu, tribo de Sumatra.

⁵⁵ *Caffer*, *kafir*, *kaffir*; indivíduo de raça sul-africana; um termo ofensivo para Negros Africanos.

⁵⁶ Um membro de um povo da África do Norte, de origem Muçulmana, que vive em tribos nômades ou estabelecidas do Marrocos ao Egito.

lá:

Salut au monde!

Cidades que a luz ou o calor penetram, penetro-as eu mesmo,
Ilhas todas às quais voam aves, vôo eu mesmo.

A vós todos, em nome da América,
Ergo alta a mão vertical, faço o sinal,
Pra ficar para sempre à vista,
Por todos os lugares e lares de homens.

4.4 Canção da Estrada Aberta

Canção da Estrada Aberta

1

A pé e tranqüilo me entrego à estrada aberta,
Saudável, livre, o mundo à minha frente,
A longa trilha de terra à minha frente levando aonde eu escolher.

Doravante não peço boa-sorte, eu sou a boa-sorte,
Doravante não mais pranteio, não mais adio, nada necessito,
Acabaram-se as queixas internas, bibliotecas, críticas querulas,
Forte e contente percorro a estrada aberta.

A terra, isso é o bastante,
Não quero as constelações mais próximas,
Sei que estão muito bem onde estão,
Sei que elas bastam àqueles que lhes pertencem.

(Ainda aqui carrego meus velhos fardos deliciosos,
Os carrego, homens e mulheres, os carrego comigo aonde quer que vá,
Juro que é impossível me livrar deles,
Sou preenchido por eles e os preencherei em troca.)

2

Tu, estrada que adentro e observo, creio que não és tudo que há aqui,
Creio que há também muita coisa não vista aqui.

Eis a profunda lição da recepção, nem preferência nem negação,
O preto com sua carapinha, o réu, o enfermo, o analfabeto, não são negados;
O nascimento, a pressa pelo médico, o roçar do mendigo, o cambalear do bêbado, o risonho
grupo de mecânicos,
O jovem evadido, o coche do rico, o janota, o casal em fuga,
O comerciante madrugador, o carro fúnebre, o transporte de mobília para a cidade, o retorno
da cidade,
Eles passam, eu também passo, qualquer coisa passa, nenhum pode ser interditado,
Todos são aceitos, todos serão caros a mim.

3

Tu, ar que me serve com fôlego pra falar!
Vós, objetos que chamam meus sentidos da difusão e lhes dão forma!
Tu, luz que me envolve e a tudo em borrifos equáveis delicados!
Vós, trilhas gastas nos valos irregulares às margens da estrada!
Creio que estais latentes de existências não vistas, sois tão caras a mim.

Vós, calçadas pavimentadas das cidades! Vós, fortes guias nas beiradas!
Vós, barcas! vós, tábuas e esteios de cais! vós, laterais de madeira! vós, navios distantes!

Vós, fileiras de casas! vós, fachadas cheias de janelas! vós, telhados!
 Vós, pórticos e entradas! vós, cumeeiras e anteparos de ferro!
 Vós, janelas cujas estruturas transparentes poderiam expor tanto!
 Vós, portas e degraus ascendentes! vós, arcos!
 Vós, pedras cinzentas de passeios intermináveis! vós, cruzamentos calcados!
 De tudo o que vos tem tocado, creio que tendes partilhado convosco mesmos e agora
 partilharíeis o mesmo secretamente comigo,
 De vivos e mortos tendes povoado vossas superfícies impassíveis, e os espíritos daí seriam
 manifestos e amistosos comigo.

4

A terra se expandindo à direita e à esquerda,
 O retrato vivo, toda parte em sua melhor luz,
 A música decrescendo onde é necessário, e parando onde não é querida,
 A alegre voz da via pública, o sentimento festivo e novo da estrada.

Oh rodovia que trafego, dizes a mim *Não me deixa?*
 Dizes *Não te arrisca—se me deixares estás perdido?*
 Dizes *já estou preparada, sou bem-batida e inegada, adere a mim?*

Oh via pública, respondo que não tenho medo de deixar-te, porém te amo,
 Expressas-me melhor que eu mesmo,
 Serás para mim mais que meu poema.

Acho que as ações heróicas foram todas concebidas ao ar livre, e todos os poemas livres
 também,
 Acho que eu poderia parar aqui e fazer milagres,
 Acho que o que encontrar na estrada eu apreciarei e quem me vir me apreciará,
 Acho que quem eu vir deve estar feliz.

5

A partir de agora me ordeno liberado de limites e linhas imaginárias,
 Indo aonde eu queira, meu próprio mestre total e absoluto,
 Ouvindo outros, considerando bem o que dizem,
 Parando, buscando, recebendo, contemplando,
 Gentilmente, mas com vontade inegável, me despindo das amarras que me reteriam.

Inalo grandes porções de espaço,
 O leste e o oeste são meus, e o norte e o sul são meus.

Sou maior, melhor do que eu pensava,
 Não sabia que eu tinha tanta bondade.

Tudo parece belo para mim,
 Posso repetir a homens e mulheres Fizestes tal bem a mim que eu faria o mesmo a vós,
 Alistarei para mim e vós ao prosseguir,
 Me espalharei entre homens e mulheres ao prosseguir,
 Lançarei um novo deleite e rudeza entre eles,

Quem me negar não me perturbará,
Quem me aceitar ele ou ela será abençoado e me abençoará.

6

Agora se mil homens perfeitos tivessem que aparecer isso não me assombraria,
Agora se mil belas formas de mulheres aparecessem isso não me espantaria.

Agora vejo o segredo de fabricação das melhores pessoas,
É crescer ao ar livre e comer e dormir com a terra.

Aqui uma grande ação pessoal tem espaço,
(Tal ação se agarra aos corações da raça inteira de homens,
Sua efusão de força e vontade esmaga a lei e escarnece de toda autoridade e todo argumento
contra ela.)

Eis o teste de sabedoria,
Sabedoria não é finalmente testada em escolas,
Sabedoria não pode ser passada de um que a tem a outro que não a tem,
Sabedoria é da alma, não é suscetível de prova, é sua própria prova,
Se aplica a todas as fases⁵⁷ e objetos e qualidades e está contente,
É a certeza da realidade e imortalidade das coisas, e a excelência das coisas;
Algo há na flutuação da visão de coisas que a provoca desde a alma.

Agora reexamino filosofias e religiões,
Elas podem se revelar bem em salas de conferência, contudo não revelar nada sob as amplas
nuvens e junto a paisagem e fluidas correntes.

Eis realização,
Eis um homem adicionado⁵⁸ —ele realiza aqui o que ele tem nele,
O passado, o futuro, majestade, amor—se estiverem vazios de ti, estás vazio deles.

Só o núcleo de todo objeto nutre;
Onde está aquele que rasga as cascas para ti e mim?
Onde está aquele que desfaz estratégias e envolve por ti e por mim?

Eis adesividade, ela não é previamente modulada, ela é pertinente;
Sabes o que significa quando passas a ser amado por estranhos?
Conheces a conversa daqueles olhos girantes?

7

Eis o eflúvio⁵⁹ da alma,

⁵⁷ No original, “stages”, que também significa “palcos”. Isto sugere que a flutuação também se refere ao fluxo de coisas num palco, visão mostrada pelas luzes baixas dele, que provoca reações nas pessoas, em suas almas.

⁵⁸ Whitman usa o termo “tallied” (do verbo “to tally”) aqui no sentido de adicionado, mas em outras passagens ele é usado como estimado, avaliado ou computado. Quanto à outra palavra, “realiza”, que indica “realização” e “realizar”, estas também já possuem em português o outro significado que têm em inglês, de “percepção” e “perceber”.

⁵⁹ Outra opção, mais poética, seria: “Eis o aroma da alma”; preferimos a outra, mais filosófica. Mas deixamos o registro, para quem preferir esta.

O eflúvio da alma vem de dentro por portões copados, sempre questões provocantes,
 Por que há esses anseios? Por que há esses pensamentos na escuridão?
 Por que há homens e mulheres que enquanto estão junto a mim a luz do sol expande meu
 sangue?
 Por que quando me deixam minhas flâmulas de júbilo afundam chatas e frouxas?
 Por que há árvores sob as quais nunca ando que grandes e melodiosos pensamentos descem
 sobre mim?
 (Acho que eles se penduram lá inverno e verão nessas árvores e sempre deixam cair seus
 frutos quando passo;)
 O que é que me faz intercambiar tão subitamente com estranhos?
 Considerando um condutor quando viajo no assento ao seu lado?
 Considerando algum pescador puxando sua rede pela praia quando passo e paro?
 O que me acontece de ser livre com a boa vontade de uma mulher e homem? o que acontece
 com eles de ser livre com a minha?

8

O eflúvio da alma é felicidade, eis felicidade,
 Acho que ela permeia o ar livre, aguardando o tempo todo,
 Agora flui sobre nós, somos justamente impregnados.

Aqui se eleva o fluido e aderente caráter,
 O fluido e aderente caráter é o frescor e doçura de homem e mulher,
 (As ervas matinais brotam não mais frescas e mais doces todo dia de suas raízes, do que ele
 brota fresco e doce continuamente de si mesmo.)

Para o fluido e aderente caráter exsuda o suor do amor de jovens e velhos,
 Dele cai destilado o encanto que desdenha beleza e aquisições,
 Para ele levanta a dor saudosa arrepiante de contato.

9

Allons!⁶⁰ quem sejas vem viajar comigo!
 Viajando comigo encontras o que nunca cansa.

A terra nunca cansa,
 A terra em princípio é rude, silenciosa, incompreensível, a Natureza em princípio é rude e
 incompreensível,
 Não desanima, continua, há coisas divinas bem encobertas,
 Te juro há coisas divinas mais belas que as palavras podem descrever.

Allons! não devemos parar aqui,
 Por mais doces que sejam estas reservas armazenadas, por mais conveniente que seja esta
 moradia não podemos permanecer aqui,
 Por mais abrigado que seja este porto e calmas estas águas não devemos ancorar aqui,
 Por mais bem vinda que seja a hospitalidade que nos rodeia nos permitimos recebê-la só por
 um momento.

⁶⁰ Do francês, “vamos”.

10

Allons! os estímulos serão maiores,
Navegaremos mares virgens e selvagens,
Iremos aonde ventos sopram, ondas quebram, e o veleiro ianque acelera a todo pano.

Allons! com poder, liberdade, a terra, os elementos,
Saúde, desafio, júbilo, auto-estima, curiosidade;
Allons! de todas as formules!⁶¹
De vossas formules, Oh padres cegos como morcegos e materialistas.

O cadáver velho bloqueia a passagem—o enterro não pode mais esperar.

Allons! porém te cuida!
Quem viaja comigo precisa do melhor sangue, tendões, resistência,
Ninguém pode fazer este teste até que ele ou ela traga coragem e saúde,
Não vem aqui se já exauriste o melhor de ti,
Só podem vir quem vêm em corpos doces e determinados,
Nenhum enfermo, nenhum bebedor de rum ou infecção venérea é permitido aqui.

(Eu e os meus não convencemos por argumentos, símiles, rimas,
Convencemos por nossa presença.)

11

Ouve! serei honesto contigo,
Não ofereço os velhos prêmios finos, mas ofereço novos prêmios toscos,
Estes são os dias que devem te acontecer:
Não acumularás o que se chama riquezas,
Espalharás com mão pródiga tudo aquilo que ganhares ou alcançares,
Mal chegas à cidade a qual foste destinado, mal te acomodas satisfatoriamente e já és
chamado por um irresistível apelo a partir,
Receberás sorrisos irônicos e escárnios dos que permanecem para trás,
Responderás aos acenos de amor que recebes somente com ardentes beijos de despedida,
Não permitirás a retenção dos que esticam suas mãos estendidas em tua direção.

12

Allons! em busca dos grandes Companheiros, e pertencer a eles!
Eles também estão na estrada—são os homens velozes e majestosos—são as maiores
mulheres,
Apreciadores de calmarias de mares e tempestades de mares,
Marinheiros de muitos navios, caminhantes de muitas milhas de terra,
Habitues⁶² de muitos países distantes, habitues de habitações distantes,
Adeptos de homens e mulheres, observadores de cidades, labutadores solitários,
Ponderadores e contempladores de tufos, flores, conchas da costa,
Dançarinos em danças de casamento, beijadores de noivas, suaves ajudantes de crianças,
portadores de crianças,

⁶¹ Também do francês, “fórmulas”.

⁶² Também do francês, “freqüentadores habituais”.

Soldados de revoltas, circunstantes embasbacados com sepulturas, baixadores de caixões,
 Viajantes em estações consecutivas, durante anos, os anos curiosos cada um emergindo do
 que o precedeu,
 Viajantes com companheiros, a saber suas próprias distintas fases,
 Ultrapassadores dos latentes dias irrealizados da infância,
 Viajantes joviais com sua própria juventude, viajantes com sua virilidade barbuda e bem
 cristalizada,
 Viajantes com sua feminidade, ampla, incomparável, contente,
 Viajantes com sua própria sublime velhice de virilidade ou feminidade,
 Velhice, calma, expandida, ampla com a amplitude ativa do universo,
 Velhice, fluindo livre com a deliciosa liberdade próxima da morte.

13

Allons! ao que é sem fim como foi sem início,
 Passar muita coisa, pisadas de dias, restos de noites,
 Fundir tudo na viagem a que eles tendem, e aos dias e noites a que eles tendem,
 De novo os fundir no começo de viagens superiores,
 Ver nada em lugar nenhum que tu não possas alcançar e ultrapassar,
 Conceber nenhum tempo, mesmo distante, que tu não possas alcançar e ultrapassar,
 Examinar nenhuma estrada que não se espicha e espera por ti, por longa que seja porém
 espicha e espera por ti,
 Não ver nenhum ser, nem o de Deus nem outro qualquer, que também não vás lá,
 Não ver nenhuma posse que tu não possas possuí-la, desfrutando tudo sem trabalho ou
 compra, abstraindo o banquete contudo não abstraindo uma partícula dele,
 Pegar o melhor da fazenda do fazendeiro e da elegante quinta do rico e das castas bênçãos do
 casal bem-casado e das frutas de pomares e flores de jardins,
 Levar para teu uso fora das compactas cidades quando as atravessas,
 Carregar prédios e ruas contigo depois aonde fores,
 Colher as mentes dos homens de seus cérebros conforme os encontras, colher o amor de seus
 corações,
 Levar teus amantes na estrada contigo, por tudo que os deixas para trás,
 Conhecer o universo em si como uma estrada, como muitas estradas, como estradas para
 almas viajantes.

Tudo se separa para o progresso das almas,
 Toda religião, todas as coisas sólidas, artes, governos—tudo que foi ou é aparente neste globo
 ou qualquer globo, descende em nichos e cantos ante a procissão de almas pelas grandes
 estradas do universo.

Do progresso das almas de homens e mulheres pelas grandes estradas do universo, todo outro
 progresso é o emblema e sustento necessário.

Para sempre vivos, sempre adiante,
 Imponentes, solenes, tristes, retirados, confusos, furiosos, turbulentos, frágeis, insatisfeitos,
 Desesperados, orgulhosos, afetuosos, doentes, aceitos por homens, rejeitados por homens,
 Eles vão! eles vão! eu sei que eles vão, mas não sei aonde vão,
 Mas sei que vão em busca do melhor—de algo ótimo.
 Quem sejam, vem! ou homem ou mulher vem!

Não deves ficar dormindo e se distraíndo aí na casa, embora a tenhas construído, ou embora tenha sido construída para ti.

Sai desse confinamento obscuro! Sai de trás da tela!
É inútil protestar, sei de tudo e o exponho.

Vê através de ti tão ruim quanto os demais,
Pelo riso, dança, refeição, cear, das pessoas,
Dentro de trajés e ornamentos, dentro desses rostos lavados e aparados,
Vê um secreto e silencioso asco e desespero.

Nenhum marido, nenhuma esposa, nenhum amigo, confiado para ouvir a confissão,
Um outro eu, uma cópia de cada um, vai se esquivando e escondendo,
Informe e sem palavras pelas ruas das cidades, polido e brando nos salões,
Nos vagões de ferrovias, em barcos a vapor, na reunião pública,
Domicílio de casas de homens e mulheres, à mesa, no quarto, em todo lugar,
Bem vestido, semblante sorridente, forma aprumada, morte sob o esterno, inferno sob o
crânio,
Sob casimira e luvas, sob fitas e flores artificiais,
Respeitando os costumes, não falando uma sílaba de si mesmo,
Falando de qualquer coisa mas nunca de si mesmo.

14

Allons! por contendadas e guerras!
A meta fixada não pode ser revogada.

As contendadas passadas prosperaram?
O que prosperou? tu? tua nação? A Natureza?
Agora me entende bem—é provido na essência das coisas que de qualquer fruição de sucesso,
não importa qual, virá algo para tornar uma contenda maior necessária.

Meu apelo é o apelo de batalha, nutro rebelião ativa,
Quem for comigo deve ir bem armado,
Quem for comigo vai com frequência com alimento escasso, pobreza, inimigos zangados,
deserções.

15

Allons! a estrada está à nossa frente!
É segura—a experimentei—meus próprios pés a experimentaram bem—não te deténs!

Que o papel permaneça no atril não escrito, e o livro na estante não aberto!
Que as ferramentas permaneçam na oficina! que o dinheiro permaneça não ganho!
Deixa a escola em seu lugar! desconsidere o rogo do professor!
Que o pastor pregue em seu púlpito! que o advogado pleiteie no tribunal, e o juiz exponha a
lei.

Camarada, te dou minha mão!
Te dou meu amor que vale mais que dinheiro,

Eu me dou a ti sem sermão ou lei;
Tu te darás a mim? virás viajar comigo?
Seremos leais enquanto vivermos?

4.5 Travessia da Barca do Brooklyn

Travessia da Barca do Brooklyn

1

Maré montante sob mim! te vejo cara a cara!
Nuvens do oeste—sol elevado de meia-hora—também te vejo cara a cara.

Grupos de homens e mulheres vestidos em trajes comuns, sois muito singulares pra mim!
Nas barcas as centenas e centenas que cruzam, voltando ao lar, são mais singulares a mim do
que supões,
E tu que cruzarás de praia a praia no futuro és mais pra mim e mais em minhas meditações
que poderias supor.

2

Meu sustento impalpável proveniente de todas as coisas em todas as horas do dia,
O esquema simples, compacto, bem-unido, eu mesmo desintegrado, todos desintegrados
porém partes do esquema,
As similitudes do passado e as do futuro,
As glórias atadas como contas em minhas menores visões e audições, na calçada na rua e na
passagem sobre o rio,
A corrente impelindo tão veloz e nadando comigo bem longe,
Os outros que me seguirão, os laços entre eu e eles,
A certeza de outros, a vida, amor, visão, audição de outros.

Outros adentrarão os portões da barca e cruzarão de praia a praia,
Outros assistirão o correr da maré montante,
Outros verão o embarque de Manhattan norte e oeste, e as elevações do Brooklyn a sul e leste,
Outros verão as ilhas grandes e pequenas;
Daqui a cinquenta anos, outros as verão conforme cruzam, o sol elevado meia hora,
Daqui a cem anos, ou sempre daqui a muitas centenas de anos, outros as verão,
Apreciarão o pôr-do-sol, o influxo da maré montante, o refluxo ao mar da maré vazante.

3

É em vão, tempo e lugar—distância é em vão,
Estou convosco, vós homens e mulheres de uma geração, ou sempre daqui a muitas gerações,
Justo como sentis quando olhais o rio e céu, assim senti,
Justo como qualquer um de vós é parte de uma multidão viva, eu fui um na multidão,
Justo como sois refrescados pelo júbilo do rio e o fluxo brilhante, fui refrescado,
Justo como vos postais e apoiais na grade, porém apressais com a veloz corrente, me postei
porém fui apressado,
Justo como olhais os inúmeros mastros de navios e os taludos tubos de vapores, olhei.

Também muitas e muitas vezes cruzei o rio no passado,
Assisti as gaivotas de Dezembro, as vi alto no ar flutuando com asas imóveis, oscilando seus
corpos,
Vi como o amarelo cintilante avivava partes de seus corpos e deixava o resto em forte sombra,

Vi os círculos lenti-girantes e o empuxo gradual para o sul,
 Vi o reflexo do céu de verão na água,
 Meus olhos foram ofuscados pelo rasto difuso de raios,
 Olhei os finos fachos centrífugos de luz ao redor da forma de minha cabeça na água
 ensolarada,
 Olhei a neblina nas colinas ao sul e sudoeste,
 Olhei o vapor quando voou em velos tintos de violeta,
 Olhei a baía abaixo para observar os navios chegando,
 Vi sua aproximação, vi a bordo os que estavam perto de mim,
 Vi as velas brancas de escunas e chalupas, vi os navios ancorados,
 Os marinheiros trabalhando no cordame ou fora montados nas vergas,
 Os mastros rotundos, o balanço dos cascos, as delgadas serpeantes flâmulas,
 Os pequenos e grandes vapores em movimento, os pilotos em suas casas do leme,
 Os sulcos brancos deixados pela passagem, o rápido giro trêmulo das rodas,
 As bandeiras de todas as nações, seu baixar ao poente,
 As ondas orladas de conchas ao crepúsculo, as xícaras cheias, as galhofeiras vagas e a
 cintilação,
 A distante extensão que fica cada vez mais fosca, as paredes cinzentas dos armazéns de
 granito nas docas,
 No rio o grupo sombrio, o grande rebocador a vapor flanqueado de perto pelas barças, o
 barco de feno, a chata atrasada,
 Na praia próxima os fogos das chaminés de fundição queimando altos e fulgurantes dentro da
 noite,
 Arrojando sua oscilação de preto contrastado com a agreste luz vermelha e amarela sobre os
 topos das casas, e embaixo nas fendas das ruas.

4

Estes e tudo o mais eram para mim o mesmo que são pra ti,
 Bem amei essas cidades, bem amei o rio imponente e rápido,
 Os homens e mulheres que vi estavam todos perto de mim,
 Outros igualmente—outros que me relembram porque os aguardei,
 (O tempo virá, embora eu pare aqui este dia e esta noite.)

5

O que há então entre nós?
 O que é a contagem de vintenas ou centenas de anos entre nós?

O que for, é em vão—distância é em vão e lugar é em vão,
 Também vivi, o Brooklyn de amplas colinas era meu,
 Também percorri as ruas da ilha de Manhattan, e me banhei nas águas ao seu redor,
 Também senti os questionamentos abruptos curiosos revolver dentro de mim,
 De dia entre grupos de pessoas às vezes eles me acometiam,
 A caminho de casa tarde da noite ou deitado em minha cama eles me acometiam,
 Eu também tinha sido golpeado pela flutuação sempre contida em solução,
 Também tinha recebido identidade pelo meu corpo,
 Que eu era eu sabia que eu era de meu corpo e o que devia ser eu sabia que eu devia ser de
 meu corpo.

6

Não é só sobre ti que caem as negras névoas,
 O escuro também jogou suas névoas sobre mim,
 O melhor que eu tinha feito pareceu-me inexpressivo e suspeito,
 Meus grandes pensamentos como os supus, não eram na realidade insuficientes?
 Nem é só tu que sabes o que é ser mau,
 Sou quem soube o que era ser mau,
 Também cerzi o velho nó da contrariedade,
 Tagarelei, ruborizei, resenti, menti, roubei, relutei,
 Tive perfídia, cólera, lascívia, desejos ardentes que não ousei revelar,
 Fui cabeçudo, vão, mesquinho, raso, astuto, covarde, malévolo,
 O lobo, a cobra, o porco, não querendo em mim,
 O olhar trapaceiro, a palavra frívola, o desejo adúltero, não querendo,
 Recusas, ódios, adiamentos, maldade, preguiça, nenhum desses querendo,
 Fui uno com os demais, os dias e acasos do resto,
 Fui chamado por meu nome mais íntimo por vozes claras e altas de jovens conforme me viam
 se aproximando ou passando,
 Senti seus braços em meu pescoço quando estava de pé, ou o apoio negligente de seus corpos
 contra mim quando sentava,
 Vi muitos que amei na rua ou barca ou assembléia pública, porém nunca lhes disse uma
 palavra,
 Vivi a mesma vida com os demais, o mesmo velho riso, roer, dormir,
 Fiz o papel que ainda relembra o ator ou atriz,
 O mesmo velho papel, o papel que é o que o tornamos, tão grande quanto gostarmos,
 Ou tão pequeno quanto gostarmos, ou tanto grande quanto pequeno.

7

Mais íntimo porém te abordo,
 O pensamento que tens de mim agora, tive o mesmo de ti—armazenei com antecedência,
 Considerei-te longa e seriamente antes de nasceres.

Quem devia saber o que chegaria pra mim?
 Quem sabe estou desfrutando disto?
 Quem sabe, por toda a distância, que estou quase te olhando agora, por tudo que não possas
 me ver?

8

Ah, o que pode ser mais imponente e admirável para mim do que Manhattan debruada de
 mastros?
 Rio e poente e ondas orladas de conchas da maré montante?
 As gaiotas oscilando seus corpos, o barco de feno no crepúsculo e a chata⁶³ atrasada?
 Que deuses podem exceder estes que me seguram pela mão e com vozes que amo me chamam
 pronta e ruidosamente pelo meu nome mais íntimo quando me aproximo?
 O que é mais sutil que isto que me ata à mulher ou homem que me olha na cara?
 Que me funde agora em ti, e derrama meu sentido em ti?

⁶³ Lanchão ou barcaça; embarcação larga e pouco profunda, feita de madeira e resistente, para o transporte de mercadorias.

Entendemos então, não?
 O que prometi sem mencionar, não aceitaste?
 O que o estudo não pôde ensinar—o que a pregação não podia realizar está realizado, não está?

9

Flui, rio! flui com a maré montante, e vaza com a vazante!
 Galhofai, ondas encrespadas e orladas de conchas!
 Magníficas nuvens do poente! encharcai-me com vosso esplendor, ou os homens e mulheres
 gerações adiante!
 Cruzai de costa a costa, multidões inumeráveis de passageiros!
 Erguei-vos, altos mastros de Mannahatta! erguei-vos, belas colinas do Brooklyn!
 Pulsa, cérebro confuso e curioso! lança perguntas e respostas!
 Suspende aqui e em todo lugar, flutuação eterna de solução!
 Fitai, olhos ternos e sedentos, na casa ou rua ou assembléia pública!
 Soai, vozes de jovens! ruidosa e musicalmente chamai-me por meu nome mais íntimo!
 Vive, velha vida! faze o papel que relembra o ator ou atriz!
 Faze o antigo papel, o papel que é grande ou pequeno de acordo com a pessoa que faz!
 Considera, tu que me perscrutas, se não posso de modo desconhecido estar te olhando;
 Sê firme, grade sobre o rio, para apoiar aqueles que se encostam ociosamente, porém se
 apressam com a rápida corrente;
 Voai, pássaros marinhos! voai lateralmente, ou circundai em grandes círculos alto no ar;
 Recebe o céu de verão, tu água, e fielmente o mantém até que todos os olhos abatidos tenham
 tempo de tomá-lo de ti!
 Divergi, finos fachos de luz, da forma de minha cabeça, ou de qualquer cabeça, na água
 ensolarada!
 Vinde, navios da baía baixa! Passai pra cima e pra baixo, escunas, chalupas, chatas de velas
 brancas!
 Tremulai, bandeiras de todas as nações! sejai devidamente baixadas ao poente!
 Queimai alto vossos fogos, chaminés de fundição! lançai sombras pretas ao anoitecer! lançai
 luz vermelha e amarela sobre os topos das casas!
 Aparências, agora ou doravante, indicai o que sois,
 Tu necessária película, continua a envolver a alma,
 Sobre meu corpo para mim, e teu corpo para ti, que parem nossos mais divinos aromas,
 Vicejai, cidades—trazei vosso frete, vossos espetáculos, rios amplos e suficientes,
 Expande, ser que nenhum outro seja talvez mais espiritual,
 Mantei vossos lugares, objetos que nenhum outro seja mais duradouro.

Aguardastes, sempre aguardais, belos bobos pastores,
 Vos recebemos com senso livre por fim, e somos doravante insaciáveis,
 Nem vós mais podereis nos frustrar, ou refrear-vos de nós,
 Vos usamos e não vos rejeitamos—vos plantamos permanentemente em nós,
 Não vos sondamos—vos amamos—também há perfeição em vós,
 Forneceis vossas partes em direção à eternidade,
 Grandes ou pequenas, forneceis vossas partes em direção à alma.

4.6 Canção do Respondente

Canção do Respondente

1

Agora ouve minha romanza⁶⁴ matinal, exponho os sinais do Respondente,
 Às cidades e fazendas canto conforme se esparramam ao sol à minha frente.

Um jovem vem a mim trazendo uma mensagem de seu irmão,
 Como o jovem saberá o se e quando do irmão?
 Dize-lhe para enviar-me os sinais.

E me posto cara a cara com o jovem, e tomo sua mão direita em minha mão esquerda e sua
 mão esquerda em minha direita,
 E respondo por seu irmão e por homens, e respondo por ele que responde por tudo e envio
 estes sinais.

Aquele que todos aguardam, aquele a quem todos se rendem, sua palavra é decisiva e final,
 O aceitam, nele se banham, nele se percebem como na luz,
 O imergem⁶⁵ e ele os imerge.

Belas mulheres, as nações mais altivas, leis, a paisagem, pessoas, animais,
 A terra profunda e seus atributos e o inquieto oceano,
 (assim exponho minha romanza matinal,)

 Todos os deleites e propriedades e dinheiro, e o que o dinheiro comprará,
 As melhores fazendas, outros labutando e plantando e ele inevitavelmente colhe,
 As cidades mais nobres e caras, outros classificando e construindo e ele reside lá,
 Nada para ninguém exceto o que é pra ele, próximo e distante são pra ele, os navios ao largo,
 Os espetáculos perpétuos e marchas na terra são para ele se forem para qualquer um.

Ele põe as coisas em suas atitudes,
 Ele põe o hoje ao largo de si mesmo com plasticidade e amor,
 Ele põe suas próprias horas, reminiscências, pais, irmãos e irmãs, associações, emprego,
 política, de forma que o resto nunca se envergonhe posteriormente, nem assuma que os
 comanda.

Ele é o Respondente,
 O que pode ser respondido ele responde, e o que não pode ser respondido ele mostra como
 não pode ser respondido.

Um homem é um chamamento e um desafio,
 (É vão se ocultar—ouves esse desdém e riso? ouves os ecos irônicos?)

Livros, amizades, filósofos, padres, ação, prazer, orgulho, batem pra cima e pra baixo
 buscando dar satisfação,
 Ele indica a satisfação, e os indica quem bate pra cima e pra baixo também.

⁶⁴ Do italiano, balada ou ária.

⁶⁵ “Immerse”: imergir, submergir; batizar por imersão.

Qual seja o sexo, a estação ou lugar, ele pode ir nova, gentil e seguramente de dia ou de noite,
Ele tem a chave mestra dos corações, para ele a reação do mover de mãos nas maçanetas.

Seu acolhimento é universal, o fluxo da beleza não é mais acolhedor ou universal que ele,
A pessoa que ele favorece de dia ou com quem dorme à noite é abençoada.

Toda existência tem seu dialeto, toda coisa tem um dialeto e língua,
Ele concerta todas as línguas em sua própria e a outorga aos homens, e qualquer homem
traduz, e qualquer homem também se traduz,
Uma parte não se contrapõe a outra parte, ele é o unidor, ele vê como se unem.

Ele diz indiferentemente e igual *Como estás amigo?* ao Presidente em sua recepção,
E diz *Bom dia meu irmão*, ao Cudge⁶⁶ que capina no canavial,
E ambos o entendem e sabem que seu discurso é correto.

Ele caminha com perfeita facilidade no capitólio,
Ele caminha pelo Congresso, e um Representante diz a outro, *Eis nosso igual manifesto e
novo.*

Assim os mecânicos o tomam por mecânico,
E os soldados o supõem um soldado, e os marujos que ele serviu no mar,
E os autores o tomam por autor, e os artistas por artista,
E os operários percebem que ele poderia trabalhar com eles e os amar,
Não importa o trabalho, ele é aquele que o segue ou seguiu,
Não importa a nação, ele poderia achar seus irmãos e irmãs nela.

Os Ingleses crêem que ele descende de sua cepa,
Um Judeu aos Judeus ele parece, um Russo ao Russos, comum e próximo, afastado de
ninguém.

Quem ele olha no café de viajantes o solicita,
O Italiano ou Francês tem certeza, o Alemão tem certeza, o Espanhol tem certeza, e o Cubano
da ilha tem certeza,
O engenheiro, o taifeiro nos grandes lagos, ou no Mississippi ou São Lourenço ou
Sacramento, ou Hudson ou estreito de Paumanok, o solicita.

O cavalheiro de sangue perfeito reconhece seu sangue perfeito,
O insultador, a prostituta, o raivoso, o mendigo, se vêem em seus modos, ele estranhamente
os transmuta,
Eles não são mais vis, eles mal se sabem tão maduros.

2

As indicações e tabulações do tempo,
Sanidade perfeita mostra o mestre entre filósofos,
O tempo, sempre sem quebra, se indica em partes,
O que sempre indica o poeta é a multidão da companhia agradável de cantores, e suas
palavras,

⁶⁶ Nome africano para alguém do sexo masculino nascido numa segunda-feira.

As palavras dos cantores são as horas ou minutos da luz ou escuro, mas as palavras do
 fabricante de poemas são a luz e o escuro geral,
 O fabricante de poemas assenta justiça, realidade, imortalidade,
 Sua perspicácia e potência cingem coisas e a raça humana,
 Ele é a glória e o extrato até agora de coisas e da raça humana.

Os cantores não procriam, só o Poeta procria,
 Os cantores são bem recebidos, compreendidos, aparecem freqüentemente, mas raro tem sido
 o dia, também o local, do nascimento do fabricante de poemas, o Respondente,
 (Nem todo século nem cada cinco séculos contêm tal dia, por todos os seus nomes.)

Os cantores de horas sucessivas de séculos podem ter nomes ostensivos, mas o nome de cada
 um deles é um dos cantores,
 O nome de cada um é, cantor de olho, cantor de ouvido, cantor de cabeça, cantor do doce,
 cantor da noite, cantor de salão, cantor de amor, cantor do estranho, ou outra coisa.

Todo este tempo e a toda hora aguardam as palavras de verdadeiros poemas,
 As palavras de verdadeiros poemas não meramente agradam,
 Os verdadeiros poetas não são seguidores da beleza mas os mestres augustos da beleza;
 A grandeza de filhos é o verter da grandeza de mães e pais,
 As palavras de verdadeiros poemas são o penacho e aplauso final da ciência.

Instinto divino, amplitude de visão, a lei da razão, saúde, rudeza de corpo, retidão,
 Júbilo, bronzeado, suavidade do ar, essas são algumas das palavras de poemas.

O marinheiro e viajante subjazem aos fabricantes de poemas, o Respondente,
 O construtor, geômetra, químico, anatomista, frenologista, artista, todos estes subjazem ao
 fabricante de poemas, o Respondente.

As palavras dos verdadeiros poemas te dão mais que poemas,
 Elas te permitem formar por ti mesmo poemas, religiões, política, guerra, paz,
 comportamento, histórias, ensaios, vida diária e tudo o mais,
 Elas equilibram graduações, cores, raças, credos e os sexos,
 Elas não buscam beleza, elas são buscadas,
 Sempre as tocando ou próxima delas segue a beleza, saudosa, ansiosa, cega de paixão.

Elas preparam para a morte, porém não são o fim, mas bem o início,
 Elas não trazem ninguém ao seu término ou para estar contente e pleno,
 Quem elas levam elas levam ao espaço para ver o nascimento de estrelas, aprender um dos
 sentidos,
 Lançar-se com fé absoluta, circular pelos anéis incessantes e nunca ficar imóvel de novo.

4.7 Nossa Antiga Feuillage⁶⁷

Nossa Antiga Feuillage

Sempre nossa antiga feuillage!
 Sempre a verde península da Flórida—sempre o delta inestimável de Louisiana—sempre os
 algodoads do Alabama e Texas,
 Sempre as colinas e vales dourados da Califórnia, e as montanhas prateadas do Novo
 México—sempre Cuba de amenas aragens,
 Sempre o vasto declive drenado pelo mar do Sul, inseparável dos declives drenados pelos
 mares Orientais e Ocidentais,
 A área no octogésimo terceiro ano destes Estados, os três milhões e meio de milhas
 quadradas,
 As dezoito mil milhas de costa marítima e a enseada no continente, as trinta mil milhas de
 navegação fluvial,
 Os sete milhões de famílias distintas e o mesmo número de moradias—sempre estas, e mais,
 se ramificando em inúmeros ramos,
 Sempre a extensão e diversidade—sempre o continente da Democracia;
 Sempre as pradarias, pastos, florestas, vastas cidades, viajantes, Kanadá, as neves;
 Sempre estas terras compactas atadas nos quadris com o cinto retesando os enormes lagos
 ovaís;
 Sempre o Oeste com fortes nativos, a densidade crescente lá, os habitantes, simpáticos,
 ameaçadores, irônicos, desdenhando invasores;
 Todas vistas, Sul, Norte, Leste—todas ações, promiscuamente feitas o tempo todo,
 Todos caracteres, movimentos, crescimentos, alguns notados, miríades despercebidos,
 Pelas ruas de Mannahatta eu caminhando, estas coisas colhendo,
 Em rios interiores à noite no clarão de nós de pinho, barcos a vapor carregando,
 Luz solar de dia no vale do Susquehanna, e nos vales do Potomac e Rappahannock, e nos
 vales do Roanoke e Delaware,
 Nas selvas nortistas feras de rapina assombrando os montes Adirondacks, ou bordejando as
 águas do Saginaw para beber,
 Numa erma angra um merganso perdido do bando, sentado na água balançando
 silenciosamente,
 Em galpões de fazendeiros bois no estábulo, seu trabalho de colheita feito, descansam de pé,
 estão cansados demais,
 Longe no gelo ártico a morsa jaz sonolenta enquanto seus filhotes brincam,
 O falcão navegando onde homens ainda não navegaram, o mar polar mais distante, ondulado,
 cristalino, aberto, além das banquisas,
 Branco turbilhão se erguendo onde o navio se arroja na tempestade,
 Em terra sólida o que é feito em cidades quando os sinos batem meia-noite juntos,
 Em bosques primitivos os sons soando lá também, o uivo do lobo, o grito da pantera, e o
 rouco berro do alce,
 No inverno embaixo do duro gelo azul do lago Moosehead, no verão visível nas águas claras,
 a grande truta nadando,
 Em latitudes mais baixas no ar mais quente nas Carolinas o grande gavião preto flutuando
 lentamente bem além das copas das árvores,
 Abaixo, o cedro vermelho festonado de tylandria⁶⁸, os pinheiros e ciprestes crescendo da
 areia branca que se espalha distante e plana,

⁶⁷ Do francês, folhagem, ou seja, conjunto de folhas das árvores (inglês: “foliage”), que também é uma metáfora para a obra do poeta, *Folhas de Relva*.

Barcos toscos descendo o grande Pedee⁶⁹, trepadeiras, parasitas com flores coloridas e bagas envolvendo árvores enormes,
 A cortina ondulante no carvalho americano pendendo longa e baixa, silentemente ondulada pelo vento,
 O acampamento de carreteiros da Geórgia logo após o poente, as fogueiras da ceia e o cozer e comer de brancos e negros⁷⁰,
 Trinta ou quarenta grandes carretas, as mulas, gado, cavalos, comendo em cochos,
 As sombras, lampejos, acima sob as folhas dos velhos plátanos, as chamas com a fumaça preta do pinheiro⁷¹ se anelando e subindo;
 Pescadores sulistas pescando, os estreitos e angras do litoral da Carolina do Norte, a pesca de sável⁷² e a pesca de arenque, as grandes redes de arrasto, os sarilhos na praia movidos a cavalos, as clareiras, cura, e fábricas de enlatados;
 No seio da floresta em bosques de pinheiro terebintina⁷³ pingando das incisões nas árvores, há os trabalhos com terebintina,
 Há negros saudáveis trabalhando, o chão em todas as direções é coberto de palha de pinheiro;
 No Tennessee e Kentucky escravos ocupados com carvoaria, na forja, junto às chamas da fornalha ou na descasca do milho,
 Em Virgínia, o filho do colono retornando após longa ausência, alegremente recebido e beijado pela idosa enfermeira mulata,
 Em rios barqueiros seguramente atracados ao anoitecer em seus barcos sob o abrigo de altas margens,
 Alguns dos mais jovens dançam ao som do banjo ou violino, outros sentam na amurada fumando e conversando;
 De tardinha o tordo-dos-remédios, o imitador americano, cantando no Grande Pântano Sombrio⁷⁴,
 Há as águas esverdeadas, o odor resinoso, o musgo fértil, o cipreste e o zimbro;
 Ao norte, jovens de Mannahatta, a guarnição retornando ao lar à noite de uma excursão, as bocas dos mosquetes todas têm feixes de flores presenteados por mulheres;
 Crianças brincando, ou no colo do pai um menininho caído no sono, (como movem seus lábios! como sorri em seu sono!)
 O batedor cavalgando nas planícies a oeste do Mississippi, ele sobe um cômodo e varre o espaço com a vista;
 Vida na Califórnia, o mineiro, barbudo, trajado em seu traje rude, a leal amizade da Califórnia, o doce ar, os túmulos que um passante encontra solitário bem ao lado da trilha;
 Lá no Texas o algodoal, as cabanas dos negros, condutores conduzindo mulas ou bois à frente de rudes carroças, fardos de algodão empilhados em margens e cais;
 Circundando tudo, dardejando extensamente, a Alma Americana, com hemisférios iguais, um Amor, outro Expansão ou Orgulho;
 No passado o acordo de paz com os Iroqueses os aborígenes, o calumet⁷⁵, o cachimbo da boa-vontade, arbitramento e endosso,

⁶⁸ A grafia correta em inglês é: “tillandsia”, que é uma bromelídea, ou musgo espanhol; em português, tilândsia. Preferimos manter a grafia original no texto, pois é a grafia peculiar de Whitman para a palavra que causa o estranhamento.

⁶⁹ Certamente o “Pee Dee River”, um rio na Carolina do Sul.

⁷⁰ No original, “negroes”.

⁷¹ “Pitch Pine” (Pinus rígida) é o pinheiro que produz pez, piche, breu.

⁷² Do gênero Alosa, da mesma família do arenque.

⁷³ É o nome comum das resinas extraídas de coníferas.

⁷⁴ No original, “Dismal Swamp”, região pantanosa (“swamp” = pântano, brejo, charco; “dismal” = sombrio, lúgubre) dos estados da Carolina do Norte e Virgínia.

O cacique soprando a fumaça primeiro para o sol e então para a terra,
 O drama da dança do escalpo encenada com rostos pintados e exclamações guturais,
 A partida do grupo de guerra, a marcha longa e furtiva,
 A fila indiana, as machadinhas oscilantes, a surpresa e matança de inimigos;
 Todos os atos, cenas, modos, pessoas, atitudes destes Estados, reminiscências, instituições,
 Todos estes Estados compactos, toda milha quadrada destes Estados sem excetuar uma
 partícula;
 Eu satisfeito, vagueando em veredas e campos do interior, campos de Paumanok,
 Observando o vôo espiral de duas pequenas borboletas amarelas se embaralhando,
 ascendendo alto no ar,
 A andorinha dardejante, a destruidora de insetos, o viajante de outono em direção ao sul mas
 retornando ao norte no início da primavera,
 O jovem campeador ao fim do dia tocando o rebanho de vacas e gritando com elas quando
 retardam para pastar à beira da estrada,
 O cais da cidade, Boston, Filadélfia, Baltimore, Charleston, Nova Orleans, São Francisco,
 Os navios de partida quando os marinheiros viram o cabrestante;
 Noite—eu em meu quarto—o sol poente,
 O sol poente de verão brilhando em minha janela aberta, mostrando o enxame de moscas,
 suspenso, se equilibrando no ar no centro do quarto, dardejando obliquamente, acima e
 abaixo, lançando sombras rápidas em manchas na parede oposta onde o brilho está;
 A matrona americana atlética falando em público para multidões de ouvintes,
 Machos, fêmeas, imigrantes, combinações, a copiosidade, a individualidade dos Estados, cada
 um por si mesmo—os enriquecedores,
 Fábricas, maquinaria, as forças mecânicas, o sarilho, alavanca, polia, todas certas,
 A certeza de espaço, aumento, liberdade, futuridade,
 No espaço as Espórades⁷⁶, as ilhas espalhadas, as estrelas—na firme terra, as terras, minhas
 terras,
 Oh terras! todas tão queridas pra mim—o que vós sois, (o que for,) eu expressando isso ao
 acaso nestas canções, torna-se uma parte disso, o que for,
 Para o sul, eu guinchando, com asas lenti-adejantes, com as miríades de gaivotas invernando
 no litoral da Flórida,
 Diferentemente lá entre as margens do Arkansaw, do Rio Grande, do Nueces, do Brazos, do
 Tombigbee, do Rio Vermelho, do Saskatchewan ou do Osage, eu com as águas
 primaveris rindo e saltando e correndo,
 Para o norte, nas areias, em alguma rasa baía de Paumanok, eu com grupos de alvas garças
 patinhando no molhado em busca de minhocas e plantas aquáticas,
 Recuando, triunfalmente trinando, o tirano, de perfurar o corvo com seu bico, por diversão—e
 eu triunfalmente trinando,
 O bando migrante de gansos selvagens pousando no outono para se refrescar, o grosso do
 bando se alimenta, as sentinelas fora se deslocam vigiando com cabeças eretas, e são de
 vez em quando rendidas por outras sentinelas—e eu me alimentando e alternando com
 os demais,
 Em florestas Kanadianas o alce, grande como um boi, acuado por caçadores, se erguendo
 desesperadamente nas patas traseiras, e lançando-se com as patas dianteiras, os cascos
 afiados como facas—e eu, lançando-me aos caçadores, acuado e desesperado,

⁷⁵ Do latim tardio, “calamellus”, diminutivo do latim calamus, “reed” (em inglês), do grego “kalamos”, a mesma palavra para caniço, cálam, cana, flauta, que é o título de um dos livros de *Folhas de Relva*, “Cálam”. Neste contexto, é o cachimbo da paz, fumado pelos índios em cerimônias ou eventos especiais.

⁷⁶ Esta palavra vem do adjetivo grego “sporas”, que significa espalhado, que é usado para designar um grupo de ilhas gregas, as Espórades Setentrionais, assim como é usado no poema para falar das estrelas espalhadas no céu.

Em Mannahatta, ruas, molhes, remessa, armazéns, e os incontáveis trabalhadores trabalhando nas lojas,
 E eu também de Mannahatta, cantando isso—e não menos em mim que o todo de Mannahatta em si,
 Cantando a canção Destas, minhas sempre-unidas terras—meu corpo não mais inevitavelmente unido, parte a parte, e feito de mil contribuições diversas uma identidade, não mais que minhas terras estão inevitavelmente unidas e feitas UMA IDENTIDADE;
 Natividades, climas, a relva das grandes Planícies pastoris,
 Cidades, labutas, morte, animais, produtos, guerra, bem e mal—estes eu,
 Estes conferindo, em todos seus particulares, a antiga feullage a mim e à América, como posso fazer menos que passar a evidência⁷⁷ da união deles, para conferir o mesmo a ti? Quem sejas! que fazer exceto oferecer-te divinas folhas, que sejas também preferível⁷⁸ como eu?
 Que fazer exceto aqui cantando, convidar-te a recolher buquês da feullage incomparável destes Estados?

⁷⁷ No original, “clew”, ou seja, novelo, evidência, pista, dica, indicação.

⁷⁸ No original, “eligible”, quer dizer, “elegível”, aceitável, apropriado, apto, qualificado, habilitado, ou seja, que pode ser escolhido. Algo como escolhível ou preferível.

4.8 Uma Canção de Júbilos

Uma Canção de Júbilos

Oh criar a canção mais jubilosa!
Cheia de música—cheia de masculinidade, feminidade, infância!
Cheia de ocupações comuns—cheia de cereais e árvores.

Oh pelas vozes de animais—Oh pela presteza e proporção dos peixes!
Oh pelo verter de gotas de chuva em uma canção!
Oh pela luz do sol e impulso de ondas em uma canção!

Oh o júbilo de meu espírito—ele está desenjaulado – ele dispara feito raio!
Não é o bastante ter este globo ou um certo tempo,
Terei milhares de globos e todo tempo.

Oh os júbilos do engenheiro! andar numa locomotiva!
Ouvir o silvo do vapor, o guincho alegre, o apito a vapor, a hílare locomotiva!
Impulsionar sem resistência e acelerar na distância.

Oh o alegre passeio nos campos e encostas!
As folhas e flores das ervas daninhas mais comuns, a quietude fresca úmida dos bosques,
O agudo aroma da terra na aurora, e por toda a manhã.

Oh o júbilo do cavaleiro e amazona!
A sela, o galope, a pressão no assento, o fresco jorrar nas orelhas e cabelos.

Oh o júbilo do bombeiro!
Ouço o alarme no meio da madrugada,
Ouço sinos, gritos! Passo a multidão, corro!
A visão das chamas me enlouquece de prazer.

Oh o júbilo do vigoroso lutador, altaneiro na arena em condição perfeita, consciente do poder,
sedento por conhecer seu oponente.

Oh o júbilo dessa vasta solidariedade essencial que só a alma humana é capaz de gerar e
emitir em fluxos estáveis e ilimitados.

Oh o júbilo da mãe!
A vigilância, a resistência, o amor precioso, a angústia, a vida pacientemente concedida,.

Oh o júbilo do aumento, crescimento, recuperação,
O júbilo de acalmar e pacificar, o júbilo de concórdia e harmonia.

Oh voltar ao lugar onde nasci,
Ouvir os pássaros cantar uma vez mais,
Vaguear pela casa e galpão e pelos campos uma vez mais,
E no pomar e pelas velhas veredas uma vez mais.

Oh ter sido criado em baías, lagunas, riachos, ou no litoral,

Continuar e ser empregado lá toda a minha vida,
 O cheiro salobro e úmido, a praia, as algas salgadas expostas na maré baixa,
 O trabalho de pescadores, o trabalho do pescador de enguia e do marisqueiro;
 Venho com meu ancinho e pá, venho com meu arpão,
 A maré está baixa? Eu me junto ao grupo de catadores de marisco nos baixios,
 Rio e trabalho com eles, gracejo no meu trabalho como um jovem brioso;
 No inverno pego minha cesta e arpão de enguia e viajo a pé no gelo—tenho um machadinho
 para fazer buracos no gelo,
 Vede me bem-trajado indo jovialmente ou retornando à tarde, meu bando de rudes rapazes me
 acompanhando,
 Meu bando de rapazes meio-maduros e maduros, que não adora estar com ninguém mais tão
 bem quanto adora estar comigo,
 De dia trabalhar comigo, e de noite dormir comigo.

Uma outra vez em tempo quente num barco, erguer os cestos de lagosta onde estão afundados
 com pedras pesadas, (conheço as bóias,
 Oh a doçura da manhã do Quinto mês sobre a água quando remo logo antes da aurora para as
 bóias,
 Puxo os cestos de vime para cima obliquamente, as lagostas verde-escuras estão desesperadas
 com suas garras quando as tiro, insiro cavilhas de madeira nas juntas de suas quelas,
 Vou a todos os lugares um após o outro, e aí remo de volta à praia,
 Lá num enorme caldeirão de água fervente as lagostas serão fervidas até sua cor se tornar
 escarlate.

Uma outra vez pegando cavalinha,
 Vorazes, loucas pelo anzol, perto da superfície, parecem preencher a água por milhas;
 Uma outra vez pescando serranídeos na baía de Chesapeake, eu parte da tripulação bronze-
 faceada;
 Uma outra vez rastreando enchova em Paumanok, me posto com o corpo preparado,
 Meu pé esquerdo está na amurada, meu braço direito lança ao longe os rolos de corda leve,
 À vista a meu redor as rápidas guinadas e arranques de cinqüenta esquifes, meus
 companheiros.

Oh navegando nos rios,
 A viagem descendo o São Lourenço, a paisagem soberba, os vapores,
 Os navios navegando, as Mil Ilhas, a jangada de madeira ocasional e os jangadeiros com
 longos remos,
 As pequenas cabanas nas jangadas, e a névoa de fumaça quando preparam ceia à noite.

(Oh algo pernicioso e terrível!
 Algo distante de uma vida débil e devota!
 Algo não provado! algo num transe!
 Algo escapado da ancoragem e seguindo livre.)

Oh trabalhar em minas, ou forjando ferro,
 Fundição fundindo, a própria fundição, o telhado alto e rude, o espaço amplo e sombreado,
 A fornalha, o líquido quente despejado e escorrendo.

Oh retomar o júbilo do soldado!
 Sentir a presença de um valente oficial comandante—sentir sua solidariedade!

Ver sua calma—ser aquecido nos raios de seu sorriso!
 Ir pra batalha—ouvir as cornetas tocar e os tambores rufar!
 Ouvir o estrondo da artilharia—ver o brilho das baionetas e os canos dos mosquetes ao sol!
 Ver homens tombar e morrer e não reclamar!
 Provar o gosto selvagem de sangue—ser tão satânico!
 Se regozijar sobre as feridas e mortes do inimigo.

Oh o júbilo do baleeiro! Oh navego minha velha viagem de novo!
 Sinto o movimento do navio sob mim, sinto as brisas Atlânticas me bafejando,
 Ouço de novo o grito vindo do topo do mastro, *Lá—ela sopra!*
 De novo pulo o cordame para olhar com os demais—descemos, ansiosos com a agitação,
 Salto no barco baixado, remamos rumo à nossa presa aonde ele jaz,
 Nos aproximamos furtivos e silenciosos, vejo a massa montanhosa, letárgica, exposta ao sol,
 Vejo o arpoador se erguendo, vejo a arma partir de seu braço vigoroso;
 Oh veloz de novo distante no oceano a baleia ferida, serenando, correndo a barlavento, me
 reboca,
 De novo o vejo subir pra respirar, remamos perto de novo,
 Vejo uma lança enfiada em seu flanco, pressionada fundo, girada na ferida,
 De novo nos retiramos, o vejo serenar de novo, a vida o está deixando rápido,
 Quando sobe ele esguicha sangue, o vejo nadar em círculos cada vez mais estreitos, cortando
 a água veloz—o vejo morrer,
 Ele dá um salto convulsivo no centro do círculo, e então fica prostrado e imóvel na espuma
 sangrenta.⁷⁹

Oh minha velha virilidade, meu mais nobre júbilo!
 Meus filhos e netos, meu cabelo branco e barba,
 Minha grandeza, calma, majestade, na longa extensão de minha vida.

Oh júbilo maduro da feminidade! Oh felicidade afinal!
 Tenho mais de oitenta anos de idade, sou a mais venerável mãe,
 Como é clara minha mente—como todas as pessoas se achegam a mim!
 Que atrações são estas além das anteriores? o que floresce mais que a flor da juventude?
 Que beleza é esta que desce sobre mim e se eleva de mim?

Oh o júbilo do orador!
 Inflar o tórax, rolar o trovão da voz das costelas e garganta,
 Fazer o povo se enfurecer, lamentar, odiar, desejar, contigo,
 Conduzir a América—dominar a América com uma grande língua.

Ah o júbilo de minha alma pairada sobre si mesma, recebendo identidade através de materiais
 e os amando, observando caracteres e os absorvendo,
 Minha alma vibrou de volta a mim deles, da visão, audição, tato, razão, articulação,
 comparação, memória, e assim por diante,
 A vida real de meus sentidos e corpo transcendendo meus sentidos e corpo,
 Meu corpo cansado dos materiais, minha visão cansada dos meus olhos físicos,
 Provado a mim hoje além de sofismas que não são meus olhos físicos que finalmente vêem,
 Nem meu corpo físico que finalmente ama, anda, ri, grita, abraça, procria.

⁷⁹ Não há erro de pronomes aqui; a variação existe no original, em que uma baleia fêmea é avistada, mas, quando se chega perto, é um macho, por isso o *ela* passa a ser *ele*, o macho da baleia.

Ah o júbilo do fazendeiro!

O júbilo do Ohioano, Illinoisiano, Wisconsinês, Kanadiano, Iowano, Kansiano, Missouriano,
Oregonês!

Se levantar ao raiar do dia e agilmente ir trabalhar,
Arar terra no outono para culturas semeadas no inverno,
Arar terra na primavera para o milho,
Arrumar pomares, enxertar as árvores, colher maçãs no outono.

Ah banhar-se na piscina, ou num bom lugar na praia,
Aspergir água! caminhar com água pelos tornozelos, ou correr nu pela praia.

Ah perceber o espaço!

Ah a plenitude de tudo, que não há limites,
Emergir e ser do céu, do sol e lua e nuvens voadoras, ser um com eles.

Ah o júbilo de um si mesmo viril!

Ser servil a ninguém, submeter-se a ninguém, a nenhum tirano conhecido ou desconhecido,
Caminhar com postura ereta, um passo flexível e elástico,
Olhar com mirada calma ou com olho cintilante,
Falar com uma voz plena e sonora saindo de um amplo tórax,
Confrontar com tua personalidade todas as outras personalidades da terra.

Conhece tu o júbilo excelente da juventude?

Júbilo dos queridos companheiros e da palavra feliz e rosto risonho?
Júbilo do dia festivo radiante, júbilo dos jogos de grande fôlego?
Júbilo de doce música, júbilo do salão iluminado e dos dançarinos?
Júbilo da refeição completa, da boa farra e bebida?

Porém Ah minha alma suprema!

Conhece tu o júbilo do pensamento contemplativo?
Júbilo do coração livre e isolado, do coração terno e sombrio?
Júbilo da caminhada solitária, do espírito reverente mas orgulhoso, do sofrimento e da porfia?
As dores agonísticas, os êxtases, júbilo das solenes reflexões dia ou noite?
Júbilo do pensamento da Morte, as grandes esferas Tempo e Espaço?
Júbilo profético dos melhores e mais elevados ideais de amor, da divina esposa, do doce,
eterno, perfeito camarada?
Júbilo todo teu imortal, júbilo digno de ti Oh alma.

Ah enquanto vivo pra ser o regente da vida, não um escravo,

Encontrar a vida como um conquistador poderoso,
Nem fumos, nem enfado, nem mais queixas ou críticas desdenhosas,
A estas leis orgulhosas do ar, da água e do chão, revelando minha alma interior inexpugnável,
E nada exterior jamais me comandará.

Pois não só o júbilo da vida canto, repetindo—o júbilo da morte!

Ah o belo toque da Morte, acalmando e entorpecendo alguns momentos, por razões,
Eu mesmo liberando meu corpo excrementoso para ser queimado, ou cedido ao pó, ou
enterrado,

Meu corpo real deixado sem dúvida a mim para outras esferas,

Meu corpo vazio nada mais para mim, voltando às purificações, futuros ofícios, usos eternos da terra.

Ah atrair por mais do que atração!
Como é não sei—porém vê! o algo que não obedece nada mais,
É ofensivo, nunca defensivo—porém como puxa magnético.

Ah enfrentar grandes desavenças, encontrar inimigos indômitos!
Estar inteiramente sozinho com eles, descobrir o quanto podemos suportar!
Olhar contenda, tortura, prisão, opróbrio popular, cara a cara!
Escarlar o cadafalso, avançar para os canos das armas com perfeito desinteresse!
Ser de fato um Deus!

Ah navegar para o mar em um navio!
Deixar esta intolerável terra estável,
Deixar a mesmice cansativa das ruas, das calçadas e das casas,
Deixar-te Oh terra sólida imóvel, e entrar num navio,
Para navegar e navegar e navegar!

Ah ter a vida doravante um poema de novo júbilo!
Dançar, bater palmas, exultar, gritar, saltar, pular, rolar, flutuar!
Ser um marinheiro do mundo rumo a todos os portos,
Um navio em si, (vede de fato estas velas que iço ao sol e ar,)
Um veloz e volumoso navio cheio de palavras ricas, cheio de júbilo.

4.9 Canção da Acha-d'Armas⁸⁰

Canção da Acha-d'Armas

1

Arma simétrica, exposta, pálida,
 Cunha extraída das entranhas da mãe,
 Corpo lenhoso e osso metálico, único membro e único lábio,
 Folha gris-azulada em calor encarnado lavrada, cabo obtido de uma sementinha semeada,
 Em meio e sobre a relva a repousar,
 Para ser apoio e se apoiar.

Formas fortes e atributos de formas fortes, negócios viris, cenários e sons,
 Longo variado encadeamento de um emblema, ruídos de música,
 Dedos do organista saltando staccato sobre as teclas do grande órgão.

2

Bem-vindas são todas as terras da terra, cada uma para sua espécie,
 Bem-vindas as terras de pinheiro e carvalho,
 Bem-vindas as terras de limão e figo,
 Bem-vindas as terras do ouro,
 Bem-vindas as terras de trigo e milho, bem-vindas as da uva,
 Bem-vindas as terras de açúcar e arroz,
 Bem-vindas as terras de algodão, bem-vindas as da batata inglesa e batata-doce,
 Bem-vindas as montanhas, várzeas, areias, florestas, pradarias,
 Bem-vindas as ricas ribeiras, chapadas, aberturas,
 Bem-vindas as pastagens incomensuráveis, bem-vindo o solo fértil de pomares, linho, mel,
 cânhamo;
 Bem-vindas igualmente as outras terras mais endurecidas,
 Terras tão ricas quanto terras de ouro ou trigo e terras de fruta,
 Terras de minas, terras dos minérios varonis e ásperos,
 Terras de carvão, cobre, chumbo, estanho, zinco,
 Terras de ferro—terras da fabricação do machado.

3

A tora no monte de lenha, o machado apoiado nela,
 A rústica choupana, a videira sobre a porta, o roçado para um jardim,
 O respingar irregular da chuva nas folhas após a tempestade se aplacar,
 A lástima e a lamúria aqui e ali, o pensamento do mar,
 O pensar em navios encalhados na tempestade e quase adernados, e o corte dos mastros,
 O sentimento das enormes vigas das casas antigas e dos galpões,
 O impresso ou narrativa lembrada, o transporte ao acaso de homens, famílias, bens,
 O desembarque, a fundação de uma nova cidade,
 A viagem daqueles que buscaram uma Nova Inglaterra e a acharam, o início em qualquer
 lugar,

⁸⁰ Machado de lenhador, ou grande machado muito utilizado no século 19 antes da invenção de instrumentos mais eficientes para lavar madeira.

As colônias do Arkansas, Colorado, Ottawa, Willamette,
 O lento progresso, o parco alimento, o machado, rifle, alforjes;
 A beleza de todas as pessoas aventureiras e audazes,
 A beleza dos lenhadores juvenis e adultos com suas caras claras não aparadas,
 A beleza da independência, partida, ações que confiam em si,
 O desdém americano por estatutos e cerimônias, a infinita impaciência da limitação,
 A frouxa orientação do caráter, a alusão a tipos ao acaso, a solidificação;
 O açougueiro no matadouro, os tripulantes a bordo de escunas e escaleres, o jangadeiro, o
 pioneiro,
 Lenhadores em seu acampamento de inverno, alvorada no bosque, filetes de neve nos ramos
 de árvores, o estalo fortuito,
 O som claro e festivo da própria voz, a canção feliz, a vida natural do bosque, o forte trabalho
 do dia,
 O fogo flamejante à noite, o gosto suave da ceia, a conversa, a cama de ramos de cicuta e a
 pele de urso;
 O construtor de casas a trabalho nas cidades ou em qualquer lugar,
 Os encaixes, enquadramento, serra, mortagem preparatórios,
 O içamento de vigas, a pressão para colocá-las no lugar, assentando-as regular,
 Fixando os cravos junto às respigas nos malhetes como estavam preparados,
 As batidas de macetes e martelos, as atitudes dos homens, seus membros curvados,
 Se dobrando, se erguendo, montados nas vigas, cravando os pinos, se segurando em esteios e
 grampos,
 O braço curvo sobre o frechal, o outro braço empunhando o machado,
 Os soalheiros forçando as pranchas rente para pregar,
 Suas posturas baixando suas armas sobre as vigas mestras,
 Os ecos ressoando pelo edifício vazio;
 O enorme armazém ajustado na cidade em progresso correto,
 Os seis construtores, dois no meio e dois em cada ponta, cuidadosamente carregando em seus
 ombros uma verga pesada para travessão,
 A fileira completa de pedreiros com colheres em suas mãos direitas assentando rapidamente a
 longa parede lateral, duzentos pés da frente ao fundo,
 O flexível subir e descer de costas, o contínuo estalar das colheres batendo nos tijolos,
 Os tijolos um após outro cada um assentado tão bem em seu lugar, e fixado com um golpe do
 cabo da colher,
 As pilhas de materiais, a argamassa na trolha, e o reabastecimento regular dos carregadores;
 Fazedores de longarinas no pátio, a fileira apinhada de aprendizes bem-crescidos,
 O balanço de seus machados na tora esquadriada modelando-a em forma de mastro,
 O vivaz crepitar curto do aço pregado enviesado no pinho,
 Os cavacos cor de manteiga voando em grandes flocos e lascas,
 O movimento maleável de jovens braços musculosos e quadris em trajes leves,
 O construtor de cais, pontes, molhes, tabiques, bóias, esteios contra o mar;
 O bombeiro da cidade, o incêndio que de repente estoura na praça apertada,
 As máquinas chegando, os gritos roucos, o ágil pisar e ousar,
 O comando forte das trombetas de incêndio, o entrar em forma, o subir e descer dos braços
 forçando a água,
 Os esguios, espasmódicos, jatos azul-alvos, o trazer o auxílio de ganchos e escadas e sua
 execução,
 A quebra e corte de madeiramento conectivo, ou através dos pisos se o fogo arde debaixo
 deles,
 A multidão assistindo com seus rostos iluminados, o clarão e as sombras densas;

O forjador no forno de sua forja e o usuário de ferro à sua procura,
 O fabricante do machado grande e pequeno, e o soldador e o temperador de metal,
 O selecionador soprando seu hálito no aço frio e testando o fio com seu polegar,
 O que molda bem o cabo e o ajusta firmemente na cavidade;
 Os cortejos sombrios dos retratos dos usuários passados também,
 Os pacientes mecânicos primordiais, os arquitetos e engenheiros,
 O distante edifício Assírio e edifício Mizra⁸¹,
 Os lictores⁸² romanos precedendo os cônsules,
 O antigo guerreiro europeu com seu machado em combate,
 O braço levantado, o fragor de golpes na cabeça galeada⁸³,
 O uivo da morte, o corpo flácido e trôpego, o ataque de amigo e inimigo lá,
 O sítio de lígios revoltados determinados à liberdade,
 O apelo à rendição, o arremeter em portões de castelo, a trégua e a negociação,
 O saque a uma antiga cidade em seu tempo,
 O irromper de mercenários e fanáticos tumultuosa e desordenadamente,
 Urro, chamadas, sangue, embriaguez, demência,
 Bens livremente pilhados de casas e templos, berros de mulheres agarradas por bandidos,
 Arte e furto de vivandeiros⁸⁴, homens correndo, velhos se desesperando,
 O inferno da guerra, as crueldades de credos,
 A lista de todas as ações resolutas e palavras justas ou injustas,
 O poder da personalidade justo ou injusto.

4

Músculo e ânimo para sempre!
 O que envidua a vida envidua a morte,
 E os mortos avançam tanto quanto os vivos,
 E o futuro não é mais incerto que o presente,
 Pois a aspereza da terra e do homem inclui tanto quanto a delicadeza da terra e do homem,
 E nada perdura exceto qualidades pessoais.

O que achas que perdura?
 Achas que uma grande cidade perdura?
 Ou um produtivo estado industrial? ou uma constituição preparada? ou os navios a vapor mais
 bem construídos?
 Ou hotéis de granito e ferro? ou quaisquer chef-d'oeuvres⁸⁵ de engenharia, fortes,
 armamentos?
 Fora! estes não são para ser acalentados por si mesmos,
 Eles preenchem seu tempo, os dançarinos dançam, os músicos tocam para eles,
 O espetáculo passa, tudo vai bem o bastante claro,
 Tudo vai muito bem até uma faísca de desafio.

⁸¹ Egípcio; Mizraim é o nome bíblico do Egito.

⁸² Variação: litor; oficial que, na Roma antiga, acompanhava os magistrados com um molho de varas e uma machadinha para as execuções da justiça. Este feixe de varas com machado (em it., *fascio*; em lat. *fasces*), representando o poder de punição das autoridades, se transformou no símbolo do fascismo (1922-1943; sistema político nacionalista, imperialista e antidemocrático, liderado por Benito Mussolini, 1883-1945, na Itália).

⁸³ “Helmeted head”, ou seja, cabeça protegida por capacete ou elmo, que era um tipo de capacete que protegia a cabeça nas armaduras antigas; outro nome pra elmo é “gálea”, daí, galeado(a).

⁸⁴ Vendedores e prostitutas que seguem unidades militares em campanha.

⁸⁵ Do francês, obras primas.

Uma grande cidade é aquela que tem os maiores homens e mulheres,
Se for umas choupanas rotas ainda assim é a maior cidade no mundo inteiro.

5

O lugar onde fica uma grande cidade não é o lugar de cais extensos, docas, manufaturas,
depósitos de produção apenas,
Nem o lugar de incessantes saudações de recém-chegados ou de levantadores de âncora de quem parte,
Nem o lugar dos edifícios mais altos e mais caros ou de lojas vendendo mercadorias do resto da terra,
Nem o lugar das melhores bibliotecas e escolas, nem o lugar onde o dinheiro é mais abundante,
Nem o lugar da mais numerosa população.

Onde fica a cidade com a raça mais vigorosa de oradores e bardos,
Onde fica a cidade que é amada por estes, e os ama em troca e os entende,
Onde não existem monumentos a heróis exceto nas palavras e ações comuns,
Onde parcimônia está em seu lugar, e prudência está em seu lugar,
Onde os homens e mulheres consideram as leis de leve,
Onde o escravo cessa, e o senhor de escravos cessa,
Onde as massas logo se levantam contra a audácia sem fim de pessoas eleitas,
Onde homens e mulheres ferozes derramam como o mar derrama ao apito da morte suas ondas impetuosas e dilaceradas,
Onde autoridade exterior sempre entra após a precedência da autoridade interior,
Onde o cidadão é sempre o comandante e ideal, e Presidente, Prefeito, Governador e demais, são agentes remunerados,
Onde crianças são ensinadas a ser independentes, e a depender de si,
Onde a equanimidade é ilustrada nos afazeres,
Onde especulações sobre a alma são estimuladas,
Onde mulheres andam em préstitos públicos nas ruas iguais aos homens,
Onde elas entram em assembléia pública e tomam assentos iguais aos homens;
Onde fica a cidade dos amigos mais fiéis,
Onde fica a cidade do asseio dos sexos,
Onde fica a cidade dos pais mais saudáveis,
Onde fica a cidade das mães fisicamente mais aptas,
Aí fica a grande cidade.

6

Como parecem pobres argumentos ante uma ação desafiante!
Como a ostentação dos materiais de cidades murcha ante o olhar de um homem ou mulher!

Tudo aguarda ou corre à revelia até que um ser forte apareça;
Um ser forte é a evidência da raça e da habilidade do universo,
Quando ele ou ela aparece os materiais são intimidados,
Cessa a disputa na alma,
Os velhos costumes e frases são confrontados, repelidos, ou armazenados.

O que é teu enriquecimento agora? o que ele pode fazer agora?

O que é tua respeitabilidade agora?
 O que são tua teologia, instrução, sociedade, tradições, livros estatuto, agora?
 Onde estão tuas invectivas de ser agora?
 Onde estão teus sofismas sobre a alma agora?

7

Uma paisagem estéril cobre o minério, há tão bom quanto o melhor apesar da aparência agreste.

Há a mina, há os mineiros,
 O forno da forja está lá, a fusão é realizada, os marteladores estão à mão com suas tenazes e martelos,
 O que sempre serviu e sempre serve está à mão.

Do que isto nada serviu melhor, serviu tudo,
 Serviu o grego de fala fluente e percepção aguçada, e muito antes do grego,
 Serviu na construção dos edifícios que duram mais que os outros,
 Serviu o hebreu, o persa, o mais antigo hindustani,
 Serviu a tribo pré-histórica no Mississippi⁸⁶, serviu aqueles cujas relíquias permanecem na América Central,
 Serviu os templos Álbicos⁸⁷ em bosques ou planícies, com pilares brutos e os druidas,
 Serviu as fissuras artificiais, vastas, altas, silenciosas, nas colinas cobertas de neve da Escandinávia,
 Serviu aqueles que em tempos imemoriais fizeram nas paredes de granito rústicos esboços do sol, lua, estrelas, navios, ondas do mar,
 Serviu as rotas das irrupções dos godos, serviu as tribos pastorais e nômades,
 Serviu o distante Kelt⁸⁸, serviu os intrépidos piratas do Báltico,
 Serviu antes de qualquer um desses os homens veneráveis e inofensivos da Etiópia,
 Serviu a confecção de lemes para as galés de prazer e a fabricação dessas para a guerra,
 Serviu todos os grandes trabalhos em terra e todos os grandes trabalhos no mar,
 Para as eras medievais e antes das eras medievais,
 Serviu não só os vivos antes como agora, mas serviu os mortos.

8

Vejo o carrasco⁸⁹ europeu,
 Ele está mascarado, trajado de vermelho, com pernas enormes e fortes braços despidos,
 E se apóia num pesado machado.

(Quem tens abatido ultimamente carrasco europeu?
 De quem é esse sangue sobre ti tão úmido e grudento?)

Vejo os alvos ocasos dos mártires,
 Vejo dos cadafalsos os fantasmas descentes,

⁸⁶ No original, "Served the mound-raiser on the Mississippi"; esta tribo pré-histórica, que construiu aterros, túmulos e câmaras no vale do Mississippi é geralmente conhecida como "mound-builder".

⁸⁷ Ou "templos ingleses"; o termo vem de Albion, antigo nome da Inglaterra.

⁸⁸ Variante de (*Celt*) Celta.

⁸⁹ No sentido de decapitador.

Fantasma de senhores mortos, damas descoroadas, ministros impugnados, reis rejeitados, Rivais, traidores, envenenadores, líderes desgraçados e os demais.

Vejo aqueles que em qualquer terra morreram pela boa causa,
A semente é escassa, no entanto a safra nunca se esgotará,
(Cuidai, Ah reis estrangeiros, Ah padres, a safra nunca se esgotará.)

Vejo o sangue inteiramente lavado do machado,
Tanto a lâmina quanto o cabo estão limpos,
Eles não espirram mais o sangue de nobres europeus, não mais cingem os pescoços de rainhas.

Vejo o carrasco recuar e se tornar inútil,
Vejo o ínvio e mofado cada falso, não vejo mais nenhum machado nele,
Vejo o poderoso e simpático emblema do poder de minha própria raça, a raça mais nova, maior.

9

(América! não alardeio meu amor por ti,
Tenho o que eu tenho.)

O machado salta!
A sólida floresta dá fluidas elocuições,
Elas desabam, levantam e formam,
Cabana, barraca, plataforma, inspeção,
Mangual, arado, picareta, alavanca, pá,
Sarrafo, grade, escora, lambris, batente, ripa, painel, oitão,
Cidadela, teto, bar, academia, órgão, casa de exposição, biblioteca,
Cornija, treliça, pilastra, sacada, janela, torreão, varanda,
Enxada, ancinho, forçado, lápis, carreta, cajado, serra, plaina, malho, cunha, manilha⁹⁰,
Cadeira, tina, aro, mesa, postigo, ventoinha, caixilho, piso,
Caixa de costura, baú, instrumento de corda, barco, moldura, e não sei que mais,
Capitólios dos Estados, e capitólio⁹¹ da nação de Estados,
Longas fileiras imponentes em avenidas, hospitais para órfãos ou para os pobres ou doentes,
Vapores de Manhattan e veleiros tomando as medidas de todos os mares.

As formas se elevam!
Formas do uso de machados de qualquer forma, e os usuários e tudo aquilo que os avizinha,
Cortadores de madeira e carregadores dela para o Penobscot ou Kennebec⁹²,
Moradores em cabanas entre as montanhas Californianas ou à beira de pequenos lagos, ou em Colúmbia,
Moradores ao sul nas margens do Gila ou Rio Grande, simpáticos ajuntamentos, os caracteres e a diversão,

⁹⁰ Alça ou manivela de prelo manual.

⁹¹ Note-se a inversão da letra inicial desta palavra no poema: a sede do Congresso em Washington, D.C. é com maiúscula: Capitólio; e as sedes das assembleias legislativas estaduais, com minúscula: capitólios.

⁹² Nota-se pelo próprio contexto que são rios; no caso, rios localizados no estado do Maine e que deságuam no Oceano Atlântico.

Moradores à beira do São Lourenço, ou norte no Kanadá, ou junto a Yellowstone⁹³,
 moradores nos litorais e fora dos litorais,
 Pescadores de focas, baleeiros, marinheiros árticos quebrando passagens pelo gelo.

As formas se elevam!

Formas de fábricas, arsenais, fundições, mercados,
 Formas dos duplos trilhos tramados das ferrovias,
 Formas dos dormentes de pontes, vastas armações, barrotes, arcos,
 Formas das frotas de barcaças, reboques, destreza lacustre e canal, destreza fluvial,
 Estaleiros e docas secas à beira dos mares Orientais e Ocidentais, e em muita baía e lugar
 retirado,
 As sobrequilhas de carvalho americano, as pranchas de pinho, os mastros, as raízes de lariço
 como juntas,
 Os próprios navios em suas rotas, os atadores de plataformas, os trabalhadores ocupados fora
 e dentro,
 As ferramentas largadas, a grande verruma e pequena verruma, a enxó, parafuso, linha,
 esquadro, goiva, e plaina para nódulos.

10

As formas se elevam!

A forma medida, serrada, erguida, unida, manchada,
 A forma do caixão para o morto jazer dentro em sua mortalha,
 A forma conseguida em hastes, nas hastes da armação da cama, nas hastes da cama da noiva,
 A forma do pequeno cocho, a forma das armações curvas em baixo, a forma do berço do
 bebê,
 A forma das tábuas do assoalho, as tábuas do assoalho para pés de dançarinos,
 A forma das tábuas do lar familiar, o lar dos simpáticos pais e filhos,
 A forma do telhado do lar do rapaz e moça felizes, o telhado sobre os jovens bem-casados,
 O telhado sobre a ceia jubilosamente cozida pela casta esposa, e jubilosamente comida pelo
 casto marido, contente depois de seu dia de trabalho.

As formas se elevam!

A forma do lugar do prisioneiro no tribunal, e dele ou dela sentado no lugar,
 A forma do bar no qual se apóiam o jovem e o velho bebedor de rum,
 A forma da escada envergonhada e raivosa pisada por passos furtivos,
 A forma do sofá, e o casal adúltero doentio,
 A forma do tabuleiro de jogo com seus ganhos e perdas diabólicos,
 A forma da escada de mão para o assassino condenado e sentenciado, o assassino com rosto
 desfigurado e braços atados,
 O xerife perto com seus delegados, a multidão silenciosa e de lábios pálidos, o balanço da
 corda.

As formas se elevam!

Formas de portas dando muitas saídas e entradas,
 A porta passando o amigo dividido corado e com pressa,
 A porta que admite boas notícias e más notícias,
 A porta de onde o filho deixou o lar confiante e esbaforido,

⁹³ Rio, lago e parque (o Parque Nacional de Yellowstone foi criado em 1872, e é o primeiro parque nacional dos Estados Unidos da América; ele se localiza em Wyoming, Montana e Idaho).

A porta pela qual entrou de novo após longa e escandalosa ausência, adoecido, arruinado, sem inocência, sem meios.

11

Sua forma se eleva,
Ela menos guardada que nunca, porém mais guardada que nunca,
Os toscos e sujos entre os quais se move não a fazem tosca e suja,
Ela conhece os pensamentos conforme passa, nada é oculto a ela,
Ela é contudo respeitosa ou simpática para isso,
Ela é a mais amada, é sem exceção, ela não tem razão para temer e ela não teme,
Juramentos, querelas, canções soluçadas, expressões obscenas, são vãs a ela quando ela passa,
Ela é calada, ela é dona de si, eles não a ofendem,
Ela os recebe como as leis da Natureza os recebem, ela é forte,
Ela também é uma lei da Natureza—não há nenhuma lei mais forte que ela.

12

As formas principais se elevam!
Formas de Democracia total, resultado de séculos,
Formas sempre projetando outras formas,
Formas de turbulentas cidades varonis,
Formas dos amigos e doadores de lares de toda a terra,
Formas fixando a terra e fixadas com toda a terra.

4.10 Canção da Exposição

Canção da Exposição⁹⁴

1

(Ah pouco se importa o trabalhador⁹⁵,
Seu trabalho o põe tão perto de Deus,
O terno Trabalhador pelo espaço e tempo.)

Afinal não criar apenas, ou fundar apenas,
Mas trazer talvez de longe o que já está fundado,
Dar-lhe nossa própria identidade, média, ilimitada, livre,
Preencher o todo o tórpido volume com fogo religioso vital,
Não repelir ou destruir tanto quanto aceitar, fundir, reabilitar,
Obedecer assim como comandar, seguir mais que liderar,
Estas também são as lições de nosso Novo Mundo;
Enquanto tão pouco o Novo afinal, quanto o Velho, Velho Mundo!

Há muito tempo a relva está medrando,
Há muito tempo a chuva está caindo,
Há tempo o globo está girando.

2

Vem Musa migra da Grécia e Jônia,
Risca por favor essas contas imensamente indevidas,
Esse assunto de Tróia e a ira de Aquiles, e as errâncias de Enéas, de Odisseu,
Coloca "Mudou-se" e "Aluga-se" nas pedras de teu Parnaso nevado,
Repete em Jerusalém, coloca alto o aviso no portal de Jaffa e no Monte Moriah,
O mesmo nos muros de teus castelos alemão, francês e espanhol, e coleções italianas,
Pois saibas que uma esfera melhor, mais recente, mais ocupada, um domínio amplo,
inexperenciado te aguarda, te exige.

3

Sensível ao nosso apelo,
Ou melhor à sua inclinação longamente nutrida,
Unida a uma gravitação irresistível, natural,
Ela vem! Ouço o farfalhar de seu vestido,
Farejo o odor da fragrância deliciosa de seu hálito,
Marco seu passo divino, seus olhos curiosos girando, rolando,
Justo sobre esta cena.

A dama das damas! Posso então crer,
Que aqueles antigos templos, clássicas esculturas, nenhum deles podia retê-la?

⁹⁴ Esta canção foi feita a convite do Instituto Americano, para a abertura da sua quadragésima Exibição Anual em Nova York, a 7 de setembro de 1871.

⁹⁵ "Laborer" é trabalhador braçal, que utiliza as mãos no trabalho, como os bóias-frias. "Worker" pode ser um trabalhador de escritório ou industrial, ou simplesmente um membro da classe operária.

Nem sombras de Virgílio e Dante, nem miríade de memórias, poemas, velhas associações,
magnetizá-la e apreendê-la?
Mas que ela deixou a todos—e aqui?

Sim, se vós me permitis assim dizer,
Eu, meus amigos, se vós não, posso vê-la claramente,
A mesma alma imortal da expressão da terra, da atividade, da beleza, do heroísmo,
De suas evoluções vinda aqui, findos os estratos de seus temas anteriores,
Oculta e coberta pelos de hoje, fundação dos de hoje,
Finda, morta no tempo, sua voz na fonte de Castália,
Silente a Esfinge de lábio partido no Egito, silentes todas as tumbas perturbadoras de séculos,
Findos para sempre os épicos da Ásia, os guerreiros galeados da Europa, findo o chamado
primitivo das musas,
A invocação a Calíope para sempre calada, mortas Clio, Melpomene, Talia,
Findo o ritmo imponente de Una e Oriana, finda a busca ao Santo Graal,
Jerusalém um punhado de cinzas sopradas pelo vento, extinta,
As correntes de sombrias tropas noturnas de Cruzados aceleradas com a aurora,
Amadis, Tancred, totalmente liquidados, Charlemagne, Roland, Oliver liquidados,
Palmerin, ogro, defunto, desvanecidos os torreões que Usk refletia de suas águas,
Arthur desvaneceu com todos seus cavaleiros, Merlin e Lancelot e Galahad, todos liquidados,
totalmente decompostos como uma exalação;
Passado! passado! para nós, para sempre passado, esse mundo de antanho tão poderoso, agora
vazio, inanimado, mundo fantasma,
Bordado, deslumbrante, mundo estrangeiro, com todas suas magníficas lendas, mitos,
Seus reis e castelos orgulhosos, seus padres e senhores bélicos e damas refinadas,
Passado à sua câmara mortuária, encerrado com coroa e armadura,
Blasonado pela página púrpura de Shakspeare⁹⁶,
E endechado pela doce rima triste de Tennyson.

Digo que vejo, meus amigos, se vós não, a ilustre emigré⁹⁷,
(tendo é verdade em seus dias, embora o mesmo, mudado, viajado considerável,)
Vindo diretamente a este rendezvous⁹⁸, clareando vigorosamente uma trilha para si, galgando
pela confusão,
Por ruído de maquinaria e estridente apito a vapor imperturbada,
Nem um pouco burlada por cano de esgoto, gasômetros, fertilizantes artificiais,
Sorridente e satisfeita com intenção palpável de ficar,
Ela está aqui, instalada entre os utensílios de cozinha!

4

Mas esperai—não esqueço meus modos?
Apresentar a estranha, (a quem mais de fato vivo a cantar?) a ti Columbia⁹⁹;
Em nome da liberdade bem-vinda imortal! apertem as mãos,
E doravante irmãs queridas sejam ambas.

⁹⁶ Maneira que Whitman tinha de escrever o nome de Shakespeare.

⁹⁷ Emigrante; aquele/a que vem de outro país; tb refugiado ou exilado político.

⁹⁸ Rendez-vous; encontro ou local de encontro.

⁹⁹ Personificação feminina dos Estados Unidos, a partir do nome de Cristóvão Colombo; foi o primeiro nome popular e poético dos Estados Unidos. Esta é a origem do nome do Distrito de Colúmbia, onde fica a capital federal, Washington.

Não teme Oh Musa! na verdade novos modos e dias te recebem, rodeiam,
Candidamente reconheço uma raça singular, singular, de aspecto insólito,
Ainda assim a mesma velha raça humana, por dentro e por fora,
As mesmas caras e corações, os mesmos sentimentos, os mesmos anseios,
O mesmo velho amor, a mesma beleza e o mesmo hábito.

5

Não te culpamos Mundo mais velho, nem realmente nos separamos de ti,
(O filho se separaria do pai?)
Relembrando-te, tratando de teus deveres, grandezas, pelas eras passadas flexionando,
construindo,
Construímos os nossos hoje.

Mais pujante que as tumbas do Egito,
Mais bela que os templos da Grécia, de Roma,
Mais orgulhosa que a catedral de Milão com estátuas e cúspides,
Mais pitoresca que as torres de menagem¹⁰⁰ renanas,
Planejamos agora mesmo erguer, além de todos,
Tua grande catedral indústria sagrada, não tumba,
Uma torre de menagem vitalícia para a invenção prática.

Como numa visão consciente,
Mesmo enquanto canto a vejo se elevar, perscruto e profetizo fora e dentro,
Seu múltiplo ensemble¹⁰¹.

Em volta de um palácio, mais altivo, mais belo, mais amplo que qualquer outro,
A maravilha moderna da terra, as sete da história superando,
Subindo alto camada sobre camada com vidro e fachades¹⁰² de ferro,
Alegrando o sol e céu, matizado nos matizes mais animados,
Bronze, lilás, azul esverdeado claro, marinho e carmim,
Sobre cujo telhado dourado tremulará, sob o pavilhão Liberdade,
As bandeiras dos Estados e os pendões de toda terra,
Um enxame de palácios altivos, belos, mas menores se agrupará.

Em algum lugar dentro de seus muros tudo aquilo que promove vida humana perfeita será
iniciado,
Tentado, ensinado, fomentado, visivelmente exibido.

Não só todo o mundo de trabalhos, comércio, produtos,
Mas todos os operários do mundo a ser aqui representados.

Aqui seguireis a operação corrente,
Em todo estado de movimento prático, ocupado, os canais da civilização,
Materiais aqui sob vosso olho mudarão sua forma como que por mágica,
O algodão será colhido quase no próprio campo,

¹⁰⁰ Torre principal dentro de um castelo medieval.

¹⁰¹ Do francês, conjunto.

¹⁰² Do francês, fachadas, frentes.

Será secado, limpo, descarado, enfardado, tecido em linha e pano à vossa frente,
 Vereis mãos trabalhando em todos os velhos processos e em todos os novos,
 Vereis os vários grãos e como é feita a farinha e então pão assado pelos padeiros,
 Vereis os minérios crus da Califórnia e Nevada passando sem parar até se tornarem barras,
 Assistireis como o gráfico compõe tipo, e aprendereis o que é um componedor,
 Notareis com espanto a prensa de Hoe¹⁰³ girando seus cilindros, emitindo as folhas impressas
 constante e rápido,
 A fotografia, cópia, relógio, alfinete, prego, serão criados diante de vós.

Em grandes calmos salões, um imponente museu vos ensinará as infinitas lições dos minerais,
 Em outro, bosque, plantas, vegetação serão ilustrados—em outro, animais, vida animal e
 desenvolvimento.

Uma imponente casa será a casa de música,
 Outras para outras artes—aprendizado, as ciências, estará tudo aqui,
 Nada será descuidado, tudo será aqui honrado, assistido, exemplificado.

6

(Este, este e estes, América, serão *tuas* pirâmides e obeliscos,
 Teu Farol de Alexandria, jardins da Babilônia,
 Teu templo em Olímpia.)

Os muitos masculinos e femininos que não trabalham,
 Confrontarão aqui sempre os muitos que trabalham,
 Com benefícios preciosos para ambos, glória para todos,
 Para ti América e tu Musa eterna.

E aqui habitareis poderosas Matronas!
 Em vosso vasto estado mais vasto que todo o antigo,
 Ecoado por longos, longos séculos por vir,
 A soar em canções diferentes, mais orgulhosas, com temas mais fortes,
 Vida prática, pacífica, a vida das pessoas, as próprias Pessoas,
 Elevadas, iluminadas, banhadas em paz—exultantes, seguras em paz.

7

Fora com temas de guerra! fora com a própria guerra!
 Daqui da minha visão arrepiante pra nunca mais retornar esse espetáculo de cadáveres
 enegrecidos e mutilados!
 Esse inferno aberto e ataque de sangue, próprio de tigres selvagens ou lobos de longas
 línguas, não de homens racionais,

E em seu lugar expedir campanhas da indústria,
 Com teus exércitos indômitos, engenharia,
 Tuas flâmulas trabalham, soltas à brisa,
 Tuas cornetas soando alto e claro.

¹⁰³ Richard March Hoe (1812-1886), que nasceu em Nova York, foi um inventor Americano que desenhou uma máquina impressora aperfeiçoada, a prensa rotativa, em 1846. Esta prensa estava em exibição nessa exposição.

Fora com o antigo romancismo¹⁰⁴!
 Fora com romances, enredos e peças de cortes estrangeiras,
 Fora com versos de amor adoçados com rima, as intrigas, aventuras amorosas de indolentes,
 Próprios só para festins na madrugada onde dançarinos bailam ao som de música atrasada,
 Os prazeres insalubres, dissipações extravagantes de poucos,
 Com perfumes, calor e vinho, sob os deslumbrantes lustres.

A ti tuas reverentes irmãs sãs,
 Ergo uma voz por temas muito mais soberbos para poetas e para arte,
 Para exaltar o presente e o real,
 Para ensinar ao homem médio a glória do seu passeio e ofício diários,
 Para cantar em canções como exercício e vida química nunca devem ser zombados,
 Pelo trabalho manual a todos, arar, capinar, cavar,
 Plantar e cuidar a árvore, a baga, legumes, flores,
 Para todo homem tratar de realmente fazer algo, para toda mulher também;
 Para usar o martelo e a serra, (serrar em direção ao veio, ou cortar transversalmente),
 Cultivar um pendor por marcenaria, reboco, pintura,
 Trabalhar como alfaiate, costureira, enfermeira, cavalariaço, porteiro,
 Inventar um pouco, algo engenhoso, para ajudar a lavar, cozinhar, limpar,
 E não achar uma desgraça botar a mão na massa.

Digo que trago-te Musa hoje e aqui,
 Todas as profissões, deveres de todos os tipos,
 Lida, lida saudável e suor, infinda, sem pausa,
 Os velhos, velhos práticos fardos, interesses, júbilos,
 A família, ascendência, infância, marido e mulher,
 As comodidades da casa, a casa em si e todos seus pertences,
 Alimento e sua preservação, química aplicada a ele,
 O que quer que forme o homem ou a mulher média, forte, completa, de sangue doce, a
 personalidade longeva perfeita,
 E favoreça sua vida presente em saúde e felicidade, e molde sua alma,
 Para a eterna vida real por vir.

Com as mais recentes conexões, trabalhos, o inter-transporte do mundo,
 Energia a vapor, as grandes linhas expressas, gás, petróleo,
 Estes triunfos de nosso tempo, o delicado cabo do Atlântico,
 A ferrovia do Pacífico, o canal de Suez, os túneis de Mont Cenis e Gothard e Hoosac, a ponte
 do Brooklyn,
 Esta terra toda coberta com grades de ferro, com linhas de vapores tecendo todo mar,
 Nossa própria orbe, eu trago o globo atual.

8

E tu América,
 Tua prole pairando sempre tão alta, porém Tu acima de todos pairando,
 Com a Vitória à tua esquerda, e à tua direita a Lei;

¹⁰⁴ No original, “romance”, que significa aventuras amorosas e contos medievais com intrigas. Ou seja, o espírito romântico ou as aventuras românticas. Em português, as palavras “romance” e “novel”, que aparece no verso seguinte, são traduzidos pela mesma palavra, romance. Romantismo em inglês é “Romanticism”. Para diferenciar, utilizei o termo “romancismo”.

Tu União contendo tudo, fundindo, absorvendo, tolerando tudo,
A Ti, sempre a ti, canto.

Tu, também tu, um Mundo,
Com todas tuas amplas geografias, múltiplas, diferentes, distantes,
Reunidas por ti em uma—uma linguagem orbicular comum,
Um destino indivisível comum para Todos.

E pelos encantos que concedes a teus ministros seriamente,
Aqui personifico e profiro meus temas, para fazê-los passar à tua frente.

Vê, América! (e tu, inefável convidada e irmã!)
Por ti vêm marchando tuas águas e tuas terras;
Vê! teus campos e cultivos, teus bosques e montes longínquos,
Como em procissão vindo.

Vê, o próprio mar,
E em seu ilimitado peito ondeante, os navios;
Vê, onde suas velas brancas, enfunando ao vento, pontilham o verde e azul,
Vê, os vapores indo e vindo, entrando e saindo de porto,
Vê, obscuras e ondulantes, as longas flâmulas de fumaça.

Vê, em Oregon, no norte e oeste distante,
Ou em Maine, no norte e leste distante, teus alegres lenhadores,
Brandindo seus machados o dia inteiro.

Vê, nos lagos, teus pilotos em seus lemes, teus remadores,
Como o freixo se retorçe sob aqueles braços musculosos!

Lá perto da fornalha, e lá perto da bigorna,
Vê teus resolutos ferreiros meneando seus malhos,
Do alto tão firme, do alto giram e caem com tinido jovial,
Como um tumulto de risos.

Nota o espírito de invenção em todo lugar, tuas rápidas patentes,
Tuas oficinas contínuas, fundições, erguidas ou se erguendo,
Vê, das chaminés como os fogos flamantes emanam.

Nota, tuas fazendas intermináveis, Norte, Sul,
Tuas abundantes regiões-filhas, a Leste e a Oeste,
Os produtos variados de Ohio, Pensilvânia, Missouri, Geórgia, Texas, e dos demais,
Tuas colheitas ilimitadas, relva, trigo, açúcar, óleo, milho, arroz, cânhamo, lúpulo,
Teus celeiros todos repletos, o infinito trem de carga e o volumoso armazém,
Tuas uvas que maturam em tuas videiras, as maçãs em teus pomares,
Tua madeira incalculável, carne de boi, de porco, batatas, teu carvão, teu ouro e prata,
O ferro inexaurível em tuas minas.

Tudo teu Oh sagrada União!
Navios, fazendas, lojas, celeiros, fábricas, minas,
Cidade e Estado, Norte, Sul, item e conjunto,

Dedicamos, Mãe venerável, tudo a ti!

Protetora absoluta, tu! baluarte de tudo!

Pois bem sabemos que enquanto dás a cada um e a todos,
(generosa como Deus,)

Sem ti nem todos nem cada um, nem terra, lar,

Nem navio, nem mina, nem nada aqui hoje se asseguram,

Nem nenhum, nem qualquer dia se asseguram.

9

E tu, o Emblema ondulante sobre tudo!

Beleza delicada, uma palavra a ti, (pode ser salutar,)

Lembras nem sempre tens estado aqui tão confortavelmente soberana,

Em outras cenas tenho te observado bandeira,

Não tão apumada e inteira e florescendo louçã em seda imaculada,

Mas tenho te visto estamenha¹⁰⁵, em farrapos rasgada em teu mastro lascado,

Ou grudada ao peito de algum jovem porta-estandarte por mãos desesperadas,

Ferozmente disputada, por vida ou morte, longamente batalhada,

O estrondo-trovão de ‘canhões médios’, e muita imprecação e gemido e berro, e rajadas de
rifle estalando abruptas,

E massas moventes como demônios selvagens se agitando, e vidas como nada arriscadas,

Por teu mero fragmento encardido de sujeira e fumaça e saturado de sangue,

Por causa disso, minha beldade, e que tu possas vagar agora segura aí em cima,

Muitos bons homens tenho visto tombar.

Agora aqui e estes e daqui em paz, tudo teu Oh Bandeira!

E aqui e daqui por ti, Oh Musa universal! e tu por eles!

E aqui e daqui Oh União, todo trabalho e trabalhadores são teus!

Nenhum separado de ti—doravante Um só, nós e tu,

(Pois o sangue dos filhos, o que é, só o sangue materno?

E vidas e obras, o que são todas afinal, exceto as vias para fé e morte?)

Enquanto ensaiamos nossa riqueza incomensurável, é por ti, Mãe querida,

Possuímos tudo e vários hoje indissolúveis em ti;

Não pensa que nosso canto, nosso espetáculo, meramente como produtos brutos ou lucro—é
por ti, a alma em ti, elétrica, espiritual!

Nossas fazendas, invenções, colheitas, possuímos em ti! cidades e Estados em ti!

Nossa liberdade toda em ti! nossas próprias vidas em ti!

¹⁰⁵ Tecido comum de lã; fazenda para confeccionar bandeiras.

4.11 Canção da Sequóia

Canção da Sequóia

1

Uma canção da Califórnia,
 Uma profecia e dissimulação, um pensamento tão impalpável para respirar quanto o ar,
 Um coro de driades, desfalecendo, partindo, ou hamadriades partindo,
 Uma voz murmurante, decisiva, gigante, desde a terra e céu,
 Voz de uma poderosa árvore moribunda na densa floresta de sequóia.

*Adeus meus irmãos,
 Adeus Oh terra e céu, adeus a vós águas vizinhas,
 Meu tempo findou, meu prazo chegou,*

Pelo litoral norte,
 Um pouco afastado da praia rodeada de rochas e cavernas,
 No ar salino do mar no condado de Mendocino,
 Com as vagas como base e acompanhamento baixo e rouco,
 Com crepitantes golpes de machados soando musicalmente acionados por braços fortes,
 Fendida fundo pelas línguas afiadas dos machados, lá na floresta densa de sequóia,
 Ouvi a poderosa árvore cantando seu canto de morte.

Os cortadores não ouviram, as choças e cantigas do acampamento não ecoaram,
 Os carreteiros de ouvido apurado e os carregadores de corrente e macaco de rosca não
 ouviram,
 Quando os espíritos da floresta vieram de seus refúgios de mil anos para unir-se ao refrão,
 Mas em minha alma eu ouvi claramente.

Murmurando desde sua miríade de folhas,
 Do seu altivo topo se erguendo a duzentos pés de altura,
 De seu tronco robusto e membros, de sua casca espessa,
 Aquele canto das estações e tempo, canto não só do passado mas do futuro.

*Tu minha vida inarrada,
 E todos vós veneráveis e inocentes júbilos,
 Minha vida resistente e perene com júbilos em meio à chuva e muitos sóis de verão,
 E as brancas neves e noite e os ventos bravios;
 Ah os grandes júbilos ásperos pacientes, os fortes júbilos de minha alma impensados pelo
 homem,
 (Pois saibas que carrego a alma adequada a mim, também tenho consciência, identidade,
 E todas as pedras e montanhas têm, e toda a terra,)
 Júbilos da vida adequados a mim e meus irmãos,
 Nosso tempo, nosso prazo chegou.*

*Nem nos rendemos tristemente majestosos irmãos,
 Nós que preenchemos grandiosamente nosso tempo;
 Com o calmo contentamento da Natureza, com enorme deleite tácito,
 Nós acolhemos o que forjamos no passado,*

E deixamos o campo para eles.

*Para eles previstos há tempos,
Para uma raça mais soberba, para eles também grandiosamente preencher seu tempo,
Por eles abdicamos, neles nós mesmos vós reis da floresta!
Neles estes céus e ares, estes picos de montanhas, Shasta, Nevadas,
Estes enormes penhascos escarpados, esta amplidão, estes vales, Yosemite distante,
Para neles ser absorvidos, assimilados.*

*Então a uma tensão mais elevada,
Ainda mais orgulhoso, mais extático se ergueu o canto,
Como se os herdeiros, as deidades do Oeste,
Acompanhando com língua magistral tomassem parte.*

*Nem pálidas dos fetiches da Ásia,
Nem vermelhas do antigo matadouro dinástico da Europa,
(Área de tramas assassinas de tronos, ainda com sobra do cheiro de guerras e patíbulos em
todos os lugares,)
Mas vindas dos longos e inofensivos estertores da Natureza, construídas pacificamente daí,
Estas terras virgens, terras da costa Ocidental,
Para o novo homem culminante, pra ti, o império novo,
Tu há tempos prometido, empenhamos, dedicamos.*

*Vós profundas volições ocultas,
Tu masculinidade espiritual média, propósito de tudo, pairando em ti mesma, concedendo
não tomando lei,
Tu divina feminidade, senhora e fonte de tudo, origem de vida e amor e o que vem de vida e
amor,
Tu essência moral invisível de todos os vastos materiais da América,
(era após era trabalhando na morte como na vida,)
Tu que, às vezes conhecido, com mais freqüência desconhecido, realmente forma e modela o
Novo Mundo, ajustando-o ao Tempo e Espaço,
Tu vontade nacional escondida estendida em teus abismos, oculta mas sempre alerta,
Vós propósitos passados e presentes tenazmente perseguidos, talvez inconscientes de vós
mesmos,
Inabalados por todos os erros fugazes, perturbações da superfície;
Vós germes vitais, universais, imortais, sob todos os credos, artes, estatutos, literaturas,
Aqui construí vossos lares para sempre, estabeleçam-se aqui, estas áreas inteiras, terras da
costa Ocidental,
Nos empenhamos, dedicamos a vós.*

*Pois vosso homem, vossa raça característica,
Aqui pode ele crescer árduo, doce, gigantesco, aqui se elevar proporcional à Natureza,
Aqui galgar os puros espaços vastos inconfiados, irreprimidos por parede ou telhado,
Aqui rir com procela ou sol, aqui júbilo, aqui pacientemente se habituar,
Aqui ouvir-se, desdobrar-se, (não ouvir fórmulas de outros,) aqui preencher seu tempo,
Propriamente cair, auxiliar, impensado por fim,
Desaparecer, servir.*

Assim no litoral norte,

No eco dos chamados de carreteiros e das correntes tilintantes, e a música dos machados de cortadores,
 O tronco e os ramos cadentes, o estrondo, o guincho abafado, o gemido,
 Tais palavras combinadas da sequóia, como de vozes extáticas, antigas e bulhentas,
 As dríades seculares, invisíveis, cantando, recuando,
 Deixando todos seus recessos de florestas e montanhas,
 Da cordilheira de Cascade até a de Wahsatch, ou Idaho distante, ou Utah,
 Às deidades do moderno doravante se rendendo,
 O coro e as indicações, as perspectivas da humanidade vindoura, as colônias, todos aspectos,
 No bosque de Mendocino peguei.

2

O flamejante cortejo dourado da Califórnia,
 O drama súbito e suntuoso, as terras ensolaradas e amplas,
 O trecho longo e variado do estreito de Puget até o Colorado meridional,
 Terras banhadas em ar mais doce, mais raro, mais saudável, vales e penhascos montanhosos,
 Os campos da Natureza há muito preparados e incultos, a química cíclica, silenciosa,
 As eras lentas e regulares mourejando, a superfície desocupada maturando, os ricos minérios
 se formando abaixo;
 Por fim o Novo chegando, assumindo, tomando posse,
 Uma raça pululante e atarefada colonizando e se organizando em todos os lugares,
 Navios vindo de todo este redondo mundo, e saindo para o mundo inteiro,
 Para a Índia e China e Austrália e as mil ilhas paradisíacas do Pacífico,
 Cidades populosas, as últimas invenções, os vapores nos rios, as ferrovias, com muita fazenda
 florescente, com maquinaria,
 E lã e trigo e a uva, e escavações de ouro amarelo.

3

Mas mais em ti que estas, terras da costa Ocidental,
 (Estas só os meios, os implementos, o terreno fixo,)
 Vejo em ti, certo por vir, a promessa de milhares de anos, até agora adiada,
 Prometida para ser cumprida, nossa espécie comum, a raça.

A nova sociedade por fim, proporcional à Natureza,
 Em teus homens, mais que em teus picos de montanha ou árvores robustas imperiais,
 Na mulher mais, muito mais, que todo teu ouro ou videiras, ou mesmo o ar vital.

Recém vindo, a um novo mundo de fato, porém há muito preparado,
 Vejo o gênio do moderno, filho do real e ideal,
 Desbravando o território para a ampla humanidade, a verdadeira América, herdeira de tão
 grandioso passado,
 Para construir um futuro mais grandioso.

4.12 Uma Canção para Profissões

Uma Canção para Profissões

1

Uma canção para profissões!
No labor de máquinas e negócios e na lida dos campos encontro os desenvolvimentos,
E encontro os eternos sentidos.

Trabalhadores e Trabalhadoras!
Fossem todas as instruções práticas e ornamentais bem mostradas por mim, o que isso significaria?
Fosse eu o diretor da escola, o proprietário caridoso, o estadista sábio, o que isso significaria?
Fosse eu o chefe vos empregando e pagando, isso vos satisfaria?

O douto, virtuoso, benevolente, e os termos habituais,
Um homem como eu e nunca os termos habituais.

Nem criado nem senhor sou,
Tomo na mesma hora um grande valor e um pequeno, terei o meu próprio quem quer que me desfrute,
Estarei quite contigo e estarás quite comigo.

Se te postas a trabalho numa loja eu me posto tão próximo quanto o mais próximo na mesma loja,
Se concedes presentes a teu irmão ou amigo mais querido eu exijo o mesmo que teu irmão ou amigo mais querido,
Se teu amante, marido, esposa, é bem-vindo de dia ou de noite, devo ser pessoalmente tão bem recebido quanto,
Se tornas-te degradado, criminoso, doente, então eu me torno igual pelo teu bem,
Se relembras tuas ações tolas e ilegais, pensas que não posso me lembrar de minhas ações tolas e ilegais?
Se farreias à mesa eu farreio no lado oposto da mesa,
Se encontras algum estranho nas ruas e o ou a ama, ora eu freqüentemente encontro estranhos na rua e os amo.

Ora o que tens pensado de ti mesmo?
É tu então que te achaste menos?
É tu que achaste o Presidente maior que tu mesmo?
Ou os ricos mais prósperos que tu mesmo? ou os educados mais sábios que tu mesmo?

(Porque és graxento ou tens espinhas, ou estiveste uma vez bêbado, ou foste um ladrão,
Ou que estás doente, ou reumático, ou uma prostituta,
Ou de frivolidade ou impotência, ou que não és um erudito e nunca viste teu nome impresso,
Tu consentes que sejas menos imortal?)

2

Almas de homens e mulheres! não é vós que chamo não vistas, inauditas, intocáveis e insensíveis,
 Não é sobre vós que discuto os prós e os contras, e resolvo se estais vivas ou não,
 Eu reconheço publicamente quem vós sois, se ninguém mais reconhece.

Adulto, meio-adulto e bebê, deste país e de todo país, dentro ou fora de casa, um tal qual o outro, eu vejo,
 E tudo o mais atrás ou através deles.

A esposa, e ela não é nem um tiquinho menos que o marido,
 A filha, e ela é tão boa quanto o filho,
 A mãe, e ela é tudinho tanto quanto o pai.

Prole de ignorantes e pobres, rapazes como aprendizes em negócios,
 Jovens trabalhado em fazendas e velhos trabalhando em fazendas,
 Marinheiros, comerciantes, navios costeiros, imigrantes,
 Todos estes eu vejo, mas mais perto e mais longe o mesmo eu vejo,
 Nenhum me escapará e nenhum desejará me escapar.

Eu trago o que tu muito precisas porém sempre tens,
 Não dinheiro, casos, vestimenta, refeição, erudição, mas tão bom quanto,
 Não envio agente ou médium, não ofereço representante de valor, mas ofereço o valor em si.

Há algo que vem pra gente agora e perpetuamente,
 Não é o que é impresso, pregado, discutido, isso elude discussão e impresso,
 Não é pra ser posto num livro, não está neste livro,
 É para ti quem tu sejas, não está mais distante de ti que tua audição e visão estão de ti,
 É aludido pelos mais próximos, mais comuns, mais prontos, é sempre provocado por eles.

Podes ler em muitos idiomas, porém não ler nada sobre isso,
 Podes ler a mensagem do Presidente e não ler nada sobre isto nela,
 Nada nos relatórios da secretaria de Estado ou secretaria do Tesouro, ou nos jornais diários ou semanários,
 Ou no censo ou restituições da receita, preços atuais, ou qualquer cômputo de ação.

3

O sol e estrelas que flutuam ao ar livre,
 A terra maçaniforme e nós sobre ela, seguramente o empuxo deles é algo grandioso,
 Eu não sei o que é exceto que é grandioso, e que é felicidade,
 E que o nosso conteúdo incluso aqui não é uma especulação ou bon-mot¹⁰⁶ ou reconnoissance¹⁰⁷,
 E não é algo que por sorte pode se tornar algo bom pra nós, e sem sorte deve ser um fracasso pra nós,
 E não é algo que pode ainda ser escamoteado em uma certa contingência.

A luz e a sombra, o sentido curioso de corpo e identidade, a gula que com perfeita complacência devora todas as coisas,

¹⁰⁶ Dito espirituoso, gracioso; chiste, facécia, piada, pilhéria, gracejo.

¹⁰⁷ Reconhecimento, exame.

O infinito orgulho e dilatação do homem, júbilos e mágoas indizíveis,
 A maravilha que todo mundo vê em todo mundo que ele vê, e as maravilhas que preenchem
 cada minuto do tempo pra sempre,
 Por que as computaste, camarado¹⁰⁸?
 As computaste para teu negócio ou lavoura? ou para os lucros de tua loja?
 Ou para te alçares a uma posição? ou preencher o lazer de um cavalheiro, ou o lazer de uma
 dama?

Computaste que a paisagem tomou matéria e forma para que pudesse ser pintada em um
 quadro?
 Ou homens e mulheres para que pudessem ser descritos, e canções cantadas?
 Ou a atração da gravidade e as grandes leis e combinações harmoniosas e os fluidos do ar,
 como tópicos para os savans¹⁰⁹?
 Ou a terra marrom e o mar azul para mapas e diagramas?
 Ou as estrelas pra ser postas em constelações e chamadas por nomes elegantes?
 Ou que o crescimento de sementes é para gráficos agrícolas, ou a agricultura em si?

Velhas instituições, estas artes, bibliotecas, lendas, coleções, e a prática repassada em
 manufaturas, as estimaremos tão alto?
 Estimaremos nosso dinheiro e negócio alto? não tenho nenhuma objeção,
 Eu os estimo tão alto quanto o mais alto—assim uma criança nascida de uma mulher e
 homem eu estimo além de toda estimativa.

Achamos nossa União grandiosa e nossa Constituição grandiosa,
 Não digo que elas não são grandiosas e boas, pois são,
 Estou hoje tão apaixonado por elas quanto tu,
 Então estou apaixonado por Ti, e por todos meus companheiros sobre a terra.

Consideramos bíblias¹¹⁰ e religiões divinas—não digo que elas não são divinas,
 Digo que elas brotaram de ti, e ainda podem brotar de ti,
 Não são elas que dão a vida, é tu que das a vida,
 Folhas não são mais vertidas das árvores, ou árvores da terra, do que são vertidas de ti.

4

A soma de toda reverência conhecida eu acrescento a ti quem sejas,
 O Presidente está lá na Casa Branca por ti, não és tu que está lá por ele,
 Os Secretários agem em suas repartições por ti, não tu aqui por eles,
 O Congresso se reúne a cada doze meses por ti,
 Leis, tribunais, a formação de Estados, as cartas das cidades, o ir e vir do comércio e
 correspondências, são tudo por ti.

¹⁰⁸ Forma antiga da palavra “camarada”, em inglês.

¹⁰⁹ Esta é a grafia de WW para a palavra francesa “savants”: sábios, eruditos, filósofos.

¹¹⁰ Livros em geral considerados muito importantes.

Escutai bem meus queridos eruditos,
 Doutrinas, políticas e civilização exsurtem de vós,
 Escultura e monumentos e qualquer coisa inscrita em qualquer lugar são talhados em vós,
 O âmago de histórias e estatísticas tão remotas quanto os registros alcançam está em vós
 nesta hora, e mitos e contos igualmente,
 Se vós não estivésseis respirando e caminhando aqui, onde eles todos estariam?
 Os poemas mais renomados seriam cinzas, discursos e peças seriam vácuos.

Toda arquitetura é o que vós fazeis a ela quando a considerais,
 (Pensastes que estava na pedra branca ou cinza? ou nas linhas dos arcos e cornijas?)

Toda música é o que desperta de vós quando sois lembrados pelos instrumentos,
 Não são os violinos e as cornetas, não é o oboé nem os rufantes tambores, nem a partitura do
 barítono cantando sua doce romanza¹¹¹, nem a do estribilho dos homens, nem a do
 estribilho das mulheres,
 Está mais próximo e mais distante que eles.

5

O todo voltará então?
 Cada um pode ver sinais do melhor por um olhar no espelho? não há nada maior ou mais?
 Tudo senta aí contigo, com a mística alma invisível?

Estranho e difícil esse paradoxo verdadeiro eu dou,
 Objetos maciços e a alma invisível são unos.

Construção de casa, medição, serrar as tábuas,
 Malhação de ferro, vidraria, fabrico de pregos, tanoaria, telhamento de zinco, ripagem,
 Marcenaria de navio, construção de cais, cura¹¹² de peixe, lajeamento de calçadas por
 lajeadores,
 A bomba, o bate-estacas, o grande guindaste, o forno de carvão e forno de tijolo,
 Minas de carvão e tudo que há lá embaixo, as lanternas na escuridão, ecos, canções, quantas
 meditações, quantos vastos pensamentos nativos repassando em rostos tisonados,
 Fundição, fogos de forjas nas montanhas ou em ribeiras, homens ao redor examinando a fusão
 com enormes alçapremas, montes de minério, a devida combinação de minério, calcário,
 carvão,
 O alto-forno e o forno de pudlar¹¹³, o monte circular no fundo da fusão por fim, o laminador,
 as espessas barras de ferro-gusa, os fortes limpi-formes trilhos para ferrovias,
 Fábrica de óleos, fábrica de seda, fábrica de alvaiade¹¹⁴, o engenho de açúcar, serras a vapor,
 os grandes moinhos e fábricas,

¹¹¹ Balada ou ária.

¹¹² No sentido de preservação, por secagem, sal ou defumação.

¹¹³ Em metalurgia: processo de descarburização (diminuir o teor de carbono) do ferro mediante a ação de escória ou de óxidos; pudlagem, pudlagem.

¹¹⁴ Em química: pigmento branco, seja de carbonato básico de chumbo (de composição variável), seja de óxido de zinco.

Trabalho de cantaria, guarnições bem-feitas para fachadas ou janela ou lintéis de porta, o malho, a talhadeira denteada, a placa para proteger o polegar,
 O ferro de calafetagem, a caldeira de cimento fervente para a abóbada, e o fogo sob a caldeira,
 O fardo de algodão, o gancho do estivador, a serra e cavalete do serrador, o molde do moldador, a faca de trabalho do açougueiro, o serrote de gelo, e todo o trabalho com gelo,
 O trabalho e ferramentas do armador, abordador¹¹⁵, veleiro, fabricante de blocos, Mercadorias de guta-percha¹¹⁶, papel machê, insígnias, escovas, fabricação de escovas, implementos de vidraceiro,
 O folheado¹¹⁷ e o caço¹¹⁸, os ornamentos do confeitiro, o decanter e as retortas, o tesourão e o ferro de engomar,
 A sovela e a alça de joelho, a medida de quartilho e quarto, o balcão e tamborete, a caneta de pena ou metal, a fabricação de todos os tipos de ferramentas afiadas,
 A cervejaria, a preparação, o malte, os barris, tudo que é feito por cervejeiros, vinicultores, vinagreiros,
 Vestuário de couro, fabricação de carruagem, fabricação de caldeira, trançador de corda, destilação, pintura de placas, calcinação, colheita de algodão, galvanoplastia, eletrotipia, estereotipia,
 Máquinas de aduela, aplainadoras, segadoras, arados, debulhadoras, carros a vapor,
 O carro do motorneiro, o ônibus, a pesada carreta,
 Pirotecnia, disparando fogos de artifício coloridos à noite, figuras fantasiosas e jorros;
 Carne de boi na banca do açougueiro, o matadouro do açougueiro, o açougueiro em seu traje de abate,
 As pocilgas de porcos vivos, o martelo de abate, o gancho para suíno, a tina de escaldar, destripamento, o cutelo de açougueiro, a marreta do empacotador, e o profuso trabalho invernal de empacotar carne de porco,
 Fábrica de farinha, moagem de trigo, centeio, milho, arroz, os barris e os barris de meio e quarto, as barças carregadas, as altas pilhas em cais e desembarcadouros,
 Os homens e o trabalho dos homens em balsas, ferrovias, navios costeiros, barcos de pesca, canais;
 A rotina horária de tua própria vida ou de qualquer homem, a loja, quintal, depósito, ou fábrica,
 Estes espetáculos todos perto de ti dia e noite—trabalhador! quem tu sejas, tua vida diária! Nisso e neles o grosso do mais pesado—nisso e neles muito mais que calculaste, (e muito menos também,)
 Neles realidades para ti e mim, neles poemas para ti e mim,
 Neles, não tu mesmo—tu e tua alma incluem todas as coisas, a despeito de avaliação,
 Neles o desenvolvimento bom—neles todos temas, dicas, possibilidades.

Eu não afirmo que o que vês além é fútil, não te aconselho a parar,
 Eu não digo que orientações que achavas ótimas não são ótimas,
 Mas digo que nenhuma leva a algo maior que estas.

¹¹⁵ Aquele que lança arpéu ou croque numa abordagem a outro barco.

¹¹⁶ Resina produzida por essa árvore, de coloração cinzenta, utilizada em goma de mascar e antigamente para fazer moldagem dentária, isolamento de condutores de eletricidade e bolas de golfe. Foi substituída pela resina sintética.

¹¹⁷ Lâmina de madeira para revestimentos.

¹¹⁸ Caldeira para derreter cola em banho-maria.

Buscarás a grande distância? seguramente voltas por fim,
Em coisas mais conhecidas a ti encontrando o melhor, ou tão bom quanto o melhor,
Em gente muito próxima a ti encontrando o mais doce, mais forte, mais amoroso,
Felicidade, conhecimento, não em outro lugar, mas neste lugar, não numa outra hora, mas
nesta hora,
Homem no primeiro que vês ou tocas, sempre em amigo, irmão, o vizinho mais próximo—a
mulher em mãe, irmã, esposa,
Os gostos populares e empregos tomam precedência em poemas ou em qualquer lugar,
Vós trabalhadoras e trabalhadores destes Estados tendo sua própria divina e forte vida,
E tudo o mais dando lugar a homens e mulheres como vós.

Quando o salmo cantar em vez do cantor,
Quando a prédica proclamar em vez do pastor,
Quando o púlpito descer e se for em vez do entalhador que esculpiu a escrivainha de apoio,
Quando posso tocar o corpo de livros noite e dia e quando eles tocarem meu corpo de volta de
novo,
Quando um curso universitário convencer como uma mulher e filho sonolentos convencem,
Quando o ouro novo no cofre sorrir como a filha do guarda-noturno,
Quando títulos de propriedade vaguearem em cadeiras defronte e forem meus amáveis
companheiros,
Eu pretendo estender-lhes minha mão, e fazer grande alarde deles como faço de homens e
mulheres como vós.

4.13 Uma Canção da Terra Girante

Uma Canção da Terra Girante

1

Uma canção da terra girante, e de palavras concordantes,
 Pensaste que aquelas fossem as palavras, aquelas linhas verticais? aquelas curvas, ângulos,
 pontos?
 Não, essas não são as palavras, as palavras substanciais estão no chão e mar,
 Estão no ar, estão em ti.

Pensaste que essas fossem as palavras, esses deliciosos sons das bocas de seus amigos?
 Não, as palavras reais são mais deliciosas que eles.

Corpos humanos são palavras, miríades de palavras,
 (Nos melhores poemas reaparece o corpo, de homem ou de mulher, bem-torneado, natural,
 alegre,
 Toda parte capaz, ativa, receptiva, sem vergonha ou a necessidade de vergonha.)

Ar, solo, água, fogo—essas são palavras,
 Eu mesmo sou uma palavra com elas—minhas qualidades interpenetram com as delas—meu
 nome é nada pra elas,
 Embora fosse dito nos três mil idiomas, o que o ar, a terra, a água, o fogo, saberiam do meu
 nome?

Uma presença saudável, um gesto amável ou imperativo, são palavras, provérbios,
 significados,
 Os encantos que acompanham as meras expressões de alguns homens e mulheres, são também
 provérbios e significados.

O artesanato das almas é feito pelas palavras inaudíveis da terra,
 Os mestres conhecem as palavras da terra e as usam mais que palavras audíveis.

Melhoria é uma das palavras da terra,
 A terra não se atrasa nem se apressa,
 Tem todos os atributos, crescimentos, efeitos, latentes em si mesma desde o princípio¹¹⁹,
 Não é só meio linda, defeitos e excrescências mostram tanto quanto perfeições.

A terra não retém; é generosa o bastante,
 As verdades da terra aguardam continuamente, também não são tão ocultas,
 São tranquilas, sutis, intransmissíveis por impressão,
 São imbuídas de todas as coisas que se transmitem de boa vontade,
 Transmitindo um sentimento e convite, eu emito e emito,
 Não falo, porém se não me ouves que proveito tenho pra ti?
 Suportar, melhorar, faltando estes que proveito tenho?

(Accouche! accouchez!¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Referência bíblica, que no princípio era o Verbo (Logos; em inglês, “Word”), e o Verbo se fez carne, isto é, matéria.

Estragarás teu próprio fruto em ti aí?
Te agacharás e sufocarás aí?)

A terra não discute,
Não é patética, não tem preparativos,
Não brada, se apressa, persuade, ameaça, promete,
Não faz discriminação, não tem falhas concebíveis,
Nada fecha, nada recusa, não exclui nada,
De todos os poderes, objetos, estados, ela informa, não exclui nenhum.

A terra não se exhibe nem recusa se exhibir, frui calma abaixo,
Abaixo os sons ostensivos, o coro augusto de heróis, a lamúria de escravos,
Persuasões de amantes, maldições, arquejos dos moribundos, risada de jovens, sotaques de
vendedores,
Abaixo estas palavras frutivas que nunca falham.

A seus filhos as palavras da grande mãe muda eloqüente nunca falham,
As verdadeiras palavras não falham, pois movimento não falha e reflexo não falha,
Também o dia e a noite não falham e a viagem que buscamos não falha.

Das irmãs intermináveis,
Dos cotillons¹²¹ incessantes de irmãs,
Das irmãs centrípetas e centrífugas, das irmãs mais velhas e mais jovens,
A linda irmã que conhecemos continua a dançar com as demais.

Com suas amplas costas voltadas a todo observador,
Com as fascinações da juventude e as equivalentes fascinações da idade,
Senta ela a quem também amo como os demais, senta serena,
Segurando em sua mão o que tem o caráter de um espelho, enquanto seus olhos se afastam
dele,
Relanceiam quando ela senta, convidando a ninguém, negando a ninguém,
Segurando um espelho dia e noite incansavelmente diante do próprio rosto.

Vistas de perto ou vistas à distância,
Pontualmente as vinte e quatro aparecem em público todo dia,
Pontualmente se aproximam e passam com seus companheiros ou um companheiro,
Não olhando de semblantes próprios, mas dos semblantes daqueles que estão com elas,
Dos semblantes de crianças ou mulheres ou do semblante masculino,
Dos semblantes abertos de animais ou de coisas inanimadas,
Da paisagem ou águas ou da aparição primorosa do céu,
De nossos semblantes, meu e vosso, fielmente os devolvendo,

¹²⁰ A forma correta é “Accouchée! accouchez!”, ou seja, “Grávida! dê à luz!”.

¹²¹ Cotilhão, cotilhões: é uma antiga dança de muitos pares, entremeada de várias músicas e distribuição de brindes, que era utilizada para terminar um baile. Whitman se refere aqui a estrelas e planetas, incluindo-se aí a Terra.

Todo dia em público aparecendo sem falta, mas nunca duas vezes com os mesmos
companheiros.

Abraçando o homem, abraçando tudo, avançam os trezentos e sessenta e cinco
irresistivelmente ao redor do sol;
Abraçando tudo, acalmando, apoiando, seguem perto trezentos e sessenta e cinco
ramificações dos primeiros, certas e necessárias como eles.

Rolando regularmente, nada temendo,
Luz do sol, tormenta, frio, calor, sempre suportando, passando, carregando,
A realização e determinação da alma ainda herdando,
O fluido vácuo em volta e à frente ainda entrando e dividindo,
Nenhum estorvo retardando, nenhuma âncora ancorando, em nenhuma rocha se chocando,
Rápida, alegre, contente, consolada, nada perdendo,
De tudo capaz e pronta a qualquer hora a dar exata conta,
A nave divina singra o mar divino.

2

Quem sejas! movimento e reflexo são especialmente para ti,
A nave divina singra o mar divino para ti.

Quem sejas! tu és ele ou ela para quem a terra é sólida e líquida,
Tu és ele ou ela para quem o sol e a lua pendem no céu,
Para ninguém mais que tu são o presente e o passado,
Para ninguém mais que tu é a imortalidade.

Cada homem para si e cada mulher para si, é a palavra do passado e presente, e a verdadeira
palavra da imortalidade;
Ninguém pode adquirir para um outro—ninguém,
Ninguém pode crescer para um outro—ninguém.

A canção é para o cantor, e volta quase tudo para ele,
O ensino é para o professor, e volta quase tudo para ele,
O assassinato é para o assassino, e volta quase tudo para ele,
O roubo é para o ladrão, e volta quase tudo para ele,
O amor é para o amante, e volta quase tudo para ele,
O dom é para o doador, e volta quase tudo para ele—não pode falhar,
O discurso é para o orador, a encenação é para o ator e atriz não para a platéia,
E nenhum homem entende qualquer grandeza ou bondade exceto sua própria ou a indicação
de sua própria.

3

Juro que a terra será certamente completa a ele ou ela que for completo,
A terra permanece recortada e quebrada apenas a ele ou ela que permanecer recortado e
quebrado.

Juro que não há nenhuma grandeza ou poder que não emulem os da terra,
 Não pode haver nenhuma teoria de importância a menos que ela corrobore a teoria da terra,
 Nenhuma política, canção, religião, comportamento, ou outra coisa, é de importância, a
 menos que se compare com a amplitude da terra,
 A menos que encare a exatidão, vitalidade, imparcialidade, retidão da terra.

Juro que começo a ver o amor com mais doces espasmos que aquele que corresponde amor,
 É aquele que se contém, que nunca convida e nunca recusa.

Juro que começo a ver pouco ou nada em palavras audíveis,
 Tudo se funde para a apresentação dos significados não ditos da terra,
 Em direção àquele que canta as canções do corpo e das verdades da terra,
 Em direção àquele que faz os dicionários de palavras que a impressão não pode tocar.

Juro que vejo o que é melhor do que contar o melhor,
 É sempre manter o melhor inaudito.

Quando empreendo contar o melhor descubro que não posso,
 Minha língua é ineficaz em suas bases,
 Minha respiração não será obediente a seus órgãos,
 Eu me torno um homem mudo.

O melhor da terra não pode ser contado de qualquer forma, tudo ou qualquer coisa é melhor,
 Não é o que antecipaste, é mais barato, mais fácil, mais próximo,
 As coisas não são dispensadas dos lugares que tinham antes,
 A terra é tão positiva e direta quanto era antes,
 Fatos, religiões, melhorias, política, negócios, são tão reais quanto antes,
 Mas a alma também é real, ela também é positiva e direta,
 Nenhum raciocínio, nenhuma prova a estabeleceu,
 Crescimento inegável a estabeleceu.

4

Estes para ecoar os tons das almas e as frases das almas,
 (Se eles não ecoassem as frases das almas o que seriam eles então?
 Se eles não tivessem referência a ti em especial o que seriam eles então?)

Juro que nunca doravante terei algo a ver com a fé que conta o melhor,
 Terei a ver só com aquela fé que deixa o melhor inaudito.

Falai, falantes! cantai, cantores!
 Sondai! moldai! empilhai as palavras da terra!
 Trabalhai, era após era, nada será perdido,
 Pode ter que esperar muito, mas entrará certamente em uso,
 Quando os materiais estiverem todos preparados e prontos, os arquitetos aparecerão.

Juro que os arquitetos aparecerão sem falta,
 Vos juro que eles vos entenderão e justificarão,
 O maior entre eles será aquele que vos conhece melhor, e inclui tudo e é fiel a tudo,

Ele e os demais não vos esquecerão, eles perceberão que vós não sois um tiquinho menos que eles,
Vós sereis plenamente glorificados neles.

4.14 Juventude, Dia, Velhice e Noite

Juventude, Dia, Velhice e Noite¹²²

Juventude, vasta, vigorosa, amorosa—juventude cheia de graça, força, fascinação,
Sabes que a Velhice pode vir depois de ti com a mesma graça, força, fascinação?

Dia maduro e esplêndido—dia do imenso sol, ação, ambição, riso,
A Noite sucede com milhões de sóis e sono e revigorante escuridão.

¹²² Este poema é o que restou na edição final de *Folhas de Relva* do poema “Great Are the Myths”, da edição original de 1855 (“Grandes São os Mitos” foi excluído na edição de 1881).

4.15 AVES DE ARRIBAÇÃO

AVES DE ARRIBAÇÃO¹²³

Canção do Universal

1

Vem disse a Musa,
Canta-me uma canção que poeta algum cantou ainda,
Canta-me o universal.

Nesta extensa terra nossa,
Entre a imensurável grosseria e a escória,
Inclusa e salva dentro de seu coração central,
Aninha-se a semente perfeição.

Por toda vida uma parte ou mais ou menos,
Ninguém nascido mas ela está nascida, oculta ou descoberta a semente está esperando.

2

Vê! arguta ciência altaneira,
Como de altos picos examinando o moderno,
Emitindo ordens absolutas sucessivas.

Porém de novo, vê! a alma, acima de toda ciência,
Por ela a história se reuniu como palhas pelo globo,
Por ela as miríades de estrelas todas rolam pelo céu.

Em rotas espirais por longos desvios,
(Como um navio que muda muito a rota no mar,)
Por ela o parcial ao permanente fluindo,
Por ela o real para o ideal tende.

Por ela a evolução mística,
Não somente o correto justificado, o que chamamos mal também justificado.

De suas máscaras, não importando nada,
Do enorme tronco inflamado, do ofício e malícia e lágrimas,
A emergir saúde e júbilo, júbilo universal.

Da massa, do mórbido e do raso,
Da maioria ruim, as variadas fraudes incontáveis de homens e estados,
Elétrico, porém anti-séptico, rachando, inundando tudo,
Só o bem é universal.

¹²³ O título também poderia ser “Pássaros Migratórios”. A expressão também indica pessoas nômades ou que se mudam com frequência.

3

Sobre a vegetação da montanha doença e mágoa,
Um pássaro livre está sempre pairando, pairando,
Alto no ar mais puro, mais feliz.

Da nuvem mais sombria da imperfeição,
Dardeja sempre um raio de luz perfeita,
Um clarão da glória celeste.

Para a discórdia da moda, do costume,
Para a balbúrdia de Babel, as orgias ensurdecedoras,
Abrandando cada calmaria uma tensão é ouvida, recém ouvida,
De alguma praia distante o coro final soando.

Oh os olhos abençoados, os corações felizes,
Que vêem, que conhecem o fio guia tão bem,
Pelo poderoso labirinto.

4

E tu América,
Para a culminação do esquema, seu pensamento e sua realidade,
Para estes (não para ti mesma) chegaste.

Tu também rodeias tudo,
Abraçando carregando recebendo tudo, tu também por amplas e novas trilhas,
Para o ideal tendes.

As fés medidas de outras terras, os esplendores do passado,
Não são pra ti, mas teus próprios esplendores,
Fés deíficas e amplitudes, absorvendo, compreendendo tudo,
Tudo aceitável a tudo.

Tudo, tudo pela imortalidade,
O amor como a luz silenciosamente cobrindo tudo,
A melhoria da natureza abençoando tudo,
As flores, frutos de eras, pomares divinos e certos,
Formas, objetos, crescimentos, humanidades, amadurecendo para imagens espirituais.

Dá-me Oh Deus cantar esse pensamento,
Dá-me, dá àquele ou àquela que amo esta fé inextinguível,
Em Teu conjunto, o que mais for retido não reténs de nós,
Crença em Teu plano incluído no Tempo e Espaço,
Saúde, paz, salvação universal.

É um sonho?
Não mas a falta dele o sonho,
E fracassando o saber e a riqueza da vida um sonho,
E todo o mundo um sonho.

Pioneiros! Oh Pioneiros!

Vinde meus filhos trigueiros,
 Segui bem em ordem, aprontai vossas armas,
 Tendes vossas pistolas? Vossos afiados machados?
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Não podemos tardar aqui,
 Devemos marchar meus amados, agüentar o rojão do perigo,
 Nós as rijas raças jovens, tudo o mais de nós depende,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Oh vós moços, Ocidentais moços,
 Tão impacientes, combatentes, cheios de másculo orgulho e amizade,
 Claro vos vejo Ocidentais moços, perambulando com os primeiros;
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Cessaram as raças mais velhas?
 Elas se curvam e findam a lição, exaustas lá além dos mares?
 Nós pegamos a eterna tarefa, e o fardo e a lição,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Todo o passado deixamos pra trás,
 Emergimos num mundo mais novo e pujante, variado mundo,
 Novo e forte o mundo que apreendemos, mundo de labor e da marcha,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Lançamos desprendimentos regulares,
 Pelas orlas, pelos passos, íngremes montanhas acima,
 Vencendo, retendo, ousando, se arriscando por vias desconhecidas,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Nós cortando selvas primevas,
 Nós represando os rios, furando e perfurando fundo as minas,
 Nós mapeando a ampla superfície, nós levantando o solo virgem,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Somos homens do Colorado,
 Dos picos gigantescos, das grandes sierras e dos altos planaltos,
 Da mina e da ravina, viemos da trilha de caça,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Do Nebraska, do Arkansas,
 Somos raça central interior, do Missouri, intervenada com o sangue continental,
 Apertando as mãos de todos camaradas, todos Sulistas, todos Nortistas,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Oh raça irresistente irrequieta!

Oh raça amada em tudo! Oh meu peito padece de meigo amor por tudo!
 Oh lamento e no entanto exulto, estou enlevado de amor por tudo,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Erguei a magnífica mãe senhora,
 Agitando alto a fina senhora, sobre tudo a estrelada senhora,
 (curvai vossas cabeças todos,)
 Erguei a dentada e bélica senhora, severa, insensível, armada senhora,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Vede meus filhos, resolutos filhos,
 Aos enxames na retaguarda nunca devemos sucumbir ou ceder,
 Eras atrás em milhões espectrais torvos lá atrás de nós impelindo,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Sem parar as compactas tropas,
 Com acessões¹²⁴ sempre à espera, com os locais dos mortos preenchidos logo,
 Por batalha, por derrota, se movendo ainda e nunca parando,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Oh morrer prosseguindo!
 Há alguns de nós pra pender e morrer? a hora chegou?
 Então na marcha nós os mais aptos morremos, logo e certo o hiato é preenchido,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Todos os pulsos do mundo,
 Se alinhando batem por nós, com a batida do movimento Ocidental,
 Mantendo-se único ou junto, movendo firme à frente, tudo por nós,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Os desfiles envolvidos e variados da vida,
 Todas as formas e mostras, todos os operários em seu trabalho,
 Todos os marítimos e os terrestres, todos os senhores com seus escravos,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Todos os amantes calados infelizes,
 Todos os prisioneiros nas prisões, todos os justos e os iníquos,
 Todos os alegres, todos os aflitos, todos os viventes, todos os morrentes,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Eu também com minha alma e corpo,
 Nós, um trio curioso, colhendo, vagando em nosso caminho,
 Pelas praias entre as sombras, com as aparições pressionando,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Vê, o dardejante orbe rolante!
 Vê, os orbes irmãos em volta, todos os sóis e planetas agrupantes,
 Todos os dias deslumbrantes, todas as noites místicas com sonhos,

¹²⁴ .Ato ou efeito de aceder; consentimento.

Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Estes são nossos, estão conosco,
 Todos para o trabalho primordial necessário, enquanto os seguidores em embrião aguardam
 atrás,
 Nós conduzindo o préstito de hoje, nós abrindo a rota de viagem,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Oh vós filhas do Oeste!
 Oh vós filhas jovens e mais velhas! Oh vós mães e vós esposas!
 Nunca deveis estar divididas, em nossas tropas moveis unidas,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Latentes menestréis nos prados!
 (Bardos amortalhados de outras terras, podeis repousar, fizestes vosso trabalho.)
 Breve vos ouço vindo gorjeando, breve subis e vagueais entre nós,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Não para doces delícias,
 Nem almofada e chinelo, nem o tranqüilo e o atento,
 Nem bens seguros e insípidos, não pra nós a dócil posse,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Os vorazes festeiros festejam?
 Os corpulentos adormecidos dormem? eles tem portas trancadas e aferrolhadas?
 Sejam ainda nossos o rígido regime e o cobertor no chão,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

A noite caiu?
 A estrada tem sido assim árdua? paramos desanimados cochilando no caminho?
 Porém vos concedo uma breve hora em vossas trilhas a deter-vos desatentos,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Até que com som de clarim,
 Longe, remoto o toque da aurora—ouvi! quão alto e claro o ouço rolar,
 Rápido! ao comando do exército!—rápido! ocupai vossas posições,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

A Ti

Quem quer que tu sejas, temo que estejas passando em passagens de sonhos,
 Temo que estas supostas realidades se derreterão sob teus pés e mãos,
 Mesmo agora teus traços, júbilos, fala, casa, comércio, modos, problemas, tolices, traje,
 crimes, dissipam-se pra longe de ti,
 Tua verdadeira alma e corpo aparecem à minha frente,
 Eles se destacam dos afazeres, do comércio, lojas, trabalho, fazendas, roupas, da casa,
 comprar, vender, comer, beber, sofrer, morrer.

Quem quer que tu sejas, agora coloco minha mão sobre ti, que tu sejas meu poema,
 Sussurro com meus lábios junto a teu ouvido,
 Tenho amado muitas mulheres e homens, mas não amo ninguém melhor que tu.

Oh tenho sido dilatário e tolo,
 Eu devia ter aberto meu caminho direto a ti há muito tempo,
 Eu não devia ter tagarelado nada exceto a ti, eu não devia ter cantado nada exceto a ti.

Deixarei tudo e virei fazer teus hinos,
 Ninguém te entendeu, mas eu te entendo,
 Ninguém fez justiça a ti, não fizeste justiça a ti mesmo,
 Ninguém te achou senão imperfeito, só eu não acho imperfeição em ti,
 Ninguém deixaria de te subordinar, só eu sou aquele que nunca consentirá em te subordinar,
 Só eu sou aquele que não coloca sobre ti nenhum mestre, dono, melhor, Deus, além do que
 espera intrinsecamente em ti mesmo.

Pintores têm pintado seus grupos fervilhantes e a figura central de tudo,
 Da cabeça da figura central se espalha um nimbo de luz dourada,
 Mas eu pinto miríades de cabeças, mas não pinto nenhuma cabeça sem seu nimbo de luz
 dourada,
 Da minha mão do cérebro de todo homem e mulher ela emana, fulgurantemente fluindo
 infinita.

Oh eu poderia cantar tais grandezas e glórias sobre ti!
 Não tens sabido o que tu és, tens cochilado sobre ti mesmo toda tua vida,
 Tuas pálpebras têm ficado como que fechadas a maior parte do tempo,
 O que tens feito já retorna em zombarias,
 (Tua parcimônia, conhecimento, orações, se não retornam em zombarias, qual é seu retorno?)

As zombarias não são tu,
 Sob elas e dentro delas vejo que tu espreitas,
 Eu te busco onde ninguém mais te buscou,
 Silêncio, a escrivanhinha, a expressão frívola, a noite, a rotina costumeira, se estas coisas te
 ocultam de outros ou de ti mesmo, elas não te ocultam de mim,
 O rosto barbeado, o olho instável, a compleição impura, se estas coisas impedem outros elas
 não me impedem,
 O traje atrevido, a atitude disforme, embriaguez, gula¹²⁵, morte prematura, tudo isso eu
 separo.

Não há nenhum dote em homem ou mulher que não esteja talhado em ti,
 Não há nenhuma virtude, nenhuma beleza em homem ou mulher, que não esteja em ti,
 Nenhuma garra, nenhuma resistência em outros, que não esteja em ti,
 Nenhum prazer aguardando outros, que não haja um prazer igual à tua espera.

Quanto a mim, não dou nada a ninguém que eu não dê igual cuidadosamente a ti,
 Não canto as canções da glória de ninguém, nem de Deus, antes que eu cante as canções da
 tua glória.

¹²⁵ Em inglês, "greed", que também pode ser cobiça, ganância. Pela proximidade com embriaguez, deixei gula.

Quem quer que tu sejas! reivindica o que te pertence sob qualquer risco!
 Estes espetáculos do Leste e Oeste são maçantes comparados a ti,
 Estes prados imensos, estes rios intermináveis, tu és imenso e interminável como eles,
 Estas fúrias, elementos, tempestades, movimentos da Natureza, angústias de dissolução
 aparente, tu és aquele ou aquela que é mestre ou mestra deles,
 Mestre ou mestra por si mesmos da Natureza, elementos, dor, paixão, dissolução.

Os grilhões caem de teus tornozelos, tu encontras uma suficiência infalível,
 Velho ou jovem, macho ou fêmea, rude, baixo, rejeitado pelos demais, o que tu fores se
 proclama,
 Através de nascimento, vida, morte, enterro, os meios são fornecidos, nada é restrito,
 Através de raivas, perdas, ambição, ignorância, enfado, o que tu fores avança com cuidado.

França¹²⁶

O 18º Ano destes Estados

Um grande ano e lugar,
 Um áspero brado nativo discordante soando mais alto, pra tocar o coração da mãe ainda mais
 próximo que qualquer outro.

Caminhei nas praias de meu mar Oriental,
 Ouvi sobre as ondas a pequena voz,
 Vi a divina infante onde ela acordou lamentando tristemente, entre o rugido do canhão, das
 maldições, gritos, estrondo de edifícios desmoronando,
 Não estava tão enjoado do sangue escorrendo nas sarjetas, nem dos cadáveres individuais,
 nem daqueles empilhados, nem daqueles carregados nas carretas¹²⁷,
 Não estava tão desesperado com as matanças da morte—não estava tão chocado com as
 repetidas fuzilarias das armas.

Pálido, silencioso, severo, o que eu poderia dizer a essa represália longamente acumulada?
 Poderia eu desejar a humanidade diferente?
 Poderia eu desejar as pessoas feitas de madeira e pedra?
 Ou que não há justiça no destino ou tempo?

Oh Liberdade! Oh minha parceira!
 Aqui também a flama, a metralha e o machado, de reserva, pra sacá-los se necessário,
 Aqui também, embora longamente reprimidos, nunca podem ser destruídos,
 Aqui também poderiam se erguer por fim assassinos e extáticos,
 Aqui também cobrando as contas completas da vingança.

Daqui assino esta saudação estrangeira,

¹²⁶ Whitman comemora com este poema o ano de 1794 da Revolução Francesa (1789-1799). Como esta Revolução se inspirou na Independência dos Estados Unidos, o ano de 1794 indica o 18º ano da Independência Americana (1776).

¹²⁷ No original, “tumbriils”, isto é, carretas ou carroças que levavam os presos à guilhotina na Rev. Francesa.

E não nego aquele terrível nascimento vermelho e batismo,
 Mas lembro a pequena voz que ouvi se lamentando, e espero com perfeita confiança, não
 importa quanto tempo,
 E doravante triste e convincente mantenho a causa legada, como a todas as terras,
 E envio estas palavras a Paris com meu amor,
 E imagino que os chansonniers¹²⁸ de lá as entenderão,
 Pois imagino que há música latente ainda na França, torrentes dela,
 Oh já ouço o alvoroço dos instrumentos, eles logo afogarão tudo o que os interromperia,
 Oh acho que o vento leste traz uma marcha triunfal e livre,
 Ela chega aqui, ela me enche de jubilosa loucura,
 Correrei para transpô-la em palavras, para justificá-la,
 Ainda cantarei uma canção pra ti ma femme¹²⁹.

Eu Mesmo e Minha

Eu mesmo e minha ginástica sempre,
 Suportar o frio ou calor, fazer boa mira com uma arma, pilotar um barco, adestrar cavalos,
 gerar filhos soberbos,
 Falar pronta e claramente, sentir-se em casa entre pessoas comuns,
 E nos mantermos firmes em posições terríveis em terra e mar.

Não para um bordador,
 (Sempre haverá bastantes bordadores, os recebo também,)
 Mas para a fibra das coisas e para homens e mulheres inerentes.

Não esculpir ornamentos,
 Mas esculpir com golpe livre as cabeças e membros de profusos Deuses supremos, que os
 Estados possam percebê-los andando e falando.

Deixa-me fazer o que eu quero,
 Deixa outros promulgarem as leis, não darei a mínima às leis,
 Deixa outros elogiarem homens eminentes e susterem a paz, eu susterei agitação e conflito,
 Não elogio nenhum homem eminente, reprovoo em sua cara aquele foi considerado mais
 digno.

(Quem és tu? e de que és secretamente culpado toda tua vida?
 Te desviarás toda tua vida? mourejarás e charlarás toda tua vida?
 E quem és tu, tagarelado por hábito, anos, páginas, línguas, reminiscências,
 Inadvertido hoje que tu não saibas falar uma única palavra corretamente?)

Deixa outros terminarem espécimes, eu nunca termino espécimes,
 Eu os inicio por leis inexauríveis como a Natureza faz, recentes e modernos continuamente.

Nada dou como deveres,
 O que outros dão como deveres eu dou como impulsos vivos,

¹²⁸ Em inglês, seria “song writer”, isto é, alguém que escreve as canções e compõe a música para elas, um compositor-letrista.

¹²⁹ “Minha mulher”; em inglês seria “my woman”. Whitman se refere à Democracia, como no poema “Para Ti, Oh Democracia”, do livro “Cálamo”.

(Darei a ação do coração como um dever?)

Deixa outros se desfazerem de perguntas, eu não me desfaço de nada, eu levanto perguntas
irrespondíveis,
Quem são aqueles que vejo e toco, e que tal eles?
Que tal estes meus semelhantes que me puxam assim tão perto com ternas direções e
dissimulações?

Eu clamo ao mundo para desconfiar dos relatos de meus amigos, mas escutar a meus
inimigos, como eu mesmo faço,
Te incumbo para sempre rejeita aqueles que me exporiam, pois não posso me expor,
Incumbo que não haja nenhuma teoria ou escola fundada em mim,
Te incumbo de deixar tudo livre, como eu deixei tudo livre.

Depois de mim, perspectiva!
Oh vejo que a vida não é curta, mas incomensuravelmente longa,
Doravante trilho o mundo casto, moderado, um madrugador, um lavrador regular,
Cada hora o sêmen de séculos e ainda de séculos.

Devo persistir nestas lições contínuas do ar, água, terra,
Percebo que não tenho tempo a perder.

Ano de Meteoros

(1859-60)

Ano de meteoros! ano taciturno!
Eu juntaria em palavras retrospectivas algumas de tuas ações e sinais,
Eu cantaria tua disputa para a 19º Presidentiad¹³⁰,
Eu cantaria como um velho, alto, de cabelo branco, subiu o patíbulo na Virgínia¹³¹,
(Eu estava perto, em silêncio fiquei com os dentes cerrados, assisti,
Eu fiquei muito perto de ti meu velho quando sereno e indiferente, mas trêmulo com a idade e
com teus ferimentos não curados subiste ao patíbulo;)
Eu cantaria em minha copiosa canção teus dados demográficos dos Estados,
As tabelas de população e produtos, eu cantaria teus navios e suas cargas,
Os soberbos navios pretos de Manhattan chegando, alguns repletos de imigrantes, alguns do
istmo com cargas de ouro,
Canções disso eu cantaria, a tudo aquilo que pra cá vem boas-vindas eu daria,
E tu eu cantaria, justo rapaz! boas-vindas a ti de mim, jovem príncipe da Inglaterra!¹³²
(Lembras tu engrossando as multidões de Manhattan quando passaste com teu cortejo de
nobres?
Ali nas multidões estive e te escolhi com apego;)
Nem me esqueço de cantar a maravilha, o navio quando ele deslizou em minha baía,

¹³⁰ Disputa eleitoral de 1860, entre Lincoln e Douglas.

¹³¹ O abolicionista John Brown, enforcado em 1859, por alta traição (ou seja, tentativa de iniciar uma rebelião de escravos).

¹³² O Príncipe de Gales, Edward, que visitou Nova York em 1860.

Bem-feito e imponente o Grande Oriental¹³³ deslizou na minha baía, ele tinha 600 pés de comprimento,
 Seu rápido movimento rodeado de miríades de pequenas embarcações não esqueço eu de cantar;
 Nem o cometa que apareceu do norte sem ser anunciado cintilando no céu,
 Nem a estranha e enorme procissão de meteoros deslumbrante e clara cadente sobre nossas cabeças,
 (Um momento, um longo momento ela flutuou suas bolas de luz espectral sobre nossas cabeças,
 Então partiu, lançada na noite, e se foi;)
 Tais coisas, e intermitentes como elas, eu canto—com fulgores delas fulguraria e enfeitaria eu estes cantos,
 Teus cantos, Oh ano todo matizado de mal e bem—ano de presságios!
 Ano de cometas e meteoros transitórios e estranhos—vê! mesmo aqui um igualmente transitório e estranho!
 Conforme esvoaço por ti apressadamente, para logo cair e partir, o que é este canto,
 O que sou eu mesmo a não ser um de teus meteoros?

Com Antecedentes

1

Com antecedentes,
 Com meus pais e mães e as acumulações de eras passadas,
 Com tudo que, não tivesse assim sido, eu não estaria agora aqui, como estou,
 Com Egito, Índia, Fenícia, Grécia e Roma,
 Com o Celta, o Escandinavo, o Albião¹³⁴ e o Saxão,
 Com antigas ousadias marítimas, leis, artesanato, guerras e jornadas,
 Com o poeta, o escaldo¹³⁵, a saga, o mito e o oráculo,
 Com a venda de escravos, com entusiastas, com o trovador, o cruzado e o monge,
 Com aqueles velhos continentes de onde viemos a este novo continente,
 Com os reinos e reis desvanecentes por lá,
 Com as religiões e padres desvanecentes,
 Com as pequenas praias as quais relembramos desde nossas próprias grandes e presentes praias,
 Com anos incontáveis se puxando à frente e chegamos a estes anos,
 Eu e tu chegamos—a América chegou e fazendo este ano,
 Este ano! se enviando à frente anos incontáveis por vir.

¹³³ Famoso navio a vapor, o maior da época (lançado em 1858), cujo nome em inglês é *Great Eastern*, devido ao nome da empresa que o adquiriu e terminou sua construção, a *Great Eastern Ship Company*. Especificamente, o navio tinha o comprimento de 692 pés, isto é, 211 metros. Alguns dados curiosos sobre este navio: era feito de ferro, com duplo fundo (duplo casco), o que evitou um naufrágio quando bateu numa rocha perto de Long Island em 1862, que abriu um rombo em seu casco externo (o mesmo tipo de acidente que fez o *Titanic* afundar; naturalmente, este bateu num iceberg); e quando ele foi vendido como ferro velho, em 1889-90, o Liverpool F.C., que estava procurando um mastro para sua bandeira, comprou o mastaréu da gávea para colocar em seu estádio, o Anfield, construído em 1884, local em que se encontra até hoje.

¹³⁴ Isto é, habitante de Albion, antigo nome da Inglaterra ou Reino Unido.

¹³⁵ Bardo escandinavo.

2

Oh mas não são os anos—sou eu, és Tu,
 Tocamos todas as leis e computamos todos antecedentes,
 Somos o escaldo, o oráculo, o monge e o cavaleiro, facilmente os incluímos e mais,
 Nos postamos em meio ao tempo sem princípio nem fim, nos postamos entre mal e bem,
 Tudo balança ao nosso redor, há tanta escuridão quanto luz,
 O próprio sol balança a si e a seu sistema de planetas ao nosso redor,
 Seu sol, e seu de novo, tudo balança ao nosso redor.

Quanto a mim, (dilacerado, tempestuoso, entre estes dias veementes,)
 Tenho a idéia de tudo, e sou tudo e creio em tudo,
 Creio que o materialismo seja verdadeiro e o espiritualismo seja verdadeiro, não rejeito parte
 alguma.

(Esqueci de alguma parte? alguma coisa no passado?
 Vem a mim quem for e o que for, até que eu lhes dê reconhecimento.)

Respeito a Assíria, China, Teutônia¹³⁶ e os Hebreus,
 Adoto cada teoria, mito, deus e semi-deus,
 Vejo que os velhos relatos, bíblias, genealogias, são verdadeiros, sem exceção,
 Afirmo que todos dias passados foram o que deviam ter sido,
 E que não podiam de forma alguma ter sido melhor do que foram,
 E que o dia de hoje é o que deve ser, e que a América é,
 E que o dia de hoje e a América não poderiam de forma alguma ser melhor do que são.

3

Em nome destes Estados e em teu e meu nome, o Passado,
 E em nome destes Estados e em teu e meu nome, o tempo Presente.

Sei que o passado foi grande e o futuro será grande,
 E sei que ambos curiosamente conjugam no tempo presente,
 (Pelo bem daquele que típico, pelo bem do homem comum médio, teu bem se tu fores ele,)
 E que onde estou ou tu estás no dia presente, há o centro de todos os dias, todas as raças,
 E há o significado a nós de tudo que sempre veio de raças e dias, ou sempre virá.

¹³⁶ Alemanha; nome derivado dos Teutões, povos germânicos que viveram no centro e norte da Europa.

4.16 Um Desfile na Broadway

Um Desfile na Broadway

1

Sobre o mar Ocidental vindo pra cá do Niphon¹³⁷,
 Corteses, os morenos emissários de duplo gládio,
 Recostando-se em suas caleças abertas, sem chapéu, impassíveis,
 Andam hoje por Manhattan.

Libertad!¹³⁸ Eu não sei se outros vêem o que vejo,
 No préstito junto com o nobres do Niphon, os mensageiros,
 Cobrindo a retaguarda, pairando acima, em volta, ou marchando na tropa,
 Mas te cantarei uma canção do que vejo Libertad.

Quando a multitudinária¹³⁹ Manhattan descerrada desce para suas calçadas,
 Quando as armas de estrondeante estampido me despertam com o orgulhoso rugido que amo,
 Quando as armas de bocas arredondadas cospem suas salvas, em meio à fumaça e cheiro que amo,
 Quando as armas de fogo reluzentes me alertaram totalmente, e nuvens do céu dosselam
 minha cidade com uma tênue névoa delicada,
 Quando os incontáveis troncos retos magníficos, as florestas no cais, se adensam de cores,
 Quando todo navio ricamente trajado carrega sua bandeira no topo,
 Quando pendões avançam e grinaldas de rua pendem das janelas,
 Quando a Broadway está inteiramente sucumbida a pedestres e espectadores, quando a massa
 é a mais densa,
 Quando as fachadas das casas estão fervilhando de pessoas, quando olhos fitam fixos dezenas
 de milhares de cada vez,
 Quando os convidados das ilhas avançam, quando o desfile progride visível,
 Quando a convocação é feita, quando a resposta que esperou milhares de anos responde,
 Eu também me erguendo, respondendo, desço à calçada, fundo-me com a multidão, e fito com
 eles.

2

Manhattan de rosto soberbo!
 Camaradas Americanos¹⁴⁰! a nós, então por fim o Oriente vem.

A nós, minha cidade,
 Onde nossas altíssimas belezas de ferro e mármore se alinham em lados opostos, para andar
 nesse entre-espaço,
 Hoje nossos Antípodas vêm.

¹³⁷ A grafia correta em inglês é “Nippon”, o nome japonês para o país; em português temos Nipão e Japão.

¹³⁸ Espanhol para liberdade; Whitman usava esta palavra para personificar a liberdade.

¹³⁹ Literalmente, teria que ser: “Manhattan de um milhão de pés”.

¹⁴⁰ Está “Americanos” no original.

A Originadora vem,
 O ninho de idiomas, o testador¹⁴¹ de poemas, a raça do tempo antigo,
 Corada de sangue, pensativa, extasiada com devaneios, quente de paixão,
 Ardente de perfume, com amplas e fluidas vestimentas,
 Com rosto bronzeado, com alma intensa e olhos cintilantes,
 A raça de Brahma vem.

Vê meu cantabile!¹⁴² estes e mais estão reluzindo a nós do préstito,
 Conforme ele se move mudando, um caleidoscópico divino se move mudando à nossa frente.

Pois não só os emissários nem o bronzeado japonês de sua ilha,
 Flexível e silente o Hindu aparece, o próprio continente Asiático aparece, o passado, os
 mortos,
 A sombria manhã-noite de maravilha e fábula inescrutável,
 Os mistérios encobertos, as antigas e desconhecidas abelhas domésticas,
 O norte, o sufocante sul, a Assíria oriental, os Hebreus, os antigos dos antigos,
 Vastas cidades devastadas, o planante presente, todos esses e mais estão no desfile-préstito.

A geografia, o mundo, está nele,
 O Grande Mar, uma quantidade de ilhas, Polinésia, o litoral além,
 O litoral que doravante estás encarando—tu Libertad! de tuas douradas praias Ocidentais,
 Os países lá com suas populações, os milhões en-masse¹⁴³ estão curiosamente aqui,
 Os mercados infestados, os templos com ídolos alinhados nas laterais ou ao fundo; bonzo,
 brâmane e lama¹⁴⁴,
 Mandarin, fazendeiro, comerciante, mecânico e pescador,
 A cantora e a dançarina, as pessoas extáticas, os imperadores isolados,
 O próprio Confúcio, os grandes poetas e heróis, os guerreiros, as castas, todos,
 Se arrematando, se aglomerando de todas as direções, das montanhas de Altay,
 Do Tibet, dos quatro sinuosos e grandifluentes¹⁴⁵ rios da China,
 Das penínsulas sulinas e das ilhas semi-continentais, da Malásia,
 Esses e tudo que pertence a eles palpáveis exibem-se a mim, e são agarrados por mim,
 E sou agarrado por eles e simpaticamente segurado por eles,
 Até como aqui eu os cante a todos, Libertad! por eles e por ti.

Pois eu também levantando minha voz me uno à tropa deste préstito,
 Sou o cantor, canto alto por sobre o préstito,
 Canto o mundo em meu mar Ocidental,

¹⁴¹ A pessoa que lega algo a alguém, deixa como herança (“bequeather”).

¹⁴² Do italiano, cantabile, que é um adjetivo, utilizado aqui como substantivo, para significar uma canção melodiosa.

¹⁴³ Do francês, “em massa”.

¹⁴⁴ Na ordem apresentada no poema: bonzo é um monge budista do Japão; brâmane, entre os hindus, é um membro da mais alta das quatro castas, votado ao sacerdócio e ao estudo e ensino dos Vedas; lama: sacerdote budista entre os tibetanos (WW grafa “llama”, em vez de “lama”, erro cometido também em “Canção de Mim Mesmo”, na seção 43).

¹⁴⁵ “Far-flowing”, à semelhança de grandiloquente em português, criei o “grandifluente”.

Canto as copiosas ilhas além, abundantes como estrelas no céu,
 Canto o novo império mais grandioso que qualquer outro antes, isso vem a mim como numa
 visão,
 Canto a América a mestra, canto uma supremacia maior,
 Canto mil cidades florescentes projetadas ainda no tempo nesses grupos de ilhas marinhas,
 Meus veleiros e vapores entremeando os arquipélagos,
 Minha bandeira nacional tremulando ao vento,
 Abertura de comércio, o sono de eras tendo feito seu trabalho, raças renascidas, reanimadas,
 Vidas, trabalhos retomados—não conheço o objeto—mas o antigo, o Asiático renovado como
 deve ser,
 Começando neste dia rodeado pelo mundo.

3

E tu Libertad do mundo!
 Tu te sentarás no meio bem-aprumada milhares e milhares de anos,
 Como hoje de um lado os nobres da Ásia vêm a ti,
 Como amanhã de outro lado a rainha da Inglaterra envia seu filho¹⁴⁶ primogênito a ti.

O sinal está se invertendo, o orbe está circundado,
 O anel está circulado, a viagem está finda,
 A tampa da caixa está apenas perceptivelmente aberta, não obstante o perfume jorra
 copiosamente da caixa inteira.

Jovem Libertad! com a venerável Ásia, a mãe de todos,
 Seja respeitosa com ela agora e sempre quente Libertad, pois és tudo,
 Inclina teu pescoço orgulhoso à longínqua mãe agora enviando mensagens cruzando os
 arquipélagos pra ti,
 Inclina teu pescoço orgulhoso esta vez, jovem Libertad.

Estavam os filhos errando a oeste por tanto tempo? tão ampla a caminhada?
 Estavam as sombrias eras precedentes emergindo a oeste do Paraíso por tanto tempo?
 Estavam os séculos firmemente se movendo por aí, todo esse tempo desconhecido, por ti, por
 razões?

Eles estão justificados, estão realizados, eles serão agora virados para o outro lado também,
 pra viajar em tua direção dali,
 Eles também marcharão agora obedientemente para o leste por ti Libertad.

¹⁴⁶ Visita referida no poema “Ano de Meteoros”.

4.17 DETRITO MARINHO

4.17.1 Do Berço Infundamente Embalando

Do Berço Infundamente Embalando

Do berço infundamente embalando,
 Da garganta do tordo, o vaivém musical,
 Da meia-noite do Nono mês,
 Sobre as areias estéreis e os campos além, onde a criança deixando sua cama vagou sozinha,
 cabeça nua, descalça,
 Descendo da uma auréola chuvosa,
 Subindo do jogo místico das sombras trançando e torcendo como se estivessem vivas,
 Dos canteiros de sarças e amoras-pretas,
 Das memórias do pássaro que recitou para mim,
 De tuas memórias triste irmão, das ascensões e quedas espasmódicas que ouvi,
 De sob essa meia-lua amarela tardi-elevada e inchada como se de lágrimas,
 Daquelas notas iniciais de anseio e amor lá na neblina,
 Das milhares de reações de meu coração incessante,
 Da miríade de palavras daí-despertadas,
 Da palavra mais forte e deliciosa que qualquer outra,
 Como as que agora começam a cena revisitando,
 Como um bando, gorjeando, subindo, ou sobre a cabeça passando,
 Nascido aqui, antes que tudo me escape, na pressa,
 Um homem, porém por estas lágrimas um garotinho de novo,
 Me atirando na areia, confrontando as ondas,
 Eu, cantador de dores e gozos, unidor deste mundo e do outro,
 Aceitando sugestões, mas velozmente saltando além delas,
 Uma reminiscência canto.

Uma vez Paumanok,
 Quando o aroma do lilás estava no ar e a relva de maio brotava,
 Praia acima em algumas sarças,
 Dois hóspedes emplumados do Alabama, dois juntos,
 E seu ninho, e quatro verdes claros ovos com pintas castanhas,
 E todo dia o macho de um lado pro outro pronto,
 E todo dia a fêmea agachada em seu ninho, silente, com olhos brilhantes,
 E todo dia eu, curioso menino, nunca muito perto, nunca os perturbando,
 Prudentemente perscrutando, absorvendo, traduzindo.

Brilha! brilha! brilha!
Emite teu calor, grande sol!
Enquanto nos aquecemos, nós dois juntos.

Dois juntos!
Ventos sopram pro sul, ou ventos sopram pro norte,
Branco vem o dia, ou negra vem a noite,
Lar, ou rios e montanhas de casa,

*Cantando todo o tempo, não cuidando o tempo,
Enquanto nós dois ficamos juntos.*

Até que de repente,
Talvez morta, sem seu par saber,
Uma manhã a fêmea não se agachou no ninho,
Nem retornou aquela tarde, nem na próxima,
Nem nunca mais apareceu.

E desde então todo o verão no som do mar,
E à noite sob a lua cheia em calmaria,
Sobre o rouco ondular do mar,
Ou adejando de sarça em sarça de dia,
Vi, ouvi em intervalos o que restou, o macho,
O hóspede solitário do Alabama.

*Soprai! soprai! soprai!
Bufai virações pela praia de Paumanok;
Espero e espero até que soprais meu par para mim.*

Sim, quando as estrelas cintilaram,
Toda a noite na ponta de uma estaca musgo-enfeitada,
Baixo quase em meio aos tapas das ondas,
Sentou o cantor solitário maravilhoso provocando pranto.

Ele apelou a seu par,
Emitiu mensagens que só eu entre os homens conheço.

Sim meu irmão, sei,
Os demais talvez não, mas eu guardei toda nota como um tesouro,
Pois mais de uma vez deslizando na penumbra para a praia,
Silente, evitando o luar, mesclando-me com as sombras,
Recordando agora as obscuras formas, os ecos, os sons e as cenas de acordo com seus tipos,
Os braços brancos na arrebentação incansavelmente agitando,
Eu, descalço, uma criança, o vento soprando meu cabelo,
Escutei longamente.

Escutei para guardar, para cantar, agora traduzindo as notas,
Seguindo-te meu irmão.

*Conforta! conforta! conforta!
Próxima à onda conforta a onda de trás,
E de novo uma outra atrás abraçando e envolvendo, todas próximas,
Mas meu amor não me conforta, não a mim.*

*Baixa pende a lua, subiu tarde,
Está se atrasando – Ah acho que está prenhe de amor, de amor.*

*Ah furiosamente o mar avança sobre a terra,
Com amor, com amor.*

*Ah noite! não vejo meu amor se agitando nas vagas?
O que é aquela coisinha preta que vejo lá na brancura?*

*Alto! alto! alto!
Alto te exorto, meu amor!
Alto e claro lanço minha voz sobre as ondas,
Certamente deves saber quem está aqui, está aqui,
Deves saber quem sou, meu amor.*

*Lua rasante!
Que mancha fosca é essa em teu amarelo castanho?
Ah é a forma, a forma do meu par!
Ah lua não a afasta mais de mim.*

*Terra! terra! terra!
Para qualquer lado que viro, ah acho que podias me dar meu par de novo se pudesses,
Pois estou quase certo que a vejo na penumbra em qualquer direção que olho.*

*Ah ascendentes estrelas!
Talvez a que quero tanto ascenderá, ascenderá com algumas de vós.*

*Ah garganta! ah trêmula garganta!
Soa mais clara pela atmosfera!
Perfura as selvas, a terra,
Em algum lugar captando deve estar aquela que quero.*

*Agitei cânticos!
Solitários aqui, os cânticos noturnos!
Cânticos de amor desolado! cânticos de morte!
Cânticos sob essa lenta, pálida, lua minguante!
Ah sob essa lua onde ela pende quase dentro do mar!
Ah cânticos imprudentes e desesperados.*

*Mas suave! descendei!
Suave! deixai-me somente murmurar,
E aguarda um momento rouqui-ruidoso mar,
Pois algures creio que ouvi meu par me respondendo,
Tão tênue, devo serenar, serenar para escutar,
Mas não de todo sereno, senão ela talvez não venha imediatamente para mim.*

*Para cá meu amor!
Aqui estou! aqui!
Com esta longa nota me anuncio a ti,
Este amável chamado é para ti meu amor, para ti.*

*Não cai em engodos alhures,
Esse é o assóvio do vento, não é minha voz,
Esse é o agitar, o agitar da espuma,
Essas são sombras de folhas.*

*Ah trevas! Ah em vão!
Ah estou muito doente e dolorido.*

*Ah halo castanho no céu perto da lua, descaindo sobre o mar!
Ah turbulento reflexo no mar!
Ah garganta! Ah palpitante coração!
E eu cantando inutilmente, inutilmente toda a noite.*

*Ah passado! Ah vida feliz! Ah canções de júbilo!
No ar, nas árvores, nos campos,
Amada! amada! amada! amada! amada!
Mas meu par não mais, não mais comigo!
Nós dois juntos não mais.*

A ária declina,
Tudo o mais prossegue, as estrelas brilham,
Os ventos sopram, as notas do pássaro contínuas ecoam,
Com gemidos zangados a velha mãe furiosa geme incessantemente,
Nas areias da praia de Paumanok cinzenta e farfalhando,
A pálida meia-lua ampliada, arqueando, descaindo, a face do mar quase tocando,
O menino extático, com os pés descalços as ondas, com seu cabelo a atmosfera afagando,
O amor no coração longamente contido, agora solto, agora afinal tumultuosamente
explodindo,
O sentido da ária, os ouvidos, a alma, velozmente assentando,
As estranhas lágrimas escorrendo pelas bochechas,
O colóquio ali, o trio, cada um emitindo,
O murmúrio, a velha mãe selvagem chorando incessantemente,
Às perguntas da alma do menino sombriamente se ajustando, algum segredo afogado
silvando,
Ao bardo iniciante.

Demônio ou pássaro! (disse a alma do menino),
É mesmo para teu par que cantas? ou é realmente para mim?
Pois eu, que era uma criança, com o uso de minha língua adormecido, agora te ouvi,
Agora num instante já sei para que sirvo, acordo,
E já mil cantores, mil canções, mais claras, altas e contritas que a tua,
Mil ecos chilreados iniciaram vida dentro de mim, para jamais morrer.

Ah cantor solitário, cantando sozinho, me projetando,
Ah solitário eu escutando, nunca mais cessarei de perpetuar-te,
Nunca mais escaparei, nunca mais as reverberações,
Nunca mais os choros de amor insatisfeitos estejam ausentes de mim,
Nunca de novo me deixa ser a criança pacífica que eu era antes daquilo lá na noite,
Junto ao mar sob a pálida e arqueante lua,
O mensageiro lá despertado, o fogo, o doce inferno dentro,
A carência desconhecida, meu destino.

Ah me dá o sinal! (ele se oculta na noite por aqui,)
Ah se devo ter tanto, deixa-me ter mais!

Uma palavra então, (pois a conquistarei,
 A palavra final, superior a todas,
 Sutil, erguida—o que é?—ouço;
 A estais sussurrando, e estivestes todo o tempo, ondas do mar?
 Ela vem de vossas orlas líquidas e areias úmidas?

Em respondendo, o mar,
 Sem se atrasar, sem se apressar,
 Sussurrou-me noite adentro, e bem francamente antes da aurora,
 Balbuciou-me a baixa e deliciosa palavra morte,
 E de novo morte, morte, morte, morte,
 Silvando melodioso, nem como o pássaro nem como meu desperto coração de criança,
 Mas se acercando em segredo roçando meus pés,
 Subindo daí firmemente aos meus ouvidos e suavemente me banhando todo,
 Morte, morte, morte, morte, morte.

Que não esqueço,
 Mas mesclo a canção de meu sombrio demônio e irmão,
 Que ele cantou para mim ao luar na praia cinza de Paumanok,
 Com as mil canções respondentes ao acaso,
 Minhas próprias canções acordadas naquela hora,
 E com elas a chave, a palavra saída das ondas,
 A palavra da mais doce canção e de todas as canções,
 Aquela forte e deliciosa palavra que, arrastando-se aos meus pés,
 (Ou como uma megera embalando o berço, enrolada em vestes suaves, dobrando-se de lado,
 O mar murmurou-me.

4.17.2 Ao Vazar com o Oceano da Vida

Ao Vazar com o Oceano da Vida

1

Ao vazar com o oceano da vida,
 Ao passar nas praias que conheço,
 Ao andar onde as ondulações continuamente te banham Paumanok,
 Onde elas rugem roucas e sibilantes,
 Onde a velha mãe feroz infindavelmente chora por seus naufragos,
 Eu cismando tarde no dia de outono, fitando ao sul,
 Seguro por este eu elétrico fora do orgulho do qual emito poemas,
 Fui agarrado pelo espírito que trilha nas linhas no chão,
 A orla, o sedimento que representa toda a água e toda a terra do globo.

Fascinados, meus olhos retornando do sul, baixaram, para seguir essas delgadas paveias¹⁴⁷,
 Farelo, palha, estilhas de madeira, ervas daninhas e o glúten marinho,

¹⁴⁷ Também chamadas de gavelas, são feixes, molhos, braçadas de vegetação.

Espuma, partículas de pedras brilhantes, folhas de alface-do-mar¹⁴⁸, deixadas pela maré,
 Milhas caminhando, o som de ondas arrebatando do outro lado de mim,
 Paumanok sem demora ao pensar o antigo pensamento das aparências,
 Estas apresentaste a mim tu ilha pisciforme,
 Ao passar nas praias que conheço,
 Ao andar com esse eu elétrico buscando tipos.

2

Ao ir para as praias que não conheço,
 Ao ouvir a nênia, as vozes de homens e mulheres naufragados,
 Ao inalar as brisas impalpáveis que vêm sobre mim,
 Quando o oceano tão misterioso rola na minha direção cada vez mais próximo,
 Eu também significo apenas no máximo um pequeno detrito arrastado,
 Alguns bancos de areia e folhas mortas para juntar,
 Juntar e me fundir como parte dos bancos de areia e detrito.

Oh baldado, batido, dobrado à própria terra,
 Oprimido comigo mesmo porque ousei abrir minha boca,
 Consciente agora que entre toda essa tagarelice cujos ecos repercutem em mim eu não tive
 uma única vez a menor idéia de quem ou o que sou,
 Mas que diante de todos meus poemas arrogantes o Eu real se posta ainda intocado, inarrado,
 totalmente inalcançado,
 Retirado pra longe, zombando de mim com falsos sinais congratulatórios e mesuras,
 Com estrépitos de risada irônica distante a toda palavra que tenho escrito,
 Apontando em silêncio estas canções e depois a areia abaixo.

Percebo que não entendi realmente nada, nem um único objeto e que nenhum homem jamais
 consegue,
 A natureza aqui à vista do mar tirando vantagem de mim para me dardejar e me picar,
 Porque eu ousei abrir minha boca para cantar seja o que for.

3

Vós ambos oceanos, me aproximo de vós,
 Murmuramos reprovadamente iguais areias rolantes e detrito, sem saber porque,
 Estes pequenos farrapos representando de fato a vós, a mim e a tudo.

Tu friável praia com trilhas de entulhos,
 Tu ilha pisciforme, pego o que está no chão,
 O que é teu é meu, meu pai¹⁴⁹.

Eu também Paumanok,
 Eu também borbulhei, flutuei a imensurável massa flutuante, e fui lançado em tuas praias,
 Eu também sou só uma trilha de detritos e entulhos,
 Eu também deixo pequenos destroços sobre ti, tu ilha pisciforme.

Eu me lanço em teu peito meu pai,

¹⁴⁸ Um tipo de alga marinha verde.

¹⁴⁹ A ilha, a terra, é referida como o pai, e o oceano, o líquido, como a mãe.

Eu me agarro a ti para que não possas me soltar,
Eu te seguro tão firme até que me respondas algo.

Beija-me meu pai,
Toque-me com teus lábios como eu toco aqueles que amo,
Insufla em mim enquanto te abraço apertado o segredo do murmúrio que invejo.

4

Vaza, oceano da vida, (a maré voltará,
Não cessa teu lamento tu velha mãe feroz,
Infundavelmente chora por teus naufragos, mas não teme, não me nega,
Não farfalha tão rouca e raivosa contra meus pés quando te toco ou recolho de ti.

Eu tenciono ternamente por ti e tudo,
Eu recolho para mim e este fantasma que olha aonde nos dirigimos e segue a mim e aos
meus¹⁵⁰.

Eu e os meus, paveias soltas, pequenos cadáveres,
Escuma, branco níveo e bolhas,
(Vê, de meus lábios mortos a lama exsuda por fim,
Vê, as cores prismáticas faiscando e rolando,)
Tufos de palha, bancos de areia, fragmentos,
Boiados até aqui de muitas disposições, uma contradizendo a outra,
Da tempestade, da longa calmaria, da escuridão, da vaga,
Cismando, ponderando, um hausto, uma lágrima salgada, um salpico de líquido ou solo,
Subindo o mesmo as insondáveis contrações fermentadas e lançadas,
Uma flor flácida ou duas, laceradas, o mesmo sobre ondas flutuando, levadas ao acaso,
O mesmo para nós essa nênia soluçante da Natureza,
O mesmo de onde vimos esse clangor dos clarins das nuvens,
Nós, caprichosos, trazidos para cá não sabemos de onde, esparramados diante de ti,
Tu aí em cima caminhando ou sentado,
Quem quer que sejas, nós também jazemos em detritos a teus pés.

Lágrimas

Lágrimas! lágrimas! lágrimas!
Na noite, em solidão, lágrimas,
Na alva praia pingando, pingando, absorvida pela areia,
Lágrimas, nem uma estrela brilhando, tudo sombrio e solitário,
Úmidas lágrimas dos olhos de uma cabeça encoberta;
Oh quem é aquele fantasma? aquela forma na sombra, com lágrimas?
Que massa disforme é aquela, curvada, agachada lá na areia?
Lágrimas vertentes, soluçantes lágrimas, angústias, engasgadas com brados selvagens;
Oh tormenta, encarnada, se erguendo, disparando em passos rápidos pela praia!
Oh tormenta noturna selvagem e sinistra, com vento—Oh vazante e desesperado!
Oh sombra tão sóbria e digna de dia, com sereno semblante e regulado ritmo,

¹⁵⁰ “Meus” se refere a “meus parentes, minha família”.

Mas ausente à noite quando voas, ninguém olhando—Oh aí então o alastrado oceano,
De lágrimas! lágrimas! lágrimas!

Ao Alcatraz¹⁵¹

Tu que dormiste toda a noite na tormenta,
Acordando renovado em espantosas penas,
(Rompeste a brava tormenta? e acima subiste,
E dormiste no céu, teu servo que criou-te,)
Agora um ponto azul, no céu longe planando,
Quanto à luz que emerge aqui no convés, te assisto,
(Eu mesmo um grão, um ponto na vagante vastidão do mundo.)

Longe, distante no mar,
Depois que os ferozes detritos da noite juncaram a praia com destroços,
Com o dia re-aparecendo agora tão feliz e sereno,
A rósea e elástica aurora, o sol flamejante,
A límpida expansão do ar cerúleo,
Tu também re-apareceste.

Tu nascido pra contrapor o vendaval, (tu és só asas,)
Pra enfrentar céu e terra e mar e furacão,
Tu navio do ar que nunca enrolas tuas velas,
Dias, até mesmo semanas sem cansaço e adiante, por espaços, reinos girando,
No ocaso que olhas o Senegal, de manhã a América,
Que brincas em meio ao clarão do raio e nuvem tempestuosa,
Neles, em tuas experiências, tiveste tu minha alma,
Que júbilos! que júbilos foram teus!

A Bordo ao Leme de um Navio

A bordo ao leme de um navio,
Um jovem timoneiro pilotando com cuidado.

Pela névoa num litoral tocando tristemente,
Um sino oceânico—Oh um sino de advertência, balançado pelas ondas.

Oh dás bom aviso de fato, tu sino pelos recifes tocando,
Tocando, tocando, pra advertir o navio de seu local de desastre.

Pois alerta Oh timoneiro, notas a alta admonição,
A proa vira, o navio carregado girando acelera sob suas velas cinzentas,
O belo e nobre navio com toda sua preciosa riqueza acelera alegremente e a salvo.

Mas Oh o navio, o navio imortal! Oh navio a bordo do navio!

¹⁵¹ É uma ave pelicaniforme (chamada em português também por fragata, João-Grande ou tesourão) das costas atlântica e pacífica da América tropical e subtropical. Este poema foi inspirado pelo *O Pássaro*, de Jules Michelet.

Navio do corpo, navio da alma, navegando, navegando, navegando.

Na Praia à Noite

Na praia à noite,
Está uma criança com seu pai,
Observando o leste, o céu outonal.

Escuridão acima,
Enquanto nuvens vorazes, nuvens funerais, em negras massas se espalhando,
Baixam soturnas e rápidas em diagonal céu abaixo,
Em meio a um claro cinturão transparente de éter ainda remanescente no leste,
Ascende grande e calmo o astro-mor Júpiter,
E bem pertinho, só um pouquinho acima,
Nadam as delicadas irmãs as Plêiades¹⁵².

Da praia a criança que segura a mão de seu pai,
Essas nuvens funerais que baixam vitoriosas a devorar tudo em breve,
Observando, silenciosamente chora.

Não chores, criança,
Não chores, minha amada,
Com estes beijos deixe-me remover tuas lágrimas,
As nuvens vorazes não serão mais vitoriosas,
Elas não mais possuirão o céu, elas devoram as estrelas apenas em aparência,
Júpiter emergirá, seja paciente, observa de novo uma outra noite, as Plêiades emergirão,
Elas são imortais, todas essas estrelas prateadas e douradas brilharão de novo,
As grandes estrelas e as pequenas brilharão de novo, elas resistem,
Os vastos sóis imortais e as melancólicas luas super-resistentes brilharão novamente.

Então criança querida lamentas só por Júpiter?
Consideras somente o enterro das estrelas?

Algo há,
(Com meus lábios te acalmando, acrescentando sussurro,
Dou-te a primeira sugestão, o problema e a dissimulação,
Algo há mais imortal até que as estrelas,
(Muitos os enterros, muitos os dias e noites, falecendo,
Algo que resistirá mais até que Júpiter lustroso,
Mais que sol ou qualquer satélite giratório,
Ou as radiantes irmãs as Plêiades.

O Mundo Sob o Mar

O mundo sob o mar,
Florestas no fundo do mar, os galhos e folhas,

¹⁵² Grupo de sete estrelas (sete-estrela) que faz parte da constelação de Touro. Na mitologia grega, elas são as sete filhas de Atlas que foram metamorfoseadas em estrelas.

Alface-do-mar, vastos líquens, flores e sementes estranhas, a espessa alga marinha, aberturas
 e a turfa rosa,
 Cores diferentes, cinza claro e verde, púrpura, branco e ouro, o jogo de luz na água,
 Mudos nadadores lá entre as pedras, coral, glúten, relva, juncos e o alimento dos nadadores,
 Lerdas existências pascendo suspensas, ou vagarosamente rastejando rente ao fundo,
 O cachalote à superfície soprando ar e esguichos, ou saracoteando com os lobos de sua cauda,
 O tubarão de olhos plúmbeos, a morsa, a tartaruga, a peluda foca leopardo e a arraia-lixia,
 Paixões lá, guerras, perseguições, tribos, visões nas profundidades desses oceanos, respirando
 esse ar de espesso hausto, como tantos fazem,
 A mudança de lá para a visão aqui e ao ar sutil respirado por seres como nós que percorrem
 esta esfera,
 A mudança adiante das nossas para aquela de seres que percorrem outras esferas.

Na Praia Sozinho à Noite

Na praia sozinho à noite,
 Quando a velha mãe oscila pra lá e pra cá entoando sua rouca canção,
 Quando assisto às cintilantes estrelas brilhando, cogito um pensamento da clave dos universos
 e do futuro.

Uma vasta similitude entrelaça tudo,
 Todas as esferas, maduras, imaturas, pequenas, grandes, sóis, luas, planetas,
 Todas as distâncias por mais extensas que sejam,
 Todas as distâncias de tempo, todas formas inanimadas,
 Todas as almas, todos corpos vivos embora sejam sempre tão diferentes, ou em mundos
 diferentes,
 Todos processos gasosos, aquosos, vegetais, minerais, os peixes, as feras,
 Todas as nações, cores, barbarismos, civilizações, línguas,
 Todas as identidades que existiram ou podem existir neste globo, ou qualquer globo,
 Todas as vidas e mortes, tudo do passado, presente, futuro,
 Esta vasta similitude os alcança, e sempre os tem alcançado,
 E os alcançará sempre e compactamente os manterá e incluirá.

Canção para Todos Mares, Todos Navios

1

Hoje um breve rude recitativo,
 De navios navegando nos mares, cada um com sua bandeira especial ou sinal,
 De heróis inominados nos navios—de ondas se espalhando e espalhando tão longe quanto o
 olho possa alcançar,
 De arrojado jato e dos ventos sibilando e soprando,
 E destes um canto para os marujos de todas as nações,
 Intermitente, como uma vaga.

De capitães de navio¹⁵³ jovens ou velhos e dos imediatos e de todos intrépidos marujos,

¹⁵³ Geralmente, navios mercantes.

Dos poucos, muito seletos, taciturnos, a quem o destino nunca pode surpreender nem a morte
 esmorecer,
 Seleccionados parcamente sem ruído por ti velho oceano, escolhidos por ti,
 Tu mar que seleccionas e separas a raça a tempo, e unes nações,
 Amamentados por ti, velha enfermeira rouca, incorporando a ti,
 Indomáveis, indomados iguais a ti.

(Sempre os heróis na água ou na terra, aparecendo sozinhos ou em duplas,
 Sempre a cepa conservada e nunca perdida, embora rara, o suficiente para semente
 conservada.)

2

Tremula Oh mar tuas bandeiras separadas de nações!
 Tremula visíveis como sempre os vários sinais de navios!
 Mas reserva especialmente para ti mesmo e para a alma do homem uma bandeira acima das
 demais,
 Um sinal espiritual tecido para todas as nações, emblema do homem altivo sobre a morte,
 Símbolo de todos os bravos capitães e todos os intrépidos marujos e imediatos,
 E todos que foram derrotados cumprindo seu dever,
 Rememorativo deles, trançado de todos os intrépidos capitães jovens ou velhos,
 Um pendão universal, sutilmente ondulando todo tempo, sobre todos bravos marujos,
 Todos os mares, todos os navios.

Patrulhando Barnegat¹⁵⁴

Bravia, bravia a tormenta e o mar alto correndo,
 Constante o bramido da ventania, com incessante murmúrio a meia-voz,
 Brados de risada demoníaca intermitentemente perfurando e repicando,
 Ondas, ar, meia-noite, sua trindade mais selvagem açoitando,
 Lá fora nas sombras cristas branco-leitosas disparando,
 Em lama praiana e jorros arenosos de neve feroz inclinando,
 Onde pelo escuro o vento de morte levantino se opondo,
 Por cortante remoinho e esguicho atento e firme avançando,
 (Aquilo ao longe! é um naufrágio? está cintilando o sinal vermelho?)
 Lama e areia da praia incansável até a luz do dia seguindo,
 Constantemente, lentamente, por rouco bramido nunca remindo,
 Na orla da meia-noite pelas cristas branco-leitosas disparando,
 Um grupo de formas sombrias, esquisitas, lutando, confrontando a noite,
 Essa selvagem trindade cautelosamente observando.

Atrás do Navio Marítimo

Atrás do navio marítimo, atrás dos ventos sibilantes,
 Atrás das velas branco-cinza tesas em suas vergas e cordas,

¹⁵⁴ O Distrito de Barnegat se localiza no Condado de Ocean, New Jersey, Estados Unidos. Nele que está situada a Baía de Barnegat, que dá origem ao nome do distrito (Barnegat Bay). É um lugar que Whitman visitava quando morou em Camden, New Jersey.

Abaixo, uma miríade miríade¹⁵⁵ de ondas se apressando, erguendo seus pescoços,
Propendendo em fluxo incessante a esteira do navio,
Ondas do oceano borbulhando e gorgolhando, jubilosamente espreitando,
Ondas, ondulantes ondas, líquidas, desiguais, rivais, ondas,
Em direção à corrente turbilhonante, ridentes e flutuantes, com curvas,
Onde a grande nave velejando e virando de bordo deslocou a superfície,
Ondas maiores e menores na amplitude do oceano ansiosamente fluindo,
As águas do navio marítimo depois que ele passa, flamejantes e brincalhonas sob o sol,
Um cortejo heterogêneo com muito salpico de espuma e muitos fragmentos,
Seguindo o imponente e rápido navio, nas águas seguindo.

¹⁵⁵ Esta palavra está repetida no original, para ênfase.

4.18 MEMÓRIAS DO PRESIDENTE LINCOLN

MEMÓRIAS DO PRESIDENTE LINCOLN

Da Última Vez Que Lilases Floriram no Pátio

1

Da última vez que lilases floriram no pátio,
E a grande estrela pendeu antecipada no céu ocidental de noite,
Chorei, e no entanto chorarei com a sempre volvente primavera.

Sempre volvente primavera, a vinda da trindade me asseveras,
Lilás florindo perene e pendente estrela no oeste,
E pensamento naquele que amo.

2

Oh poderosa estrela ocidental caída!
Oh trevas da noite—Oh noite soturna, lacrimosa!
Oh grande estrela desaparecida—Oh o escuro negro que esconde a estrela!
Oh mãos cruéis que me mantém impotente—Oh minha alma indefesa!
Oh áspera nuvem circundante que não liberará minha alma.

3

No pátio defronte a uma velha casa de fazenda perto da paliçada caiada,
Está o arbusto de lilás alto e esguio com folhas cordiformes de fecundo verde,
Com muitas florescências salientes se erguendo delicadas, com o forte perfume que amo,
Com toda folha um milagre—e deste arbusto no pátio,
Com delicadas florescências coloridas e folhas cordiformes de fecundo verde,
Uma vergôntea com sua flor eu quebro.

4

No pântano em ermos recantos,
Um pássaro tímido e oculto está trinando uma canção.

Solitário o tordo,
O ermitão absorto consigo mesmo, evitando os assentamentos,
Canta sozinho uma canção.

Canção da garganta sangrante,
A canção da morte de saída da vida, (pois bem caro irmão eu sei,
Se tu não fosses permitido cantar tu certamente morrerias.)

5

Sobre o peito da primavera, da terra, em meio a cidades,
 Entre alamedas e por velhos bosques, onde ultimamente as violetas brotaram do chão,
 avistando os entulhos cinzentos,
 Entre a relva nos campos nos lados das alamedas, passando a relva infinita,
 Passando o lanciforme trigo amarelo, todo grão de sua mortalha nos campos marrons-escuros
 surgido,
 Passando a floração da macieira branca e rosa nos pomares,
 Carregando um cadáver pra onde repousará no túmulo,
 Noite e dia viaja um caixão.

6

Caixão que atravessa alamedas e ruas,
 Dia e noite com a grande nuvem escurecendo a terra,
 Com a pompa das bandeiras enroladas com as cidades drapeadas de preto,
 Com o espetáculo dos próprios Estados de mulheres com véu de crepe de pé,
 Com os longos e sinuosos cortejos e os archotes da noite,
 Com as incontáveis tochas acesas, com o mudo mar de rostos e as cabeças cobertas,
 Com a estação à espera, o caixão a chegar, e os rostos graves,
 Com nênias pela noite, com as mil vozes se elevando fortes e solenes,
 Com todas as vozes chorosas das nênias vertidas em volta do caixão,
 As igrejas sombrias e os órgãos trêmulos—onde entre estes viajas,
 Com o clangor perpétuo dos sinos tangentes tangentes,
 Aqui, caixão que passa lentamente,
 Dou-te minha vergôntea de lilás.

7

(Nem pra ti, pra um somente,
 Florações e verdes galhos a todos caixões eu trago,
 Pois fresca como a manhã, assim eu cantaria uma canção pra ti Oh sã e santa morte.

Em toda parte buquês de rosas,
 Oh morte, te cubro de rosas e lírios matinais,
 Mas principalmente e agora com o lilás que floresce primeiro,
 Copioso eu quebro, eu quebro as vergônteadas dos arbustos,
 Com braços carregados venho, vertendo por ti,
 Por ti e todos teus caixões Oh morte.)

8

Oh orbe ocidental navegando o céu,
 Agora sei o que deves ter querido dizer há um mês desde que caminhei,
 Quando caminhei em silêncio na sombria noite transparente,

Quando vi que tinhas algo a me dizer quando inclinaste a mim noite após noite,
 Quando pendeste do céu baixo como se a meu lado, (enquanto as outras estrelas olhavam,)
 Quando vagamos juntos na noite solene, (pois algo que desconheço me manteve acordado,)
 Quando a noite avançou e eu vi na orla do oeste quão cheio estavas de desgosto,
 Quando me postei no chão nascente na brisa na fria noite transparente,
 Quando assisti onde passaste e te afundaste no escuro mundo inferior da noite,
 Quando minha alma em seu distúrbio insatisfeita afundou, como onde tu triste orbe,
 Concluístes, caíste na noite e sumiste.

9

Canta aí no pântano,
 Oh acanhado e meigo cantor, ouço tuas notas, ouço teu chamado,
 Ouço, venho em breve, te entendo,
 Mas atraso um momento, pois a reluzente estrela me deteve,
 A estrela segura meu falecido camarada e me detém.

10

Oh como gorjearei pelo morto que amei?
 E como adornarei minha canção pela grande doce alma que se foi?
 E qual será meu perfume para o túmulo de quem amo?

Ventos marinhos soprados de leste e oeste,
 Soprados do mar Oriental e soprados do mar Ocidental, até lá nas pradarias se encontrar,
 Estes e com estes e o hausto de meu canto,
 Perfumarei o túmulo de quem amo.

11

Oh o que pendurarei nas paredes da câmara?
 E quais serão os quadros que penduro nas paredes,
 Para adornar o jazigo de quem amo?

Quadros da crescente primavera e fazendas e lares,
 Com a véspera do Quarto-mês ao poente e a fumaça cinza lúcida e luminosa,
 Com torrentes do ouro amarelo do grandioso, indolente, soçobranste sol, queimando,
 expandindo o ar,
 Com a doce fresca pastagem sob os pés e as pálidas folhas verdes das prolíficas árvores,
 Ao longe o fluxo vitrificado, o peito do rio, com um salpico de vento aqui e ali,
 Com colinas alinhadas nas margens, com muitas linhas contra o céu e sombras,
 E a cidade próxima com habitações tão densas e conjuntos de chaminés,
 E todas as cenas de vida e as oficinas e os trabalhadores retornando pra casa.

12

Vede, corpo e alma—esta terra,
 Minha própria Manhattan com vértices e as marés cintilantes e apressadas e os navios,
 A terra variada e ampla, o Sul e o Norte na luz, as praias de Ohio e o chamejante Missouri,
 E sempre as espraiadas pradarias cobertas de relva e milho.

Vede, o sol mais excelente tão tranqüilo e altivo,
 A manhã violeta e púrpura com brisas recém-sentidas,
 A gentil suave-nascida luz imensurável,
 O milagre se espalhando banhando tudo, o meio-dia consumado,
 A deliciosa véspera próxima, a noite grata e as estrelas,
 Sobre minhas cidades luzindo tudo, envolvendo homem e terra.

13

Canta, canta pássaro marrom-cinzentos,
 Canta dos pântanos, dos recantos, verte teu canto dos arbustos,
 Ilimitado do crepúsculo, dos cedros e pinheiros.

Canta caríssimo irmão, gorjeia tua canção aguda,
 Alta canção humana, com voz de maior aflição.

Oh líquido e livre e terno!
 Oh selvagem e solto à minha alma—Oh cantor maravilhoso!
 A ti somente ouço—porém a estrela me segura, (mas logo partirá,)
 Porém o lilás com odor dominante me segura.

14

Agora enquanto sentei de dia e olhei adiante,
 No fim do dia com sua luz e os campos da primavera e os fazendeiros preparando suas
 colheitas,
 No amplo cenário inconsciente de minha terra com seus lagos e florestas,
 Na celeste beleza aérea, (após os perturbados ventos e as tormentas,)
 Sob os céus arqueados da tarde passando rápida e das vozes de crianças e mulheres,
 As marés marinhas multi-moventes e vi os navios como velejavam,
 E o verão se aproximando com riqueza e os campos todos ocupados com labuta,
 E as infinitas casas separadas, como todas prosseguiram, cada uma com suas refeições e
 minúcia de usos diários,
 E as ruas como suas pulsações pulsaram e as cidades cerradas—vede, ali mesmo,
 Caindo sobre elas todas e entre elas todas, me envolvendo com o resto,
 Apareceu a nuvem, apareceu a longa trilha negra,
 E conheci a morte, seu pensamento e o sagrado conhecimento da morte.

Assim, com o conhecimento da morte a caminhar de um lado de mim,
 E o pensamento da morte caminhando rente do outro lado de mim,
 E eu no meio com acompanhantes e como a segurar as mãos de acompanhantes,
 Eu fugi para a ocultante noite receptora que não fala,
 Para as praias da água, a senda à beira do pântano na obscuridade,

Para os solenes cedros sombrios e pinheiros espectrais tão quietos.

E o cantor tão tímido aos demais me recebeu,
O pássaro marrom-cinzentos que conheço nos recebeu aos três camaradas,
E ele cantou o cântico de morte e um verso àquele que amo.

De fundos ermos recantos,
Dos aromáticos cedros e dos pinheiros espectrais tão quietos,
Veio o cântico do pássaro.

E o encanto do cântico me extasiou,
Conforme segurei como que as mãos dos meus camaradas à noite,
E a voz do meu espírito talhou a canção do pássaro.

*Vem atraente e confortante morte,
Ondula pelo mundo, serenamente chegando, chegando,
No dia, na noite, a todos, a cada,
Cedo ou tarde delicada morte.*

*Louvado seja o insondável universo,
Pela vida e júbilo e por curiosos objetos e conhecimento,
E pelo amor, doce amor—mas louvor! louvor! louvor!
Pelos braços sinuosamente seguros da fria envolvente morte.*

*Sombria mãe sempre planando próxima com pés macios,
Ninguém cantou pra ti um canto de completo acolhimento?
Então o canto pra ti, glorifico-te acima de tudo,
Trago-te uma canção que quando tiveres que de fato vir, vem resolutamente.*

*Aproxima-te, sólida salvadora,
Quando for assim, quando os tiveres levado eu jubilosamente canto os mortos,
Perdidos no teu flutuante oceano amoroso,
Banhados na torrente de teu êxtase Oh morte.*

*De mim a ti alegres serenatas,
Danças por ti proponho saudando-te, adornos e festejos por ti,
E as cenas da paisagem aberta e do céu alto-expandido são adequadas,
E vida e os campos e a enorme e pensativa noite.*

*A noite em silêncio sob muitas estrelas,
A praia oceânica e a onda rouca sussurrante cuja voz conheço,
E a alma recorrendo a ti Oh vasta e bem-velada morte,
E o corpo gratamente se aconchegando rente a ti.*

*Sobre as copas das árvores te lanço uma canção,
Sobre as ondas que se elevam e afundam, sobre as miríades de campos e as amplas
pradarias,
Sobre as cidades compacto-apinhadas todas e os cais e caminhos prolíficos,
Lanço este cântico com júbilo, com júbilo a ti Oh morte.*

15

Para a talha¹⁵⁶ de minha alma,
 Alto e forte se manteve o pássaro marrom-cinzento,
 Com puras notas deliberadas se espalhando e preenchendo a noite.

Alto nos pinheiros e cedros sombrios,
 Claro no frescor umidade e no perfume do pântano,
 E eu com meus camaradas lá à noite.

Enquanto minha vista que estava presa a meus olhos se abriu,
 Como a longos panoramas de visões.

E eu vi obliquamente os exércitos,
 Eu vi como em sonhos silenciosos centenas de bandeiras de guerra,
 Portadas através da fumaça das batalhas e perfuradas por projéteis eu as vi,
 E carregadas aqui e acolá através da fumaça e rasgadas e sangrentas,
 E por fim só alguns farrapos deixados nos mastros, (e tudo em silêncio,)
 E os mastros todos lascados e quebrados.

Eu vi cadáveres de batalhas, miríades deles,
 E os alvos esqueletos de jovens, eu os vi,
 Eu vi os entulhos e entulhos de todos os soldados assassinados da guerra,
 Mas vi que eles não estavam como foi pensado,
 Eles estavam em completo repouso, eles não sofreram,
 Os vivos permaneceram e sofreram, a mãe sofreu,
 E a esposa e a criança e o pensativo camarada sofreram,
 E os exércitos que ficaram sofreram.

16

Passando as visões, passando a noite,
 Passando, soltando o aperto das mãos de meus camaradas,
 Passando a canção do pássaro ermitão e a canção talhante de minha alma,
 Canção vitoriosa, a canção de saída da morte, porém canção variante sempre mutante,
 Mesmo baixas e plangentes, porém claras as notas, subindo e caindo, inundando a noite,
 Tristemente afundando e desfalecendo, como aviso e aviso e porém de novo explodindo de
 júbilo,
 Cobrindo a terra e preenchendo a expansão do céu,
 Como aquele poderoso salmo à noite que ouvi dos recantos,
 Passando, deixo-te lilás de folhas cordiformes,
 Deixo-te aí no pátio, florescendo, volvendo com a primavera.

Cesso minha canção por ti,
 Meu olhar a ti no oeste, defrontando o oeste, comungando contigo,
 Oh camarada reluzente de face prateada à noite.

¹⁵⁶ “Tally”, no original, que significa: talha, entalho, marca, ou incisão em madeira para contagem; conta, cálculo, cômputo, registro, grupo, série, rótulo, soma.

Porém para manter cada um e todos, resgates da noite,
 A canção, o canto maravilhoso do pássaro marrom-cinzentos,
 E o canto talhante, o eco acordado em minha alma,
 Com a reluzente e pendente estrela com a expressão cheia de aflição,
 Com os que apertam minha mão se acercando ao chamado do pássaro,
 Meus camaradas e eu no meio e sua memória sempre a manter, pelo morto que tanto amei,
 Pela alma mais doce, mais sábia alma de todos meus dias e terras—e isto por causa dele,
 Lilás e estrela e pássaro entrelaçados com o canto de minha alma,
 Lá nos aromáticos pinheiros e sombrios e obscuros cedros.

Oh Capitão! Meu Capitão!

Oh Capitão! meu Capitão! findou nossa horrível jornada,
 O navio superou toda tormenta, alcançamos a meta almejada,
 O porto está próximo, os sinos eu ouço, a gente toda exultando,
 Enquanto olhos miram a estável quilha, o casco duro e ousado;
 Mas Oh coração! coração! coração!
 Oh os pingos de vermelho sangrados,
 Onde jaz no convés meu Capitão,
 Prostrado morto e gelado.

Oh Capitão! meu Capitão! levanta e os sinos escuta;
 Levanta—por ti a bandeira é alçada—por ti trina a corneta,
 Por ti os buquês e coroas com fitas—por ti as praias se apinham,
 Por ti chamam, a massa agitada, seus rostos ansiosos virando;
 Eis Capitão! pai estimado!
 Sob tua cabeça este braço!
 É algum sonho lá no convés,
 Prostraste morto e gelado.

Meu Capitão não responde, seus lábios, pálidos, calados,
 Meu pai não sente meu braço, não tem pulso ou vontade,
 O navio ancorado são e salvo, encerrada e finda a jornada,
 Da horrível jornada o navio vencedor adentra com o fim conquistado;
 Exultai Oh praias e dobrai Oh sinos!
 Mas eu com passo pesado,
 Percorro o convés onde jaz meu Capitão,
 Prostrado morto e gelado.

Calados Estejam os Acampamentos Hoje

(4 de Maio de 1865)

Calados estejam os acampamentos hoje,
 E soldados vamos cobrir nossas armas gastas de guerra,
 E cada um com alma pensativa se retira a celebrar,
 A morte de nosso caro comandante.
 Não mais pra ele os conflitos tormentosos da vida,

Nem vitória, nem derrota—não mais os sombrios eventos do tempo,
Atacando como nuvens incessantes pelo céu.

Mas canta poeta em nosso nome,
Canta o amor que nutrimos por ele—porque tu, habitante de acampamentos, sabes disso
verdadeiramente.

Conforme sepultam o caixão lá,
Canta—conforme fecham as portas da terra sobre ele—um verso,
Para os graves corações dos soldados.

Este Pó Foi Uma Vez o Homem

Este pó foi uma vez o homem,
Gentil, simples, justo e resoluto, sob cuja mão cautelosa,
Contra o mais infame crime na história conhecida em qualquer terra ou época,
Foi salva a União destes Estados.

4.19 Passagem para a Índia

Passagem para a Índia

1

CANTANDO o meu tempo,
 Cantando as grandes realizações do presente,
 Cantando as fortes e leves obras de engenheiros,
 Nossas maravilhas modernas, (as antigas e ponderosas Sete superadas,)
 No Velho Mundo o leste o canal de Suez,
 O Novo transposto por sua poderosa ferrovia,
 Os mares incrustados com eloquentes cabos gentis;
 Porém primeiro a soar, e sempre saudável, o chamado contigo Oh alma,
 O Passado! o Passado! o Passado!

O Passado—o sombrio retrospecto insondado!
 O golfo prolífico—os adormecidos e as sombras!
 O passado—a infinita grandeza do passado!
 Pois o que é o presente afinal senão um crescer do passado?
 (Como um projétil formado, impelido, ultrapassando uma certa
 linha, ainda continua,
 Assim o presente, inteiramente formado, impelido pelo passado.)

2

Passagem Oh alma para a Índia!
 Clarifica os mitos asiáticos, as fábulas primitivas.

Não só vós orgulhosas verdades do mundo,
 Nem só vós fatos da ciência moderna,
 Mas mitos e fábulas antigas, fábulas da Ásia, da África,
 Os longos raios dardejantes do espírito, os sonhos liberados,
 As bíblias e lendas de profundo alcance,
 Os ousados enredos dos poetas, as velhas religiões;
 Oh vós templos mais imaculados que lírios despejados pelo sol nascente!
 Oh vós fábulas repulsando o conhecido, iludindo a apreensão do conhecido, subindo ao céu!
 Oh vós torres altivas e estonteantes, elevadas, rubras como rosas, brunidas a ouro!
 Torres de fábulas imortais moldadas em sonhos mortais!
 Também vos recebo de modo completo como aos demais!
 Também com júbilo vos canto.

Passagem para a Índia!
 Olha, alma, não vês o propósito de Deus desde o início?
 A terra para ser transposta, conectada por rede,
 As raças, os vizinhos, para casar e ser concedidos em matrimônio,
 Os oceanos para ser cruzados, o distante aproximado,
 As terras para ser soldadas.

Um louvor novo canto,

Vós capitães, viajantes, exploradores, vosso,
 Vós engenheiros, vós arquitetos, maquinistas, vosso,
 Vós, não só para comércio ou transporte,
 Mas em nome de Deus, e pelo teu bem Oh alma.

3

Passagem para a Índia!
 Vê alma para ti de dois quadros vivos,
 Vejo em um o canal de Suez iniciado, aberto,
 Vejo o cortejo de navios a vapor, Oh Imperadora Eugenia¹⁵⁷ conduzindo a vanguarda,
 Noto do convés a estranha paisagem, o céu puro, a areia plana à distância,
 Ultrapasso velozmente os grupos pitorescos, os operários agrupados,
 As gigantescas máquinas de dragagem.

Em um de novo, diferente, (porém teu, todo teu, Oh alma, o mesmo)
 Vejo em meu próprio continente a ferrovia do Pacífico superando cada barreira,
 Vejo comboios contínuos rodando ao largo do Rio Platte carregando fretes e passageiros,
 Ouço as locomotivas urgindo e rugindo, e o estridente apito a vapor,
 Ouço os ecos reverberando pelo mais grandioso panorama do mundo,
 Cruzo as planícies de Laramie, noto as rochas em formas grotescas, os montes,
 Vejo as abundantes esporas e cebolas bravas, as sálvias do deserto, estéreis e incolores,
 Vejo de relance ao longe ou se elevando imediatamente acima de mim as grandes montanhas,
 vejo o rio Wind e as montanhas Wahsatch,
 Vejo a montanha Monumento e o Ninho da Águia, ultrapasso o Promontório, ascendo às
 serras Nevadas,
 Esquadrinho a nobre montanha Elk e rodeio sua base,
 Vejo a cordilheira Humboldt, trilho o vale e cruzo o rio,
 Vejo as águas claras do lago Tahoe, vejo florestas de pinheiros majestosos,
 Ou cruzando o grande deserto, as planícies alcalinas, contemplo encantadoras miragens de
 águas e prados,
 Marcando através desses e afinal, em duplicadas linhas delgadas,
 Transpondo as três ou quatro mil milhas de viagem terrestre,
 Atando o mar Oriental ao Ocidental,
 A estrada entre a Europa e a Ásia.

(Ah Genovês teu sonho! teu sonho!
 Séculos após estares deitado em teu túmulo,
 O litoral que descobriste confirma teu sonho.)

4

Passagem para a Índia!
 Combates de muito capitão, contos de muito marinheiro morto,
 Sobre meu humor furtando e expandindo isso vem,
 Como nuvens e nuvenzinhas no inacessível céu.

¹⁵⁷ Esposa de Napoleão III, que estava no navio que puxava o desfile de abertura do canal de Suez.

Em toda a história, descendo declives,
 Como um regato correndo, afundando agora, e de novo à superfície ascendendo,
 Um pensamento incessante, um fluxo variado—eis que, alma, a ti, tua visão, se elevam,
 Os planos, as viagens de novo, as expedições;
 De novo Vasco da Gama veleja,
 De novo o conhecimento atingido, a bússola do navegador,
 Terras encontradas e nações nascidas, vós nascida América,
 Para amplo propósito, a longa provação do homem completada,
 Vós redondeza do mundo por fim realizada.

5

Oh ampla Redondeza, nadando no espaço,
 Toda coberta de poder e beleza visíveis,
 Alterna luz e dia e a prolífica escuridão espiritual,
 Altos cortejos indizíveis de sol e lua e incontáveis estrelas acima,
 Abaixo, a relva multiforme e águas, animais, montanhas, árvores,
 Com propósito inescrutável, alguma oculta intenção profética,
 Agora pela primeira vez parece que meu pensamento começa a te abarcar.

Dos jardins da Ásia descendo irradiando,
 Adão e Eva aparecem, e então sua miríade progênie depois deles,
 Errante, ansiosa, curiosa, com irrequietas explorações,
 Com questionamentos, desnorteada, informe, febril, com corações nunca-felizes,
 Com esse incessante refrão triste, *Por que alma insatisfeita? e Para onde Oh vida escarninha?*

Ah quem confortará estes filhos febris?
 Quem justifica estas irrequietas explorações?
 Quem expressa o segredo da terra impassível?
 Quem o vincula a nós? o que é esta Natureza separada tão desnatural?
 O que é esta terra para nossas afeições? (insensível terra, sem uma vibração que responda à
 nossa,
 Fria terra, o local de túmulos.)

Porém alma tenhas certeza que o primeiro intento permanece, e será realizado,
 Talvez mesmo agora o tempo tenha chegado.

Depois que os mares forem todos cruzados, (como parecem já cruzados),
 Depois que os grandes capitães e engenheiros tiverem realizado seu trabalho,
 Depois dos nobres inventores, depois dos cientistas, do químico, geologista, etnólogo,
 Finalmente virá o poeta digno desse nome,
 O verdadeiro filho de Deus virá cantando suas canções.

Assim não só suas façanhas Oh viajantes, Oh cientistas e inventores,
 serão justificadas,
 Todos estes corações de crianças queixosas serão confortados,
 Toda afeição será completamente retribuída, o segredo será contado,
 Todas estas separações e lacunas serão encurtadas e seguras e unidas,
 A terra inteira, esta fria, impassível e silenciosa terra, será completamente justificada,

A divina Trinitas será gloriosamente realizada e pactada
 pelo verdadeiro filho de Deus, o poeta,
 (Ele de fato ultrapassará os estreitos e conquistará as montanhas,
 Dobrará o cabo da Boa Esperança para algum propósito,)
 Natureza e Homem não mais estarão desunidos e difusos,
 O verdadeiro filho de Deus os fundirá em absoluto.

6

Ano em cuja porta escancarada canto,
 Ano do propósito cumprido,
 Ano do matrimônio de continentes, climas e oceanos!
 (Não um mero doge de Veneza agora casando o Adriático¹⁵⁸,)
 Vejo Oh ano em ti o amplo globo terráqueo dado e dando tudo,
 Europa à Ásia, a África unida, e todos ao Novo Mundo,
 As terras, geografias, dançando diante de ti, segurando uma guirlanda festiva,
 Como noivas e noivos de mãos dadas.

Passagem para a Índia!
 Ares refrescantes do longínquo Cáucaso, confortante berço do homem,
 O rio Eufrates fluindo, o passado iluminado de novo.

Vê alma, o retrospecto apresentado,
 As antigas terras mais populosas, opulentas da terra,
 As correntes do Indo e do Ganges e seus muitos afluentes,
 (Eu minhas praias da América percorrendo hoje vejo, retomando tudo,)
 O conto de Alexandre em suas marchas belicosas repentinamente morrendo,
 De um lado a China e do outro a Pérsia e a Arábia,
 Ao sul os grandes mares e a baía de Bengala,
 As literaturas fluentes, épicos tremendos, religiões, castas,
 O antigo Brahma oculto interminavelmente remoto, o terno e jovem Buda,
 Impérios centrais e sulinos e todas as suas posses, possesores,
 As guerras de Tamerlão, o reino de Aurungzebe,
 Os negociantes, regentes, exploradores, Muçulmanos, Venezianos, Bizâncio, os Árabes,
 Portugueses,
 Os primeiros viajantes ainda famosos, Marco Polo, Batouta¹⁵⁹ o Mouro,
 Dúvidas a ser solucionadas, o mapa incógnito, lacunas a ser preenchidas,
 O pé do homem instável, as mãos nunca em repouso,
 Tu mesma Oh alma que não tolerarás um desafio.

Os navegadores medievais se levantam à minha frente,
 O mundo de 1492, com seu empreendimento acordado,
 Algo inchando agora na humanidade como a seiva da terra na primavera,
 O esplendor crepuscular da cavalaria declinando.

E quem és tu triste espectro?
 Gigantesco, visionário, tu mesmo um visionário,

¹⁵⁸ Na época de maior poder de Veneza, o doge fazia uma cerimônia anual, casando a cidade com o mar Adriático, jogando nele um anel.

¹⁵⁹ Ibn Battuta foi um viajante e explorador berbere que nasceu em Tanger em 1303 e faleceu em 1377.

Com membros majestosos e radiantes olhos zelosos,
Difundindo com cada olhar teu um mundo dourado,
Tingindo-o com tons magníficos.

Como o histrião principal,
Descendo até as luzes da ribalta anda em alguma grande cena de ópera,
Dominando o resto vejo o Almirante¹⁶⁰ em pessoa,
(O tipo de coragem, ação, fé que se vê na História,)
Vede-o navegar de Palos conduzindo sua pequena frota,
Sua viagem vede, seu retorno, sua grande fama,
Seus infortúnios, caluniadores, vede-o prisioneiro, acorrentado,
Vede seu abatimento, pobreza, morte.

(Curioso no tempo me posto, notando os esforços de heróis,
A dilação é longa? amarga é a difamação, pobreza, morte?
Jaz a semente despreocupada por séculos no solo? vê, para a ocasião certa de Deus,
Ascendendo à noite, ela brota, floresce,
E enche a terra de uso e beleza.)

7

Passagem deveras Oh alma ao pensamento primevo,
Não só terras e mares, teu próprio claro frescor,
A jovem maturidade de ninhada e flor,
A reinos de bíblias brotantes.

Oh Alma, irreprensiva, eu contigo e tu comigo,
Tua circunavegação do mundo começa,
Do homem, a viagem do retorno de sua mente,
Ao precoce paraíso da razão,
De volta, de volta ao nascimento da sabedoria, a intuições inocentes,
De novo com justa criação.

8

Oh não podemos mais esperar,
Também navegamos Oh alma,
Alegres também nos lançamos em mares sem rastros,
Destemidos navegamos por costas desconhecidas em ondas de êxtase,
Entre os ventos flutuantes, (tu me apertando a ti, eu te apertando a mim, Oh alma,)
Cantarolando livre, cantando nossa canção de Deus,
Entoando nosso canto de agradável exploração.

Com riso e muitos beijos,
(Deixa outros deplorar, deixa outros lamentar pecado; remorso, humilhação,)
Oh alma tu me agradas, eu a ti.

Ah mais que qualquer padre Oh alma também cremos em Deus,

¹⁶⁰ Colombo, que partiu do porto espanhol de Palos em 1492.

Mas com o mistério de Deus não ousamos flertar.

Oh alma tu me agradas, eu a ti,
 Navegando nestes mares ou nas colinas, ou despertando à noite,
 Pensamentos, pensamentos silenciosos, de Tempo e Espaço e Morte, como águas fluindo,
 Guia-me de fato como por infinitas regiões,
 Cujo ar respiro, cujas ondulações ouço, lava-me totalmente,
 Banha-me Oh Deus em ti, subindo a ti,
 Eu e minha alma a vaguear ao teu alcance.

Oh Tu transcendente,
 Sem nome, a fibra e o fôlego,
 Luz da luz, produzindo universos, tu centro deles,
 Tu centro mais poderoso do verdadeiro, do bem, do amoroso,
 Tu fonte moral, espiritual—fonte do afeto—tu reservatório,
 (Oh minha alma meditativa—Oh sede insatisfeita—não esperaste aí?
 Não esperas por acaso por nós em algum lugar por aí o Camarada perfeito?)
 Tu pulso—tu motivo das estrelas, sóis, sistemas,
 Que, circulando, se movem em ordem, seguros, harmoniosos,
 Através das informes vastidões do espaço,
 Como eu devia pensar, como haurir um único hausto, como falar, se,
 de mim,
 Não pude lançar, a esses, universos superiores?

Rapidamente me encolho ao pensar em Deus,
 Na Natureza e suas maravilhas, Tempo e Espaço e Morte,
 Mas que eu, virando, chamo a ti Oh alma, tu Eu real,
 E vê, tu gentilmente dominas os orbes,
 Tu emparelhas com o Tempo, sorris contente pra Morte,
 E preenches, expandes bastante as vastidões do Espaço.

Maior que estrelas ou sóis,
 Saltando Oh alma prossegues tua jornada;
 Que amor a não ser o nosso poderia ampliar mais?
 Que aspirações, desejos, superariam os nossos Oh alma?
 Que sonhos do ideal? que planos de pureza, perfeição, força?
 Que vontade alegre pelo bem dos outros desistir de tudo?
 Pelo bem dos outros sofrer tudo?

Computando adiante Oh alma, quando tu, o tempo alcançado,
 Os mares todos cruzados, resistindo aos cabos, a viagem finda,
 Rodeada, lidas, encaras Deus, submetes, a meta atingida,
 Como se preenchida de amizade, amor completo, o Irmão Mais velho encontrado,
 O Mais Jovem se derrete em afeto em seus braços.

Passagem para mais que a Índia!
 Tuas asas estão emplumadas realmente para tais vôos distantes?

Oh alma, viajas de fato em viagens como essas?
 Diverte-te em águas como essas?
 Soas abaixo do Sânscrito e dos Vedas?
 Então tenhas teu ânimo liberado.

Passagem para ti, tuas praias, os antigos enigmas ferozes!
 Passagem para ti, para domínio de ti, os problemas estrangulantes!
 Tu, dispersa com os destroços de esqueletos que, vivendo, nunca te alcançaram.

Passagem para mais que a Índia!
 Oh segredo da terra e céu!
 De vós Oh águas do mar! Oh riachos sinuosos e rios!
 De vós Oh bosques e campos! de vós fortes montanhas de minha terra!
 De vós Oh pradarias! de vós cinzentas rochas!
 Oh manhã vermelha! Oh nuvens! Oh chuva e neves!
 Oh dia e noite, passagem para vós!

Oh sol e lua e vós todas estrelas! Sírius e Júpiter!
 Passagem para vós!

Passagem, passagem imediata! o sangue queima em minhas veias!
 Fora Oh alma! iça a âncora imediatamente!

Corta as amarras—puxa pra fora—treme toda vela!
 Não ficamos aqui bastante tempo como árvores no chão?
 Não rastejamos aqui bastante tempo, comendo e bebendo feito meros brutos?
 Não nos escurecemos e tonteamos bastante tempo com livros?

Navega adiante—guia somente para águas profundas,
 Descuidada Oh alma, explorando, eu contigo, e tu comigo,
 Porque iremos onde marinheiro não ousou ir ainda,
 E arriscaremos o navio, nós mesmos e tudo.

Oh minha alma valente!
 Oh mais e mais distante navega!
 Oh ousado júbilo, mas seguro! não são todos eles os mares de Deus?
 Oh mais, mais, mais distante navega!

4.20 Os Adormecidos

Os Adormecidos

1

Vagueio toda a noite em minha visão,
 Pisando com pés leves, rápida e irruídosamente pisando e parando,
 Curvando de olhos abertos sobre os olhos fechados dos adormecidos,
 Errante e confuso, perdido de mim mesmo, mal-ajustado, contraditório,
 Vacilando, fitando, curvando e parando.

Quão solenes parecem ali, espichados e imóveis,
 Quão calmos respiram, os pequeninos em seus berços.

As péssimas feições dos enfadados, as alvas feições dos cadáveres, os rostos lívidos de
 bêbados, os rostos doente-lúgubres de onanistas,
 Os corpos acutilados nos campos de batalha, os insanos nos quartos de porta reforçada, os
 idiotas sagrados, o recém-nascido emergindo de portões e os moribundos emergindo de
 portões,
 A noite os permeia e os envolve.

O casal casado dorme calmamente em sua cama, ele com sua palma no quadril da esposa e ela
 com sua palma no quadril do marido,
 As irmãs dormem ternamente lado a lado em sua cama,
 Os homens dormem ternamente lado a lado na sua,
 E a mãe dorme com seu filhinho cuidadosamente coberto.

Os cegos dormem e os surdos e mudos dormem,
 O prisioneiro dorme bem na prisão, o filho fugitivo dorme,
 O assassino que deve ser enforcado no dia seguinte, como ele dorme?
 E a pessoa assassinada, como ele dorme¹⁶¹?

A fêmea que ama incorrespondida dorme,
 E o macho que ama incorrespondido dorme,
 A cabeça do acumulador de riquezas que tramou todo o dia dorme,
 E as disposições enfurecidas e traiçoeiras, todas, todas dormem.

Eu me posto no escuro com olhos pendentes juntos aos mais sofreadores e os mais inquietos,
 Eu passo minhas mãos docemente de um lado pra outro a umas poucas polegadas deles,
 Os inquietos afundam em suas camas, eles dormem intermitentemente.

Agora perfuro a escuridão, novos seres aparecem,
 A terra recua de mim para dentro da noite,
 Eu vi que ela era bonita e vejo que o que não é a terra é belo.

Eu vou de um lado de uma cama a outro, durmo junto aos outros adormecidos de cada vez,
 Eu sonho em meu sonho todos os sonhos dos outros sonhadores,

¹⁶¹ Não há um erro de digitação; a pessoa assassinada é conseqüentemente do sexo masculino.

E me torno os outros sonhadores.

Eu sou uma dança—destacai aí! o espasmo está me rodopiando rápido!

Eu sou o sempre-risonho—é lua nova e crepúsculo,
Eu vejo o ocultar de deleites, vejo ágeis fantasmas onde quer que eu olhe,
Esconderijo e escondერიjo de novo fundo no chão e mar e onde nem não é chão nem mar.

Bem fazem seus trabalhos esses divinos artífices,
Só de mim não podem esconder nada e não fariam se pudessem,
Considero que sou seu chefe e além disso me fazem seu favorito,
E me rodeiam e me guiam e correm adiante quando caminho,
Para erguer seus sagazes disfarces para me sinalizar com braços esticados e retomar o
caminho;
À frente nos movemos, um alegre grupo de vilões! com música alegre-gritante e selvagem-
agitadas flâmulas de júbilo!

Eu sou o ator, a atriz, o eleitor, o político,
O emigrante e o exílio, o criminoso que se levantou no cubículo,
Aquele que tem sido famoso e aquele que será famoso depois de hoje,
O gago, a pessoa bem-formada, a pessoa consumida ou débil.

Eu sou aquela que se adornou e cingiu seu cabelo expectantemente,
Meu malandro amante chegou e está escuro.

Duplica-te e recebe-me escuridão,
Recebe-me e a meu amante também, ele não me deixará ir sem ele.

Eu rolo sobre ti como em uma cama, me entrego ao crepúsculo.

Aquele a quem chamo me responde e toma o lugar de meu amante,
Ele se levanta comigo silenciosamente da cama.

Escuridão, és mais gentil que meu amante, seu corpo estava suado e ofegante,
Ainda sinto a quente umidade que ele me deixou.

Minhas mãos estão distendidas, eu as passo em todas as direções,
Eu sondaria a praia sombria à qual estás te dirigindo.

Cuidado escuridão! o que era que já me tocou?
Pensei que meu amante tinha partido, a menos que a escuridão e ele sejam um,
Ouço o bater do coração, sigo, desvaneço.

2

Desço em meu curso ocidental, meus tendões estão flácidos,
Perfume e juventude me percorrem e eu sou seu rastro.

É meu rosto amarelo e enrugado em vez do da velha,

Eu sento baixo em uma cadeira de palha e cuidadosamente cerzo as meias de meu neto.

Sou eu também, a viúva insone olhando a meia-noite de inverno,
Vejo as faíscas de luz estelar na terra glacial e pálida.

Uma mortalha vejo e sou a mortalha, enrolo um corpo e deito no caixão,
É escuro aqui sob o chão, não é mal ou dor aqui, é vazio aqui, por razões.

(Parece-me que tudo na luz e no ar devia estar feliz,
Quem não estiver em seu caixão e na escura tumba que saiba que ele tem o bastante.)

3

Vejo um belo gigantesco nadador nadando nu pelos torvelinhos do mar,
Seu cabelo castanho jaz rente e liso em sua cabeça, ele golpeia com braços corajosos, ele se
 impele com suas pernas,
Vejo seu corpo alvo, vejo seus olhos destemidos,
Odeio os torvelinhos rápido-correntes que o arrojariam totalmente de cabeça nas pedras.

O que estais fazendo ondas desordeiras gotejadas de vermelho?
Matareis o gigante corajoso? o matareis no auge de sua meia-idade?

Firme e longamente ele luta,
Ele está confuso, detonado, contundido, ele resiste enquanto sua força resiste,
Os estapeantes torvelinhos estão manchados com seu sangue, eles o ganham, eles o rolam, o
 balançam, o giram,
Seu belo corpo é carregado nos circundantes torvelinhos, é continuamente contundido nas
 rochas,
Rápido e longe da vista é carregado o valente cadáver.

4

Eu giro mas não me desenredo,
Confuso, uma leitura passada, uma outra, mas com escuridão ainda.

A praia é cortada por vento gelado cortante, as armas de destruição soam,
A tempestade se acalma, a lua vem tropeçando pelos detritos.

Olho onde o navio sem auxílio avança de ponta, ouço o estouro quando ele golpeia, ouço os
 uivos de desânimo, eles ficam cada vez mais lânguidos.

Não posso ajudar com meus dedos torcidos,
Só posso me apressar à rebentação e deixá-la me encharcar e congelar sobre mim.

Procuo com a multidão, nem um da companhia nos é trazido vivo,
De manhã ajudo a pegar os mortos e os colocar em fileiras em um celeiro.

5

Agora dos dias mais antigos de guerra, a derrota no Brooklyn,

Washington se posta dentro das linhas, ele se posta nas colinas entrincheiradas entre uma
 multidão de oficiais,
 Seu rosto está frio e úmido, ele não consegue reprimir as gotas de pranto,
 Ele ergue o telescópio perpetuamente a seus olhos, a tez de suas bochechas está descorada,
 Ele vê a matança dos valentes sulistas confiados a ele pelos seus pais.

O mesmo por fim e por fim quando a paz é declarada,
 Ele se posta no cômodo da velha taverna, todos os soldados bem-amados passam,
 Os oficiais estupefatos e lentos se aproximam por sua vez,
 O chefe circunda seus pescoços com o braço e os beija na bochecha,
 Ele beija as bochechas molhadas ligeiramente uma após a outra, ele aperta as mãos e dá adeus
 ao exército.

6

Agora o que minha mãe me contou um dia quando sentamos juntos ao jantar,
 De quando ela era uma menina quase crescida morando em casa dos pais na antiga
 propriedade rural.

Uma índia vermelha veio na hora do desjejum à antiga propriedade,
 Nas costas ela carregava um feixe de juncos para empalhar assentos de cadeiras,
 Seu cabelo, liso, brilhoso, grosso, preto, profuso, meio-envolvia seu rosto,
 Seu passo era livre e elástico e sua voz soava primorosamente quando falava.

Minha mãe olhava com deleite e assombro a estranha,
 Ela olhava o frescor de seu enorme rosto e membros íntegros e flexíveis,
 Quanto mais ela olhava pra ela mais a amava,
 Nunca antes tinha ela visto tal beleza maravilhosa e pureza,
 Ela a fez sentar-se em um banco ao lado do pé direito da lareira, cozinhou comida pra ela,
 Não tinha nenhum trabalho para lhe dar, mas lhe deu recordação e afeto.

A índia vermelha permaneceu toda a manhã e pelo meio da tarde foi embora,
 Oh minha mãe estava relutante a deixá-la ir embora,
 Toda a semana pensou nela, esperou por ela muitos meses,
 Ela se lembrou dela muitos invernos e muitos verões,
 Mas a índia vermelha nunca voltou nem se ouviu falar nela de novo.

7

Um espetáculo da suavidade do verão—um contato de algo não visto—um namoro da luz e
 do ar,
 Estou enciumado e esmagado de simpatia,
 E irei flertar eu mesmo com a luz e o ar.

Oh amor e verão, estais nos sonhos e em mim,
 Outono e inverno estão nos sonhos, o fazendeiro vai com sua frugalidade,
 Os rebanhos e colheitas aumentam, os celeiros estão bem-preenchidos.

Elementos se fundem na noite, navios fazem manobras nos sonhos,
 O marinheiro navega, o exilado retorna ao lar,

O fugitivo retorna ileso, o imigrante está de volta além de meses e anos,
 O irlandês pobre mora na casa simples de sua infância com vizinhos e rostos bem-conhecidos,
 Eles o acolhem calorosamente, ele está descalço de novo, ele esquece que ele é próspero,
 O holandês veleja pra casa e o escocês e o galês velejam pra casa e o nativo do mediterrâneo
 veleja pra casa,
 A todo porto da Inglaterra, França, Espanha, entram navios bem carregados,
 O suíço caminha para suas colinas, o prussiano parte, o húngaro parte e o polonês parte,
 O sueco retorna e o dinamarquês e norueguês retornam.

Os que se dirigem ao lar e os de viagem ao estrangeiro,
 O belo nadador perdido, o enfadado, o onanista, a fêmea que ama incorrespondida, o
 acumulador de riquezas,
 O ator e atriz, aqueles que findaram seus papéis e aqueles que esperam começar,
 O menino afetuoso, o marido e a mulher, o eleitor, o indicado que é escolhido e o indicado
 que fracassou,
 O grande já conhecido e o grande a qualquer tempo depois de hoje,
 O gago, o doente, o que tem forma perfeita, o tosco,
 O criminoso que se levantou no cubículo, o juiz que se sentou e o condenou, os advogados
 fluentes, o júri, o público,
 O risonho e o chorão, o dançarino, a viúva da meia-noite, a índia vermelha,
 O tísico, o erisipeloso, o idiota, o que foi injustiçado,
 Os antípodas e cada um entre isto e os que estão na escuridão,
 Juro que eles estão na média agora—um não é melhor que o outro,
 A noite e o sono os equipararam e os restauraram.

Juro que eles são todos belos,
 Cada um que dorme é belo, tudo na luz sombria é belo,
 O mais selvagem e mais sangrento terminou e tudo está em paz.

A paz é sempre bela,
 O mito do céu indica paz e noite.

O mito do céu indica a alma,
 A alma é sempre bela, ela aparece mais ou aparece menos, vem ou fica pra trás,
 Ela vem de seu jardim copado e olha agradavelmente a si mesma e circunda o mundo,
 Perfeitos e limpos os genitais jorrando previamente e perfeito e limpo o útero aderindo,
 A cabeça bem-desenvolvida proporcionada e aprumada e os intestinos e articulações
 proporcionados e aprumados.

A alma é sempre bela,
 O universo está devidamente em ordem, tudo está em seu lugar,
 O que chegou está em seu lugar e o que espera estará em seu lugar,
 O crânio torcido espera, o sangue aguado ou podre espera,
 O filho do glutão ou do de doença venérea espera muito e o filho do bêbado espera muito e o
 próprio bêbado espera muito,
 Os adormecidos que viveram e morreram esperam, os muito avançados devem continuar por
 sua vez e os muito atrasados devem vir por sua vez,
 O diverso não será menos diverso, mas eles fluirão e unirão—eles se unem agora.

8

Os adormecidos são muito belos conforme jazem despídos,
Eles fluem de mãos dadas por sobre toda a terra de leste a oeste conforme jazem despídos,
O asiático e africano estão de mãos dadas, o europeu e americano estão de mãos dadas,
Cultos e incultos estão de mãos dadas e macho e fêmea estão de mãos dadas,
O braço nu da moça cruza o peito nu de seu amante, eles se pressionam sem luxúria, os lábios
dele pressionam o pescoço dela,
O pai segura seu filho crescido ou não em seus braços com imensurável amor e o filho segura
o pai em seus braços com imensurável amor,
O cabelo branco da mãe brilha no pulso branco da filha,
A respiração do menino acompanha a respiração do homem, o amigo é abraçado pelo amigo,
O erudito beija o professor e o professor beija o erudito, o injustiçado é corrigido,
O chamado do escravo é uno com o chamado do senhor e o senhor saúda o escravo,
O réu avança da prisão, o insano torna-se são, o sofrimento das pessoas doentes é aliviado,
Os suores e febres param, a garganta que era insalubre está sã, os pulmões do consumido são
recuperados, a pobre cabeça aflita está livre,
As articulações do reumático se movem tão suavemente quanto antes e mais suaves que
nunca,
Supressões e passagens se abrem, os paralisados tornam-se flexíveis,
Os inchados e convulsos e congestionados despertam em condição,
Eles passam o revigoração da noite e a química da noite e despertam.

Eu também passo da noite,
Eu me afasto um pouco Oh noite, mas retorno a ti de novo e te amo.

Por que devia eu ter medo de confiar-me a ti?
Não tenho medo, fui bem apresentado bem por ti,
Amo o rico dia corrente, mas não abandono em quem me deitei por tanto tempo,
Não sei como eu vim de ti e não sei aonde vou contigo, mas sei que vim bem e irei bem.

Pararei apenas um tempo com a noite, e levantarei cedo,
Passarei devidamente o dia Oh minha mãe e devidamente retornarei a ti.

5 CONCLUSION

We must begin this chapter by remembering what we stated in section 3.2, where we declared that our purpose is to re-create some books and poems from *Leaves of Grass* into Portuguese according to our theory and practice of creative translation, which was exposed in that part of our research. After establishing our methodological approach to the texts, we defined the **corpus** that would be subject of it, as it can be seen below, a passage from section 2.3 (and repeated in section 3.7):

We have chosen the following books and poems to work on this time: “Inscriptions”; “Starting from Paumanok”; “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”; “SEA-DRIFT” (“Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking”); and “Passage to India”. We intend to include more poems in our project, such as: “A Song for Occupations”; “A Song of the Rolling Earth”; “Youth, Day, Old Age and Night”; “Birds of Passage”; “Memories of President Lincoln”; “By Blue Ontario’s Shore”; “Proud Music of the Storm”; “Prayer of Columbus” and “The Sleepers”.

Now we shall explain what happened to our proposition in the course of our studies, whether they have been realized and whether there were changes, and finally whether our dream has come true, that is, if we have been able to bring into our language a considerable amount of Whitman’s poetry in a reasonable poetic re-creation. First of all, by comparing the list above to the list of poems at the Table of Contents we can see that there have been changes. The first one is the order in which the poems appear at the Table of Contents, which is the order they appear in *Leaves of Grass*; naturally, we refer to the 1891-92 edition, also known as the “deathbed” edition. Thus, after “Song of the Redwood-Tree”, the correct order is: “A Song for Occupations,” “A Song of the Rolling Earth,” “Youth, Day, Old Age and Night,” “Birds of Passage,” “A Broadway Pageant,” “Sea-Drift,” “Memories of President Lincoln,” “Passage to India,” and “The Sleepers.” The second change is in the choice of poems. We have decided to include the complete “Sea-Drift” cluster, since it is a very important book in the poet’s life, where he confesses his desperation and faith in recovery (see section 2.5.2 for more information on these poems). Another reason for this is Bloom’s indication of Whitman’s six elegies mentioned in section 2.4, which include “As I Ebb’d with the Ocean of Life.” For the same reason we have included “The Sleepers,” so that we pay homage to Bloom and provide the reader the opportunity to read all six elegies in Portuguese (“Song of Myself” was re-created for our Master’s thesis). In the same line of reasoning, as

we have decided to re-create “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d,” we have chosen to translate the complete “Memories of President Lincoln,” so that we could all enjoy “Oh Captain, My Captain” and the other poems of this group as well. As our work has increased a lot with these additions, we have decided to exclude for the present research these three poems: “By Blue Ontario’s Shore,” “Proud Music of the Storm,” and “Prayer of Columbus.” Not other criterion was used for this exclusion except for availability of time, under the circumstances mentioned above.

However, there is still another fact to explain. Actually, we are very proud to say that we have translated complete sections of *Leaves of Grass*, especially because we have rendered into Portuguese the books and poems from “Inscriptions”, the first book of *Leaves*, up to “Sea-Drift,” which is why we have translated “A Broadway Pageant,” so that we could have all these poems fully in our language. After “Sea-Drift,” we have chosen to re-create “Memories of President Lincoln” and “The Sleepers” as a deed of gratitude to Bloom’s insights, and “Passage to India,” which we had already re-created before we had taken these decisions. As a matter of fact, we began translating “Passage to India” soon after we had been awarded our Master’s degree, and it served as a bridge to our doctorate, as well as “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking,” whose revision served us as an incentive to continue this work. This is why both are part of this research.

From now on we will see in practice whether our method has worked: we will quote passages from the re-created texts in order to verify whether we have been able to re-construct the “original codification” of the poems into our vernacular, as we have stated in section 3.2. We will take a sample from each book, cluster or poem re-created, so that we can have a general view of the work. Nevertheless, we advise our reader to pay attention to the following poems, as they are an exception in Whitman’s poetic production: “Eidólons,” from “Inscriptions;” “Pioneers! O Pioneers”, from “Birds of Passage;” “To the Man-of-War-Bird,” from “Sea-Drift,” and “O Captain! My Captain!,” from “Memories of President Lincoln.” These four poems are written in traditional meter and some lines are rhymed, furthermore, they show Whitman’s departing point, traditional versification, which he developed to arrive at his free verse. However, even in these poems Whitman does not follow totally exact patterns of verse, and the verses within the stanzas are varied in meter.

As we have showed in the last sections of chapter 3, we have also followed a similar development in our course of poetic study. We first learned and practiced traditional versification, and then moved on to free verse. Therefore, our poetic ability in translation is a development over past rhythms and meter, which is a kind of learning that is similar to Whitman's own way of writing his poetry. To use Whitman's expression on music, we saturated ourselves with all kinds of poetry in Portuguese, English and Spanish, as well as in translations from other languages, before attempting to free our ear from them and be free to create new combinations of verse. Thus, it is natural to find traces of regular verses mingled with free verse. Nonetheless, our main goal is always to find the best combination possible of sound and rhythm for each line or poetic unit, that is, a part of a line, according, of course, to the "original codification." In this manner, we have followed Whitman's particular diction or prosody, which, as we have pointed out in chapter 3, section 3.4, is varied and new, adjusted to what he wanted to convey. This resulted in a broader concept of rhythm, which points to the flow of verses in the poem as a whole, as they unfold, one after the other or even one out of the other, budding like flowers, and not only the specific combinations within each unit or group of words. Regarding this, many poems or parts of poems are better enjoyed as a complete composition and not as individual verses. Then, sometimes, it is not useful to analyze a poem bit by bit; it is better just to place them next to their original and compare one to the other as an entire picture. We will indicate in each case what the best course of action is. We will do this especially not to tire the reader, since there are three sections in chapter 3 dedicated to this kind of presentation and comparison.

Apart from these comments, we must add some grammatical ones: in English, when things, thoughts or feelings are described or expressed in a series and the last item is introduced with the use of "and," it is separated from the others by a comma, which does not happen in Portuguese, in which the use of "and" is enough. So we have taken care to follow the patterns of grammar of our own language. In the case of coordinate clauses and phrases, particularly in clauses with a different subject, we use a comma after the coordinate conjunction "and" in Portuguese as well. Of course, when punctuation in the original text is used for purposes other than purely grammatical convention, or in a strange way, we have kept it the way it was printed: then it is not a mistake to find words beginning with capital letters in the middle of sentences, or a new phrase that starts with lower-case letters after an exclamation point. We have left these graphic arrangements the way they are. Of special notice is our choice of pronouns. We have decided to use the second person singular and

plural (*tu, vós*) to translate *you*. This is the best way to avoid all misunderstandings with personal references caused by *você, vocês* in Portuguese, whose verbs follow the patterns of third person pronouns (*ele, ela; eles, elas*), especially because in our language there is an even worse problem: people use *tu* and *você* with verbs following the second and third persons interchangeably. This is colloquial usage, but it has become so common that its use has contaminated all means of spoken and written expression. Another point that must be made is about the use of subject pronouns. As the verbs in Portuguese already indicate the person who is speaking, it is in general a linguistic redundancy to use pronouns, especially in catalogues when the same pronoun is repeated throughout long stanzas. Even when the pronoun is “I”, we have avoided the repetition. However, we do not lose this cataloguing effect by excluding the pronouns, since there is the repetition of the verbs. On the other hand, we have kept the pronouns in the passages in which we have considered them necessary according to the context to emphasize the subject who is performing the action.

We shall now provide examples of poetic re-creations from *Leaves of Grass* so that the reader might judge our work for themselves. We will also add some comments on each poem, in order to situate the reader. For that purpose, we will also provide the original text, and when available, another translation of the same passage for comparison. We begin by quoting stanzas from the poem “Eidólons,” from “Inscriptions.” This is an example of poems in which Whitman uses regular meter. “Eidólons” is an image, a phantom, an appearance, to indicate that above or behind it the real being exists, the soul, our eternal reality. This first stanza below is made up of the following combination: a line of six syllables, then one of five plus one of six again, with a pause between them, then one of eight syllables with one of ten between parenthesis, and ending with one of four. The other verses naturally fell within the natural rhythms of our language, especially verses of six and ten syllables:

STANZA 3:

WHITMAN:

Ever the dim beginning,
 Ever the growth, the rounding of the circle,
 Ever the summit and the merge at last, (to surely start again,)
 Eidólons! eidólons!

OUR RE-CREATION:

Sempre o sombrio começo,
 Sempre o crescimento, o circundar do círculo,
 Sempre o ápice e a fusão por fim, (pra certamente iniciar de novo,)
 Ídolos! ídolos!

MEIRA¹:

Sempre o pálido recomeço,
 Sempre o crescimento, o arredondamento do círculo,
 Sempre o ápice e o amálgama afinal (para o certo recomeço),
 Espectros, espectros!

STANZA 6:**WHITMAN:**

The ostent evanescent,
 The substance of an artist's mood or savan's² studies long,
 Or warrior's, martyr's, hero's toils,
 To fashion his eidólon.

OUR RE-CREATION:

O evanescente aspecto,
 A essência do ânimo de um artista ou longos estudos de um erudito,
 Ou labutas do guerreiro, mártir, herói,
 Para moldar seu ídolo.

MEIRA:

A ostentação evanescente,
 A substância do humor de um artista ou a longa observação da savana,
 As armadilhas de um guerreiro, de um mártir, de um herói,
 Para talhar seu espectro.

STANZA 20:**WHITMAN:**

Thy body permanent,
 The body lurking there within thy body,
 The only purport of the form thou art, the real I myself,
 An image, an eidólon.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Teu corpo permanente,
 O corpo oculto dentro de teu corpo,
 O único sentido da forma que és, o eu mesmo real,
 Uma imagem, um ídolo.

MEIRA:

Teu corpo permanente,
 O corpo espreitando lá dentro de teu corpo,
 O único sentido da forma de tua arte, o verdadeiro Eu, eu mesmo,
 Uma imagem, um espectro.

Now we quote the initial stanza from “Starting from Paumanok” that shows a typical whitmanian construction, that is, a long series of sentences with the subject appearing only in the last line of the passage. This is a type of poetic piece that must be enjoyed as a whole, to see how the poet creates his spiral construction towards the final climactic action performed

¹ The translations by Meira were published in: WHITMAN, WALT. *Folhas de Relva*. Tradução de Luciano Alves Meira. São Paulo: Martin Claret, 2005, pp.28-31.

² Whitman used to write this French word, “savant,” without the “t.” “Savana,” in English, is “savanna” or “savannah.”

by the “I”. This poem, as it appears in a foot-note in chapter 4, was the opening poem of *Leaves of Grass* in 1860, and its title then was “Proto-Leaf”; it contains the poet’s main themes, such as Love, Democracy, Religion (see part 10), as well as comradeship, catalogues of the nation and the soul.

WHITMAN:

Starting from Paumanok

1

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 Mannahatta my city, or on southern savannas,
 Or a soldier camp'd or carrying my knapsack and gun, or a miner in
 California,
 Or rude in my home in Dakota's woods, my diet meat, my drink from
 the spring,
 Or withdrawn to muse and meditate in some deep recess,
 Far from the clank of crowds intervals passing rapt and happy,
 Aware of the fresh free giver the flowing Missouri, aware of mighty
 Niagara,
 Aware of the buffalo herds grazing the plains, the hirsute and strong-
 breasted bull,
 Of earth, rocks, Fifth-month flowers experienced, stars, rain, snow, my
 amaze,
 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.

OUR RECREATION:

Partindo de Paumanok

1

Partindo da pisciforme Paumanok onde nasci,
 Bem-gerado e criado por uma mãe perfeita,
 Após percorrer muitas terras, amante de calçadas movimentadas,
 Habitante em Mannahatta minha cidade, ou em savanas sulinas,
 Ou um soldado acampado ou levando minha mochila e arma, ou um
 mineiro na Califórnia,
 Ou rude em meu lar nos bosques de Dakota, nutrido de carne, bebendo da
 fonte,
 Ou retirado para cismar e meditar em algum recanto profundo,
 Longe do clangor das aglomerações intervalos passando encantados e
 contentes,
 Atento ao fluido Missouri doce disposto doador, atento ao vasto Niágara,
 Atento aos rebanhos de búfalos pastando nas planícies, ao touro hirsuto e
 robusto,

À terra, pedras, perito em flores de Maio, estrelas, chuva, neve, meu
 assombro,
 Tendo estudado os tons do tordo e o vôo do falcão montês,
 E ouvido de manhã o inigualável, o tordo ermitão nos cedros do pântano,
 Solitário, cantando no Ocidente, lanço meu canto para um Mundo Novo.

Now a passage from section 4 of “Salut au Monde!,” with the use of anaphoras, the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of verses (see section 3.5) and a catalogue of geographical features. This poem appears early in Whitman’s poetic life, in 1856. It counterbalances, from the beginning, his effusive nationalism and shows that he had a world vision as well, with high regard to other countries, peoples and cultures. This poem is in a way connected to “Passage to India,” which expands it and searches for transcendence from materials, inciting the soul to travel to more than India on to “the seas of God” towards the spiritual dimension.

WHITMAN:

I see plenteous waters,
 I see mountain peaks, I see the sierras of Andes where they range,
 I see plainly the Himalayas, Chian Shaks, Altays, Ghauts,
 I see the giant pinnacles of Elbruz, Kazbek, Bazardjusi,
 I see the Styrian Alps, and the Karnac Alps,
 I see the Pyrenees, Balks, Carpathians, and to the north the Dofrafields, and
 off at sea mount Hecla,
 I see Vesuvius and Etna, the mountains of the Moon, and the Red
 mountains of Madagascar,
 I see the Lybian, Arabian, and Asiatic deserts,
 I see huge dreadful Arctic and Antarctic icebergs,
 I see the superior oceans and the inferior ones, the Atlantic and Pacific, the
 sea of Mexico, the Brazilian sea, and the sea of Peru,
 The waters of Hindustan, the China sea, and the gulf of Guinea,
 The Japan waters, the beautiful bay of Nagasaki land-lock'd in its
 mountains,
 The spread of the Baltic, Caspian, Bothnia, the British shores, and the bay
 of Biscay,
 The clear-sunn'd Mediterranean, and from one to another of its islands,
 The White sea, and the sea around Greenland.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Vejo águas profundas,
 Vejo picos de montanhas, vejo as serras dos Andes onde se alinham,
 Vejo claramente os Himalaias, Chian Sahas, Altays, Ghauts,
 Vejo os pináculos gigantes de Elbruz, Kazbek, Bazardjusi,
 Vejo os Alpes da Estíria e os Alpes de Karnac,
 Vejo os Pirineus, Bálcãs, Cárpatos, e ao norte os campos de Dofra, e ao mar
 o monte Hecla,
 Vejo o Vesúvio e o Etna, as montanhas da Lua, e as montanhas vermelhas
 de Madagascar,
 Vejo os desertos líbio, árabe e asiático,
 Vejo imensos e medonhos icebergs Árticos e Antárticos,
 Vejo os oceanos superiores e inferiores, o Atlântico e o Pacífico, o mar do

México, o mar do Brasil e o mar do Peru,
 As águas do Indostão, o Mar da China, e o golfo da Guiné,
 As águas do Japão, a bela baía de Nagasaki abrigada em suas montanhas,
 A extensão dos litorais Báltico, Cáspio, Bósnio, Britânico e a baía de
 Biscaia,
 O ensolarado Mediterrâneo e de uma a outra de suas ilhas,
 O mar Branco e o mar ao redor da Groenlândia.

We quote two passages from “Song of the Open Road.” Both show the main theme of this chant, which is the invitation to travel, because Whitman always liked to be in the open air, in direct contact with nature. In this poem he can combine this love for nature with his desire for vastness and the search for the unknown; especially in search of the great comrades, the “great Companions, and to belong to them.” But there is also the symbolism of the road, for it represents the roads of the universe that are traveled by the souls, and that everything that is experienced on the roads of the earth is all designed to the progress of the souls, which includes religion. For this reason, the first quotation below sounds like a biblical speech. The second, the last stanza of the poem, is the part where the poet offers his hand, his love and the invitation for the reader to travel with him.

WHITMAN:

11

Listen! I will be honest with you,
 I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes,
 These are the days that must happen to you:
 You shall not heap up what is call'd riches,
 You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve,
 You but arrive at the city to which you were destin'd, you hardly settle
 yourself to satisfaction before you are call'd by an irresistible call to
 depart,
 You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mockings of those who
 remain behind you,
 What beckonings of love you receive you shall only answer with passionate
 kisses of parting,
 You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their reach'd hands toward
 you.

OUR RE-CREATION:

11

Ouve! serei honesto contigo,
 Não ofereço os velhos prêmios finos, mas ofereço novos prêmios toscos,
 Estes são os dias que devem te acontecer:
 Não acumularás o que se chama riquezas,
 Espalharás com mão pródiga tudo aquilo que ganhares ou alcançares,
 Mal chegas à cidade a qual foste destinado, mal te acomodas
 satisfatoriamente e já és chamado por um irresistível apelo a partir,
 Receberás sorrisos irônicos e escárnios dos que permanecem para trás,

Responderás aos acenos de amor que recibes somente com ardentes beijos
de despedida,
Não permitirás a retenção dos que esticam suas mãos estendidas em tua
direção.

WHITMAN:

15

[...]

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?

OUR RE-CREATION:

15

[...]

Camarada, te dou minha mão!
Te dou meu amor que vale mais que dinheiro,
Eu me dou a ti sem sermão ou lei;
Tu te darás a mim? virás viajar comigo?
Seremos leais enquanto vivermos?

This is a very famous part of “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”, one of the six elegies referred to in section 2.4; it was published in 1856, and was the best poem of that edition. This poem depicts the poet’s crossing from Manhattan to Brooklyn at the end of a working day. It transcendently portrays everyone’s crossing, not only from one side to other, but also a crossing of time and space, from material to immaterial toward eternity. In the part quoted below the poet talks to the river; the combination of sounds, marking the movement of the semantic units within the lines, mirrors the swinging movement of the water and the waves and the coming and going of the tide.

WHITMAN:

9

Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-tide!
Frolic on, crested and scallop-edg'd waves!
Gorgeous clouds of the sunset! drench with your splendor me, or the men
and women generations after me!
Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers!
Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta! stand up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn!
Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw out questions and answers!
Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution!
Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house or street or public assembly!
Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and musically call me by my
nighest name!

OUR RECREATION:

9

Flui, rio! flui com a maré montante e vaza com a vazante!
 Galhofai, ondas encrespadas e orladas de conchas!
 Magníficas nuvens do poente! encharcai-me com vosso esplendor, ou os
 homens e mulheres gerações adiante!
 Cruzai de costa a costa, multidões inumeráveis de passageiros!
 Erguei-vos, altos mastros de Mannahatta! erguei-vos, belas colinas do
 Brooklyn!
 Pulsa, cérebro confuso e curioso! lança perguntas e respostas!
 Suspende aqui e em todo lugar, flutuação eterna de solução!
 Fitai, olhos ternos e sedentos, na casa ou rua ou assembléia pública!
 Soai, vozes de jovens! ruidosa e musicalmente chamai-me por meu nome
 mais íntimo!

MEIRA:

9

Desce, rio! Desce com a inundação da maré e reflui com o refluxo!
 Brincai, projeções curvilíneas nas bordas das cristas das ondas!
 Nuvens formosas do crepúsculo! Encharcai-me com vosso esplendor ou às
 gerações de homens e mulheres que virão após mim!
 Levai, de uma margem à outra, incontáveis multidões de passageiros!
 De pé, altos mastros de Mannahatta! De pé, lindas montanhas do Brooklyn!
 Palpita, cérebro, confuso e curioso! Lança de ti perguntas e respostas!
 Suspende aqui e em toda parte a eterna dança das soluções!
 Olhai fixamente, olhos amorosos e sedentos, na casa ou na rua ou na
 assembléia pública!
 Soai, vozes, vozes de rapazes! Altas e musicais, chamai-me pelo meu nome
 mais íntimo!
 (WHITMAN, 2005, p.175; texto da edição de *Folhas de Relva* da Martin
 Claret)

Now an excerpt from “Song of the Answerer,” or the “Poem of the Poet” as its original title indicates, naming the poet as the answerer. Once again, the poet is giving his message of death, faith, eternal life, which shows the way to transcend our physical life on this planet. The passage below, from section 1, portrays in the first part Whitman’s flowing percussion, even when describing a daily scene, and, in the second part, the poet’s simplicity, by which he could be taken for anyone, as he always preferred to be called, “one of the roughs.”

WHITMAN:

He says indifferently and alike *How are you friend?* to the President at his
 levee,
 And he says *Good-day my brother*, to Cudge that hoes in the sugar-field,
 And both understand him and know that his speech is right.
 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.

Then the mechanics take him for a mechanic,
 And the soldiers suppose him to be a soldier, and the sailors that he has
 follow'd the sea,
 And the authors take him for an author, and the artists for an artist,
 And the laborers perceive he could labor with them and love them,
 No matter what the work is, that he is the one to follow it or has follow'd it,
 No matter what the nation, that he might find his brothers and sisters there.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Ele diz indiferentemente e igual *Como estás amigo?* ao Presidente em sua
 recepção,
 E diz *Bom dia meu irmão*, ao Cudge que capina no canavial,
 E ambos o entendem e sabem que seu discurso é correto.

Ele caminha com perfeita facilidade no capitólio,
 Ele caminha pelo Congresso, e um Representante diz a outro, *Eis nosso
 igual manifesto e novo.*

Assim os mecânicos o tomam por mecânico,
 E os soldados o supõem um soldado, e os marujos que ele serviu no mar,
 E os autores o tomam por autor, e os artistas por artista,
 E os operários percebem que ele poderia trabalhar com eles e os amar,
 Não importa o trabalho, ele é aquele que o segue ou seguiu,
 Não importa a nação, ele poderia achar seus irmãos e irmãs nela.

“Our Old Feuillage,” published in 1860 (but probably written in 1856), was composed by Whitman to be the “National Poem,” as declared by himself (WHITMAN, 2002, p.145). It is a catalogue of scenes, places, people, and atmospheres of every part of the United States, a collection, a “bouquet” of the American foliage, which should be bound together to form one single national identity, as he sings at the end of the poem. The poem indeed looks like a dense forest of words, sounds, meanings, all growing thick together: it is four and a half pages long, with no subdivisions, and verses that are longer than usual, most of them with two, and many of them with three, four and even five lines.

WHITMAN:

In the Mannahatta, streets, piers, shipping, store-houses, and the countless
 workmen working in the shops,
 And I too of the Mannahatta, singing thereof—and no less in myself than
 the whole of the Mannahatta in itself,
 Singing the song of These, my ever-united lands—my body no more
 inevitably united, part to part, and made out of a thousand diverse
 contributions one identity, any more than my lands are inevitably
 united and made ONE IDENTITY;
 Nativities, climates, the grass of the great pastoral Plains,
 Cities, labors, death, animals, products, war, good and evil—these me,
 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?

OUR RECREATION:

Em Mannahatta, ruas, molhes, remessa, armazéns, e os incontáveis trabalhadores trabalhando nas lojas,
 E eu também de Mannahatta, cantando isso—e não menos em mim que o todo de Mannahatta em si,
 Cantando a canção Destas, minhas sempre-unidas terras—meu corpo não mais inevitavelmente unido, parte a parte, e feito de mil contribuições diversas uma identidade, não mais que minhas terras estão inevitavelmente unidas e feitas UMA IDENTIDADE;
 Natividades, climas, a relva das grandes Planícies pastoris, Cidades, labutas, morte, animais, produtos, guerra, bem e mal—estes eu, Estes conferindo, em todos seus particulares, a antiga feuillage a mim e à América, como posso fazer menos que passar a evidência da união deles, para conferir o mesmo a ti?
 Quem sejas! que fazer exceto oferecer-te divinas folhas, que sejas também preferível como eu?
 Que fazer exceto aqui cantando, convidar-te a recolher buquês da feuillage incomparável destes Estados?

“A Song of Joys” expresses the Romantic feeling of longing for home, the place where he was born, but also the transcendental sympathy that must be part of the human soul, which leads us to do our share of the work towards the common good. He is so happy that he is capable of facing any thing, even torture or death. At the end of the second passage quoted below his song is similar to what a soldier or a samurai has to confront, that is, willingly give their own lives for their cause, which is also part of the Romantic heroism (this poem does not have numbered subdivisions):

WHITMAN:

O the joy of that vast elemental sympathy which only the human soul is capable of generating and emitting in steady and limitless floods.

O the mother's joys!
 The watching, the endurance, the precious love, the anguish, the patiently yielded life.

O the joy of increase, growth, recuperation,
 The joy of soothing and pacifying, the joy of concord and harmony.

O to go back to the place where I was born,
 To hear the birds sing once more,
 To ramble about the house and barn and over the fields once more,
 And through the orchard and along the old lanes once more.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Oh o júbilo dessa vasta solidariedade essencial que só a alma humana é capaz de gerar e emitir em fluxos estáveis e ilimitados.

Oh o júbilo da mãe!
A vigilância, a resistência, o amor precioso, a angústia, a vida
pacientemente concedida,

Oh o júbilo do aumento, crescimento, recuperação,
O júbilo de acalmar e pacificar, o júbilo de concórdia e harmonia.

Oh voltar ao lugar onde nasci,
Ouvir os pássaros cantar uma vez mais,
Vaguear pela casa e galpão e pelos campos uma vez mais,
E no pomar e pelas velhas veredas uma vez mais.

[...]

WHITMAN:

For not life's joys alone I sing, repeating—the joy of death!
The beautiful touch of Death, soothing and benumbing a few moments, for reasons,
Myself discharging my excrementitious body to be burn'd, or render'd to powder, or buried,
My real body doubtless left to me for other spheres,
My voided body nothing more to me, returning to the purifications, further offices, eternal uses of the earth.

O to attract by more than attraction!
How it is I know not—yet behold! the something which obeys none of the rest,
It is offensive, never defensive—yet how magnetic it draws.

O to struggle against great odds, to meet enemies undaunted!
To be entirely alone with them, to find how much one can stand!
To look strife, torture, prison, popular odium, face to face!
To mount the scaffold, to advance to the muzzles of guns with perfect nonchalance!
To be indeed a God!

OUR RE-CREATION:

Pois não só o júbilo da vida canto, repetindo—o júbilo da morte!
Ah o belo toque da Morte, acalmando e entorpecendo alguns momentos, por razões,
Eu mesmo liberando meu corpo excrementoso para ser queimado, ou cedido ao pó, ou enterrado,
Meu corpo real deixado sem dúvida a mim para outras esferas,
Meu corpo vazio nada mais para mim, voltando às purificações, futuros ofícios, usos eternos da terra.

Ah atrair por mais do que atração!
Como é não sei—porém vê! o algo que não obedece nada mais,
É ofensivo, nunca defensivo—porém como puxa magnético.

Ah enfrentar grandes desavenças, encontrar inimigos indômitos!
Estar inteiramente sozinho com eles, descobrir o quanto podemos suportar!

Olhar contenda, tortura, prisão, opróbrio popular, cara a cara!
 Escalar o cadafalso, avançar para os canos das armas com perfeito
 desinteresse!
 Ser de fato um Deus!

“Song of the Broad-Axe” presents a great introductory stanza and the persistent use of anaphoras (see section 3.5). It was published in 1856 and underwent much revision, but the first six lines have remained untouched ever since. In relation to the axe mentioned in the title, Whitman’s points to his uselessness in the hands of European headsmen, while praising its use in the hands of woodcutters and lumberjacks in America (terms used to refer to this occupation before the invention of chainsaws and similar equipments). As a result of this work, there would be wood for building houses, furniture, etc. The middle part of section three is a self-reference, since he also worked as a carpenter in his youth. We will quote the first part of the poem and a passage from section 2 to illustrate the use of anaphora. Part of this poem, published in 1856, was later excluded by the poet. This part, titled “His Shape Arises”, is quoted in section 2.5.2.

WHITMAN:

1

Weapon shapely, naked, wan,
 Head from the mother's bowels drawn,
 Wooded flesh and metal bone, limb only one and lip only one,
 Gray-blue leaf by red-heat grown, helve produced from a little seed sown,
 Resting the grass amid and upon,
 To be lean'd and to lean on.

[...]

2

Welcome are all earth's lands, each for its kind,
 Welcome are lands of pine and oak,
 Welcome are lands of the lemon and fig,
 Welcome are lands of gold,
 Welcome are lands of wheat and maize, welcome those of the grape,
 Welcome are lands of sugar and rice,
 Welcome the cotton-lands, welcome those of the white potato and sweet
 potato,
 Welcome are mountains, flats, sands, forests, prairies,
 Welcome the rich borders of rivers, table-lands, openings,
 Welcome the measureless grazing-lands, welcome the teeming soil of
 orchards, flax, honey, hemp;

OUR RE-CREATION:

1

Arma simétrica, exposta, pálida,
 Cunha extraída das entranhas da mãe,

Corpo lenhoso e osso metálico, único membro e único lábio,
 Folha gris-azulada em calor encarnado lavrada, cabo obtido de uma
 sementinha semeada,
 Em meio e sobre a relva a repousar,
 Para ser apoio e se apoiar.

[...]

2

Bem-vindas são todas as terras da terra, cada uma para sua espécie,
 Bem-vindas as terras de pinheiro e carvalho,
 Bem-vindas as terras de limão e figo,
 Bem-vindas as terras do ouro,
 Bem-vindas as terras de trigo e milho, bem-vindas as da uva,
 Bem-vindas as terras de açúcar e arroz,
 Bem-vindas as terras de algodão, bem-vindas as da batata inglesa e batata-
 doce,
 Bem-vindas as montanhas, várzeas, areias, florestas, pradarias,
 Bem-vindas as ricas ribeiras, chapadas, aberturas,
 Bem-vindas as pastagens incomensuráveis, bem-vindo o solo fértil de
 pomares, linho, mel, cânhamo;

MEIRA:

1

Tem forma de uma arma nua e descorada,
 Sua cabeça foi tirada das entranhas maternas,
 Sua carne é de madeira, seus ossos de metal, com um único membro e um
 lábio somente,
 Folha azul acinzentada, dilatada no fogo da forja, e o cabo produzido do que
 já foi semente,
 Está posto sobre a relva e, bem ao meio,
 Descansa, como também serve de esteio.

[...]

2

Bem-vindas são todas as terras do planeta, cada uma com seu tipo,
 Bem-vindas são as terras dos pinheiros e dos carvalhos,
 Bem-vindas são as terras dos limões e dos figos,
 Bem-vindas são as terras do ouro,
 Bem-vindas são as terras do trigo e do milho, bem-vindas as terras uvas,
 Bem-vindas as terras do açúcar e do arroz,
 Bem-vindas as terras do algodão, bem-vindas aquelas da batata-branca e da
 batata-doce,
 Bem-vindos são as montanhas, os vales, as areias, as florestas, os prados,
 Bem-vindos as ricas margens dos rios, os planaltos, as clareiras,
 Bem-vindas as imensuráveis terras de pastagem, bem-vindos os solos férteis
 dos pomares, a fibra do linho, o mel, o cânhamo;
 (WHITMAN, 2005, pp.193-4; texto da edição de *Folhas de Relva* da Martin
 Claret)

“Song of the Exposition”, as the title suggests, was a composition that was presented at the Annual Exhibition in New York City, on September 7, 1871. It sings the grandeur of the United States, its industrial, commercial and human power. It unites the ancient muse with the American Muse, Columbia, the first name of the United States, which represents the Union, the National Flag, the Nation, and the Mother of all its citizens. It is in fact a nationalist song, as we can see in the quotation below in its two last stanzas (it is a curious coincidence that Whitman has written a song about nationality to be read on September 7, our Independence Day):

WHITMAN:

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, except the roads to faith and
 death?)
 While we rehearse our measureless wealth, it is for thee, dear Mother,
 We own it all and several to-day indissoluble in thee;
 Think not our chant, our show, merely for products gross or lucre—it is for
 thee, the soul in thee, electric, spiritual!
 Our farms, inventions, crops, we own in thee! cities and States in thee!
 Our freedom all in thee! our very lives in thee!

OUR RE-CREATION:

Agora aqui e estes e daqui em paz, tudo teu Oh Bandeira!
 E aqui e daqui por ti, Oh Musa universal! e tu por eles!
 E aqui e daqui Oh União, todo trabalho e trabalhadores são teus!
 Nenhum separado de ti—doravante Um só, nós e tu,
 (Pois o sangue dos filhos, o que é, só o sangue materno?
 E vidas e obras, o que são todas afinal, exceto as vias para fé e morte?)

 Enquanto ensaiamos nossa riqueza incomensurável, é por ti, Mãe querida,
 Possuímos tudo e vários hoje indissolúveis em ti;
 Não pensa que nosso canto, nosso espetáculo, meramente como produtos
 brutos ou lucro—é por ti, a alma em ti, elétrica, espiritual!
 Nossas fazendas, invenções, colheitas, possuímos em ti! cidades e Estados
 em ti!
 Nossa liberdade toda em ti! nossas próprias vidas em ti!

The next poem to be quoted is “Song of the Redwood-Tree”, which is about the giant trees of the Pacific Coast, the incredibly tall trees that can reach up to 115,5 meters and that can live up to 2,200 years. In the poem there are the voices of dryads, wood nymphs and divinities that preside over trees, and of hamadryads, wood nymphs who only live as long as their trees. Clearly, the poem is their song of death as heard by the poet, since the woodcutters

do not hear them crying. Except, the poet heard it, and translated it into common language. We quote here a passage from this song, the wood nymph's song in italics, as it was composed by Whitman (from part 1):

WHITMAN:

Murmuring out of its myriad leaves,
Down from its lofty top rising two hundred feet high,
Out of its stalwart trunk and limbs, out of its foot-thick bark,
That chant of the seasons and time, chant not of the past only but the future.

*You untold life of me,
And all you venerable and innocent joys,
Perennial hardy life of me with joys 'mid rain and many a summer sun,
And the white snows and night and the wild winds;
O the great patient rugged joys, my soul's strong joys unreck'd by man,
(For know I bear the soul befitting me, I too have consciousness, identity,
And all the rocks and mountains have, and all the earth,)
Joys of the life befitting me and brothers mine,
Our time, our term has come.*

OUR RE-CREATION:

Murmurando desde sua miríade de folhas,
Do seu altivo topo se erguendo a duzentos pés de altura,
De seu tronco robusto e membros, de sua casca espessa,
Aquele canto das estações e tempo, canto não só do passado mas do futuro.

*Tu minha vida inarrada,
E todos vós veneráveis e inocentes júbilos,
Minha vida resistente e perene com júbilos em meio à chuva e muitos sóis
de verão,
E as brancas neves e noite e os ventos bravios;
Ah os grandes júbilos ásperos pacientes, os fortes júbilos de minha alma
impensados pelo homem,
(Pois saibas que carrego a alma adequada a mim, também tenho
consciência, identidade,
E todas as pedras e montanhas têm, e toda a terra,)
Júbilos da vida adequados a mim e meus irmãos,
Nosso tempo, nosso prazo chegou.*

“A Song for Occupations” is a great pronouncement by Whitman in relation to labor, equality and politics, since it balances all society, asserting that no one is above or below any one else. Besides, he sings that everything springs from the people, politics, religion, democracy, laws, Constitution, and that everything must be done for the people and not the other way around, as is thought until today in Brazil, for example. The following excerpt incites the reader to understand this issue (in this case, the substance is more important than the form):

WHITMAN:

We thought our Union grand, and our Constitution grand,
 I do not say they are not grand and good, for they are,
 I am this day just as much in love with them as you,
 Then I am in love with You, and with all my fellows upon the earth.

We consider bibles and religions divine—I do not say they are not divine,
 I say they have all grown out of you, and may grow out of you still,
 It is not they who give the life, it is you who give the life,
 Leaves are not more shed from the trees, or trees from the earth, than they
 are shed out of you.

4

The sum of all known reverence I add up in you whoever you are,
 The President is there in the White House for you, it is not you who are here
 for him,
 The Secretaries act in their bureaus for you, not you here for them,
 The Congress convenes every Twelfth-month for you,
 Laws, courts, the forming of States, the charters of cities, the going and
 coming of commerce and mails, are all for you.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Achamos nossa União grandiosa e nossa Constituição grandiosa,
 Não digo que elas não são grandiosas e boas, pois são,
 Estou hoje tão apaixonado por elas quanto tu,
 Então estou apaixonado por Ti, e por todos meus companheiros sobre a
 terra.

Consideramos bíblias e religiões divinas—não digo que elas não são
 divinas,
 Digo que elas brotaram de ti, e ainda podem brotar de ti,
 Não são elas que dão a vida, é tu que das a vida,
 Folhas não são mais vertidas das árvores, ou árvores da terra, do que são
 vertidas de ti.

4

A soma de toda reverência conhecida eu acrescento a ti quem sejas,
 O Presidente está lá na Casa Branca por ti, não és tu que está lá por ele,
 Os Secretários agem em suas repartições por ti, não tu aqui por eles,
 O Congresso se reúne a cada doze meses por ti,
 Leis, tribunais, a formação de Estados, as cartas das cidades, o ir e vir do
 comércio e correspondências, são tudo por ti.

“A Song of the Rolling Earth” is about nature, the earth, the Word, as it is in the Bible, for example, in The Gospel according to John, 1:1, The Word Made Flesh: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The Word made Flesh is the Word that creates, the Word that becomes solid matter. This is what Whitman sings in this poem, that the real words are the bodies and souls of humanity, as we can see in this passage from part 1 of this song:

WHITMAN:

Air, soil, water, fire—those are words,
 I myself am a word with them—my qualities interpenetrate with theirs—my
 name is nothing to them,
 Though it were told in the three thousand languages, what would air, soil,
 water, fire, know of my name?

A healthy presence, a friendly or commanding gesture, are words, sayings,
 meanings,
 The charms that go with the mere looks of some men and women, are
 sayings and meanings also.

The workmanship of souls is by those inaudible words of the earth,
 The masters know the earth's words and use them more than audible words.

Amelioration is one of the earth's words,
 The earth neither lags nor hastens,
 It has all attributes, growths, effects, latent in itself from the jump,
 It is not half beautiful only, defects and excrescences show just as much as
 perfections show.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Ar, solo, água, fogo—essas são palavras,
 Eu mesmo sou uma palavra com elas—minhas qualidades interpenetram
 com as delas—meu nome é nada pra elas,
 Embora fosse dito nos três mil idiomas, o que o ar, a terra, a água, o fogo,
 saberiam do meu nome?

Uma presença saudável, um gesto amável ou imperativo, são palavras,
 provérbios, significados,
 Os encantos que acompanham as meras expressões de alguns homens e
 mulheres, são também provérbios e significados.

O artesanato das almas é feito pelas palavras inaudíveis da terra,
 Os mestres conhecem as palavras da terra e as usam mais que palavras
 audíveis.

Melhoria é uma das palavras da terra,
 A terra não se atrasa nem se apressa,
 Tem todos os atributos, crescimentos, efeitos, latentes em si mesma
 desde o princípio,
 Não é só meio linda, defeitos e excrescências mostram tanto quanto
 perfeições.

The next poem, “Youth, Day, Old Age and Night,” must be quoted in full, since it has only four lines. This short poem is what was left of the poem “Great Are the Myths” from the 1855 edition, which was excluded from *Leaves of Grass* in 1881. Though short, it is a beautiful poem that sounds very well in Portuguese with its graceful and peaceful acceptance of old age.

WHITMAN:

Youth, large, lusty, loving—youth full of grace, force, fascination,
Do you know that Old Age may come after you with equal grace, force,
fascination?

Day full-blown and splendid—day of the immense sun, action,
ambition, laughter,
The Night follows close with millions of suns, and sleep and restoring
darkness.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Juventude, vasta, vigorosa, amorosa—juventude cheia de graça, força,
fascinação,
Sabes que a Velhice pode vir depois de ti com a mesma graça, força,
fascinação?

Dia maduro e esplêndido—dia do imenso sol, ação, ambição, riso,
A Noite sucede com milhões de sóis e sono e revigorante escuridão.

MEIRA:

Juventude, grande, vigorosa, amante—juventude cheia de graça, força,
fascinação,
Sabes que a Velhice pode vir após ti com a mesma graça, força, fascinação?

Dia maduro e esplêndido—dia do sol imenso, ação, ambição, risada,
A Noite vem a seguir com milhões de sóis, com o sono e a escuridão
renovadora.

(WHITMAN, 2005, p.232; texto da edição de *Folhas de Relva* da Martin
Claret)

The next section is a book, “Birds of Passage”, published in 1881, although it is made up of poems that had previously appeared in other clusters. As the title indicates, these poems are about movement, change, expansion, future, evolution, and search for identity. We supply here two excerpts, one from “Song of the Universal” and two stanzas from “Pioneers! Oh Pioneers!” The first one shows what Whitman considers to be universal: only what is good. The second part, the verses from “Pioneers!...” sing the will to travel westward and the conquest of new lands with the courage and determination to create a new nation, even at the cost of their own lives (see the more regular cadence of “Pioneers!...”).

WHITMAN:

2

Out of the bulk, the morbid and the shallow,
Out of the bad majority, the varied countless frauds of men and states,
Electric, antiseptic yet, cleaving, suffusing all,
Only the good is universal.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Canto do Universal

2

Da massa, do mórbido e do raso,
 Da maioria ruim, as variadas fraudes incontáveis de homens e estados,
 Elétrico, porém anti-séptico, rachando, inundando tudo,
 Só o bem é universal.

WHITMAN:

Have the elder races halted?
 Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond the seas?
 We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the past we leave behind,
 We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,
 Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

OUR RE-CREATION:

Pioneiros! Oh Pioneiros!

Cessaram as raças mais velhas?
 Elas se curvam e findam a lição, exaustas lá além dos mares?
 Nós pegamos a eterna tarefa, e o fardo e a lição,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Todo o passado deixamos pra trás,
 Emergimos num mundo mais novo e pujante, variado mundo,
 Novo e forte o mundo que apreendemos, mundo de labor e da marcha,
 Pioneiros! Oh pioneiros!

Now we give a quotation from part 1 of “A Broadway Pageant,” which is a poem to celebrate the parade down Broadway of the Japanese embassy in 1860, and to sing freedom and democracy in America. We have chosen this passage to show the beauty of these long lines (from part 1) that beat like a long and free percussion of the drums in a parade, and its mixing with the beating of the feet on the street and the voices from the crowds:

WHITMAN:

When million-footed Manhattan unpent descends to her pavements,
 When the thunder-cracking guns arouse me with the proud roar I love,
 When the round-mouth'd guns out of the smoke and smell I love spit their salutes,
 When the fire-flashing guns have fully alerted me, and heaven-clouds canopy my city with a delicate thin haze,
 When gorgeous the countless straight stems, the forests at the wharves, thicken with colors,
 When every ship richly drest carries her flag at the peak,
 When pennants trail and street-festoons hang from the windows,
 When Broadway is entirely given up to foot-passengers and foot-standers, when the mass is densest,
 When the façades of the houses are alive with people, when eyes gaze riveted tens of thousands at a time,

When the guests from the islands advance, when the pageant moves
 forward visible,
 When the summons is made, when the answer that waited thousands of
 years answers,
 I too arising, answering, descend to the pavements, merge with the crowd,
 and gaze with them.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Quando a multitudinária Manhattan descerrada desce para suas calçadas,
 Quando as armas de estrondeante estampido me despertam com o orgulhoso
 rugido que amo,
 Quando as armas de bocas arredondadas cospem suas salvas, em meio à
 fumaça e cheiro que amo,
 Quando as armas de fogo reluzentes me alertaram totalmente, e nuvens do
 céu dosselam minha cidade com uma tênue névoa delicada,
 Quando os incontáveis troncos retos magníficos, as florestas no cais, se
 adensam de cores,
 Quando todo navio ricamente trajado carrega sua bandeira no topo,
 Quando pendões avançam e grinaldas de rua pendem das janelas,
 Quando a Broadway está inteiramente sucumbida a pedestres e
 espectadores, quando a massa é a mais densa,
 Quando as fachadas das casas estão fervilhando de pessoas, quando olhos
 fitam fixos dezenas de milhares de cada vez,
 Quando os convidados das ilhas avançam, quando o desfile progride visível,
 Quando a convocação é feita, quando a resposta que esperou milhares de
 anos responde,
 Eu também me erguendo, respondendo, desço à calçada, fundo-me com a
 multidão, e fito com eles.

Although the “Sea-Drift” cluster comprises wonderful poems, such as “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” and “As I Ebb’d with the Ocean of Life,” as well as other beautiful poems, we have chosen one short poem and a stanza from another to include in this discussion. It does not mean that these poems are better than the others, but because they are great expressions of the poet in a very dense way, which is not typical of Whitman, who usually prefers longer and freer lines. The first, “Tears”, echoes the poet’s anxiety and loneliness at night. It is similar in tone and rhythm to another poem, “Trickle Drops”, from “Calamus,” included in section 3.5. Two Brazilian poets have inspired us in the re-creation of these poems: (João da) Cruz e Souza (1861-1898) and Augusto (de Carvalho Rodrigues) dos Anjos (1884-1914). The inspiration came from their well marked rhythm that has lingered in our memory, as well as their capacity for interweaving sounds in their poetry. The re-creation of the other poem quoted further on, “To the Man-of-War-Bird,” imposed itself by its strong and marked rhythm, a mix of decasyllables and alexandrines. The passage selected below has been translated in alexandrines, even the last line, which is a combination of a short verse of four syllables plus an alexandrine.

WHITMAN:

Tears! tears! tears!
 In the night, in solitude, tears,
 On the white shore dripping, dripping, suck'd in by the sand,
 Tears, not a star shining, all dark and desolate,
 Moist tears from the eyes of a muffled head;
 O who is that ghost? that form in the dark, with tears?
 What shapeless lump is that, bent, crouch'd there on the sand?
 Streaming tears, sobbing tears, throes, choked with wild cries;
 O storm, embodied, rising, careering with swift steps along the
 beach!
 O wild and dismal night storm, with wind—O belching and desperate!
 O shade so sedate and decorous by day, with calm countenance and
 regulated pace,
 But away at night as you fly, none looking—O then the unloosen'd ocean,
 Of tears! tears! tears!

OUR RE-CREATION:**Lágrimas**

Lágrimas! lágrimas! lágrimas!
 Na noite, em solidão, lágrimas,
 Na alva praia pingando, pingando, absorvida pela areia,
 Lágrimas, nem uma estrela brilhando, tudo sombrio e solitário,
 Úmidas lágrimas dos olhos de uma cabeça encoberta;
 Oh quem é aquele fantasma? aquela forma na sombra, com lágrimas?
 Que massa disforme é aquela, curvada, agachada lá na areia?
 Lágrimas vertentes, soluçantes lágrimas, angústias, engasgadas com brados
 selvagens;
 Oh tormenta, encarnada, se erguendo, disparando em passos rápidos pela
 praia!
 Oh tormenta noturna selvagem e sinistra, com vento—Oh vazante e
 desesperado!
 Oh sombra tão sóbria e digna de dia, com sereno semblante e regulado
 ritmo,
 Mas ausente à noite quando voas, ninguém olhando—Oh aí então o
 alastrado oceano,
 De lágrimas! lágrimas! lágrimas!

WHITMAN:

Thou who hast slept all night upon the storm,
 Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions,
 (Burst the wild storm? above it thou ascended'st,
 And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee,)
 Now a blue point, far, far in heaven floating,
 As to the light emerging here on deck I watch thee,
 (Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast.)

OUR RE-CREATION:**Ao Alcatraz**

Tu que dormiste toda a noite na tormenta,
 Acordando renovado em espantosas penas,
 (Rompeste a brava tormenta? e acima subiste,
 E dormiste no céu, teu servo que criou-te,)

Agora um ponto azul, no céu longe planando,
 Quanto à luz que emerge aqui no convés, te assisto,
 (Eu mesmo um grão, um ponto na vagante vastidão do mundo.)

“Memories of President Lincoln” was composed in the weeks after Lincoln’s assassination on April 14, 1865, and was published together with *Drum-Taps* that same year. Everything that Whitman presents in the poem “When Lilacs...” actually took place: the “great star”, Venus, excessively low in the sky, the lilacs blooming at every dooryard, the bird singing, the processions throughout the United States, the coffin being taken to many cities, the cloud over the President after his second inauguration, as he appeared on the Capitol portico (seen or heard and recorded by Whitman), the atmosphere of fear. Everything was uncommonly strange during that month. In *The Solitary Singer* (1955, chapter VIII), Allen portrays this period in the life of Washington, Whitman and the Nation in great detail as well as Whitman does in the poem. As for our work in this section, we do not intend to present any passages from “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d;” we only want to stress the extreme difficulty to re-create its title, which in Portuguese became too long: “Da Última Vez Que Lilases Floriram no Pátio.” However, it is one that mirrors the original, which is also made up of two sound/sense units. In English they are divided or separated by “in,” and in Portuguese by “Que,” which also begins the second part. We tried many variables, but it was very hard to find one that carried all the meaning and at the same time sounded well. As it is a sad and sweet elegy, it must be read in a smooth and calm tone. In this way, we may feel the sounds echoing in each other through the line. In this way, the title can sound very well in Portuguese, because it carries in itself the tearing apart, the grieving and the tiredness of the nation portrayed in the poem. On the other hand, we shall present two stanzas from “Oh Captain! My Captain!,” which is a very rare piece in Whitman’s poetry, mostly written in iambs (verses with short/unstressed syllables followed by long/stressed syllables), and dedicated to the same person addressed in “When Lilacs...” Naturally, we did the best to maintain the beating pulse and rhymes of the original, and, in comparison to it, we may say that the result is fairly good:

WHITMAN:

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
 The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
 The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
 While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
 But O heart! heart! heart!
 O the bleeding drops of red,
 Where on the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.

[...]

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
 My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
 The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
 From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
 Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
 But I with mournful tread,
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

OUR RE-CREATION:

Oh Capitão! Meu Capitão!

Oh Capitão! meu Capitão! findou nossa horrível jornada,
 O navio superou toda tormenta, alcançamos a meta almejada,
 O porto está próximo, os sinos eu ouço, a gente toda exultando,
 Enquanto olhos miram a estável quilha, o casco duro e ousado;
 Mas Oh coração! coração! coração!
 Oh os pingos de vermelho sangrados,
 Onde jaz no convés meu Capitão,
 Prostrado morto e gelado.

[...]

Meu Capitão não responde, seus lábios, pálidos, calados,
 Meu pai não sente meu braço, não tem pulso ou vontade,
 O navio ancorado são e salvo, encerrada e finda a jornada,
 Da horrível jornada o navio vencedor adentra com o fim conquistado;
 Exultai Oh praias e dobrai Oh sinos!
 Mas eu com passo pesado,
 Percorro o convés onde jaz meu Capitão,
 Prostrado morto e gelado.

MEIRA:

Ó Capitão! Meu Capitão!

Ò Capitão! Meu Capitão! Finda é a temível jornada,
 Vencida cada tormenta, a busca foi laureada.
 O porto é ali, os sinos ouvi, exulta o povo inteiro,
 Com o olhar na quilha estanque do vaso ousado e austero.
 Mas ó coração, coração!
 O sangue mancha o navio,
 No convés, meu Capitão
 Vai caído, morto e frio.

[...]

Ah, meu Capitão não fala, foi do lábio o sopro expulso,
 Meu calor meu pai não sente, já não tem vontade ou pulso.
 Da nau ancorada e ileso, a jornada é concluída.
 E lá vem ela em triunfo da viagem antes temida.
 Povo, exulta! Sino, dobra!

Mas meu passo é tão sombrio...
 No convés meu Capitão
 Vai caído, morto e frio.
 (WHITMAN, 2005, pp.334-5; texto da edição de *Folhas de Relva* da Martin Claret)

From “Passage to India,” published in 1871, we bring two excerpts to illustrate what the true son of God, the poet, is singing: God’s purpose. This means that in this poem he is not singing the materials of his America or the earth, he is going beyond geography and culture since he has seen that the earth is to be all linked together, towards what is universal and eternal: the soul, and its divinity and connection with the Creator. He includes the great achievements of his time; however, he is sailing much farther than that, he is asking his soul to sail “the seas of God.” As we have stated at the comment on “Salut au Monde!,” we have the feeling that this poem is a continuation of that one, but at another degree of awareness, passing from material, from what is seen and physical, to the immaterial, to the unseen and spiritual. I would not dare to say metaphysical because the poet himself wrote in a note that there is nothing philosophical about “Passage to India,” because it is focused on “evolution” (WHITMAN, 2002, p.345).

WHITMAN:

From section 2:

[...]

Passage to India!

Lo, soul, seest thou not God's purpose from the first?
 The earth to be spann'd, connected by network,
 The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in marriage,
 The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near,
 The lands to be welded together.

[...]

From section 8:

[...]

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
 At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
 But that I, turning, call to thee O soul, thou actual Me,
 And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
 Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
 And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.

[...]

OUR RE-CREATION:

From section 2:

[...]

Passagem para a Índia!

Olha, alma, não vês o propósito de Deus desde o início?
 A terra para ser transposta, conectada por rede,

As raças, os vizinhos, para casar e ser concedidos em matrimônio,
Os oceanos para ser cruzados, o distante aproximado,
As terras para ser soldadas.

[...]

From section 8:

[...]

Rapidamente me encolho ao pensar em Deus,
Na Natureza e suas maravilhas, Tempo e Espaço e Morte,
Mas que eu, virando, chamo a ti Oh alma, tu Eu real,
E vê, tu gentilmente dominas os orbes,
Tu emparelhas com o Tempo, sorrís contente pra Morte,
E preenches, expandes bastante as vastidões do Espaço.

[...]

From “The Sleepers” we bring the passage that is mentioned in section 2.5.2, which depicts a swimmer’s death by sea water. As we have explained in that section, Whitman was a swimmer himself, and this scene portrays the death of a swimmer that is similar to the death of Carpus in the myth when competing with his friend Calamus, who died shortly after this event (2.5.1). As Whitman saw himself in everyone, it could be argued that the swimmer described in the scene is also a manifestation or projection of his own self, since the swimmer in the passage below is big, like him, and middle-aged. Although Whitman was thirty-seven years old at that time (“The Sleepers” was part of the 1855 edition, in which the poet sings in part 1 of “Song of Myself”: “I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin”), he was prematurely aged enough to look forty-five. As for the poem, it describes Whitman’s vision in his dream, in which he can see the dreams of the other dreamers. However, he also wanders during the day in the light. He is conscious of light and dark, life and death, and is content with both. He always accepts everything and everybody and excludes nothing.

WHITMAN:

3

I see a beautiful gigantic swimmer swimming naked through the eddies of
the sea,
His brown hair lies close and even to his head, he strikes out with
courageous arms, he urges himself with his legs,
I see his white body, I see his undaunted eyes,
I hate the swift-running eddies that would dash him head-foremost on the
rocks.

What are you doing you ruffianly red-trickled waves?
Will you kill the courageous giant? will you kill him in the prime of his

middle age?

Steady and long he struggles,
 He is baffled, bang'd, bruis'd, he holds out while his strength holds out,
 The slapping eddies are spotted with his blood, they bear him away, they
 roll him, swing him, turn him,
 His beautiful body is borne in the circling eddies, it is continually bruis'd on
 rocks,
 Swiftly and out of sight is borne the brave corpse.

OUR RE-CREATION:

3

Vejo um belo gigantesco nadador nadando nu pelos torvelinhos do mar,
 Seu cabelo castanho jaz rente e liso em sua cabeça, ele golpeia com braços
 corajosos, ele se impele com suas pernas,
 Vejo seu corpo alvo, vejo seus olhos destemidos,
 Odeio os torvelinhos rápido-correntes que o arrojariam totalmente de
 cabeça nas pedras.

O que estais fazendo ondas desordeiras gotejadas de vermelho?
 Matareis o gigante corajoso? o matareis no auge de sua meia-idade?

Firme e longamente ele luta,
 Ele está confuso, detonado, contundido, ele resiste enquanto sua força
 resiste,
 Os estapeantes torvelinhos estão manchados com seu sangue, eles o
 ganham, eles o rolam, o balançam, o giram,
 Seu belo corpo é carregado nos circundantes torvelinhos, é continuamente
 contundido nas rochas,
 Rápido e longe da vista é carregado o valente cadáver.

LOPES:

Vejo um nadador gigante e bonito nadando nu pelos redemoinhos do mar,
 Seu cabelo castanho colado rente à testa....bate na água com braçadas
 corajosas....acelera com suas próprias pernas.

Vejo seu corpo branco....seus olhos destemidos;
 Odeio os rápidos redemoinhos que ameaçam arremessar sua cabeça contra
 as rochas.

O que estão fazendo, ondas cafetinas e sanguinolentas?
 Vão matar o corajoso gigante? Vão matá-lo no auge da meia-idade?

Por muito tempo ele luta e insiste;
 Elas o socam o estapeiam o espancam....ele agüenta enquanto suas forças
 agüentam,
 Os rápidos redemoinhos se tingem com seu sangue....elas o levam
 embora....o viram e reviram e o balançam:
 Seu corpo bonito emerge nos redemoinhos....continuamente ferido pelas
 rochas,
 Rapidamente e em outro lugar nasce seu bravo cadáver.
 (WHITMAN, 2005, p.165; pontuação de acordo com a edição de 1855)

By analyzing all the books and poems we have translated and the samples provided above, for some of which we have supplied a second translation for comparison, we believe that we have met our own expectations of the re-creation of Whitman's poetry into our language. Even though it is very difficult to criticize our own work, for we may fall prey to self-praise, by comparing our re-created poetic texts to other existing translations, it becomes clear that our approach to this task is at least different from the usual literal or almost literal translations, especially in regard to rhythm, as we have emphasized at the beginning of this chapter. We have been able to maintain the flow of the poems and we feel that their reading aloud shall show this, because we are constantly testing how they sound. What we mean by this is that we have always tried to find the best possible combination of sounds in each verse or parts of verse. Our purpose in this, it is not to make the verses sound beautiful, but to set the best phonic combination to transmit the sense of the verse in English. There are cases in which the effect might be exactly the opposite, that is, to describe scenes where evil thoughts and diseases are present. Besides, we have performed a careful work on vocabulary, so that the passages or words in the original that convey a sense of strangeness could be transmitted in Portuguese that way. However, there is more than just strangeness: Whitman liked to use words borrowed from other languages, such as French, Spanish and native American languages (ex.: savant, Libertad, Paumanok), he liked to write words with "k" (Kanadian, kosmos), and he sometimes changed the spelling of words (he wrote "carlacue" in section 20 of "Song of Myself," but the correct spelling is "curlicue" or "curlicue"). Together with his extensive vocabulary in *Leaves of Grass*, more than 13,000 words, the task of researching and checking every single word is tremendous. In this case, the Norton Critical Edition (WHITMAN, 2002) has been of great help with its incredible number of notes to poems and vocabulary. We have done the same thorough action regarding grammatical structures and punctuation, as well as Whitman's way of using certain collocations, particularly with adjectives, which he tends to use where they do not fit in correct English (he likes to use adjectives after the nouns, which is not considered syntactically acceptable in the English language). As in Portuguese the adjectives can go before or after the nouns, we have always tried to arrange them in the best way possible, that is, to maintain the original atmosphere of the poems. Another aspect that we have re-created with utmost care is the use of the *-ing* forms, whether they are verbs or nouns, since they are an essential part of Whitman's verse.

Apart from all that we have written before, we do know that a translator's job is never finished, for every time we return to the poems we will look for any kinds of mistakes, and we

will certainly find them, and we will verify every verse again trying to make it better, as we have done with our previous re-creations. However, we also know that there is a time when our eyes are not able to find mistakes any more, due to excessive proximity to the texts. Thus, we leave this task now, as well as the judgment on our work, to the critics and readers. Paraphrasing Whitman, we are pleased with what we have done with the poems.

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ANNEX: Origins of Attempted Secession

ORIGINS OF ATTEMPTED SECESSION

Walt Whitman

“Not the whole matter, but some side facts worth conning to-day and any day.

I CONSIDER the war of attempted secession, 1860–65, not as a struggle of two distinct and separate peoples, but a conflict (often happening, and very fierce) between the passions and paradoxes of one and the same identity—perhaps the only terms on which that identity could really become fused, homogeneous and lasting. The origin and conditions out of which it arose, are full of lessons, full of warnings yet to the Republic—and always will be. The underlying and principal of those origins are yet singularly ignored. The Northern States were really just as responsible for that war, (in its precedents, foundations, instigations,) as the South. Let me try to give my view. From the age of 21 to 40, (1840–’60,) I was interested in the political movements of the land, not so much as a participant, but as an observer, and a regular voter at the elections. I think I was conversant with the springs of action, and their workings, not only in New York city and Brooklyn, but understood them in the whole country, as I had made leisurely tours through all the middle States, and partially through the western and southern, and down to New Orleans, in which city I resided for some time. (I was there at the close of the Mexican war—saw and talk’d with General Taylor, and the other generals and officers, who were fêted and detain’d several days on their return victorious from that expedition.)

Of course many and very contradictory things, specialties, developments, constitutional views, &c., went to make up the origin of the war—but the most significant general fact can be best indicated and stated as follows: For twenty-five years previous to the outbreak, the controlling “Democratic” nominating conventions of our Republic—starting from their primaries in wards or districts, and so expanding to counties, powerful cities, States, and to the great Presidential nominating conventions—were getting to represent and be composed of more and more putrid and dangerous materials. Let me give a schedule, or list, of one of these representative conventions for a long time before, and inclusive of, that which nominated Buchanan. (Remember they had come to be the fountains and tissues of the American body politic, forming, as it were, the whole blood, legislation, office-holding, &c.) One of these conventions, from 1840 to ’60, exhibited a spectacle such as could never be seen except in our own age and in these States. The members who composed it were, seven-eighths

of them, the meanest kind of bawling and blowing office-holders, office-seekers, pimps, malignants, conspirators, murderers, fancy-men, custom-house clerks, contractors, kept-editors, spaniels well-train'd to carry and fetch, jobbers, infidels, disunionists, terrorists, mail-riflers, slave-catchers, pushers of slavery, creatures of the President, creatures of would-be Presidents, spies, bribers, compromisers, lobbyists, sponges, ruin'd sports, expell'd gamblers, policy-backers, monte-dealers, duellists, carriers of conceal'd weapons, deaf men, pimpled men, scarr'd inside with vile disease, gaudy outside with gold chains made from the people's money and harlots' money twisted together; crawling, serpentine men, the lousy combings and born freedom-sellers of the earth. And whence came they? From back-yards and bar-rooms; from out of the customhouses, marshals' offices, post-offices, and gambling-hells; from the President's house, the jail, the station-house; from unnamed by-places, where devilish disunion was hatch'd at midnight; from political hearses, and from the shrouds inside, and from the shrouds inside of the coffins; from the tumors and abscesses of the land; from the skeletons and skulls in the vaults of the federal almshouses; and from the running sores of the great cities. Such, I say, form'd, or absolutely control'd the forming of, the entire personnel, the atmosphere, nutriment and chyle, of our municipal, State, and National politics—substantially permeating, handling, deciding, and wielding everything—legislation, nominations, elections, “public sentiment,” &c.—while the great masses of the people, farmers, mechanics, and traders, were helpless in their gripe. These conditions were mostly prevalent in the north and west, and especially in New York and Philadelphia cities; and the southern leaders, (bad enough, but of a far higher order,) struck hands and affiliated with, and used them. Is it strange that a thunder-storm follow'd such morbid and stifling cloud-strata?

I say then, that what, as just outlined, heralded, and made the ground ready for secession revolt, ought to be held up, through all the future, as the most instructive lesson in American political history—the most significant warning and beacon-light to coming generations. I say that the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth terms of the American Presidency have shown that the villainy and shallowness of rulers (back'd by the machinery of great parties) are just as eligible to these States as to any foreign despotism, kingdom, or empire—there is not a bit of difference. History is to record those three Presidentiads, and especially the administrations of Fillmore and Buchanan, as so far our topmost warning and shame. Never were publicly display'd more deform'd, mediocre, snivelling, unreliable, false-hearted men. Never were these States so insulted, and attempted to be betray'd. All the main purposes for which the government was establish'd were openly denied. The perfect equality of slavery with freedom was flauntingly preach'd in the north—nay, the superiority of

slavery. The slave trade was proposed to be renew'd. Everywhere frowns and misunderstandings—everywhere exasperations and humiliations. (The slavery contest is settled—and the war is long over—yet do not those putrid conditions, too many of them, still exist? still result in diseases, fevers, wounds—not of war and army hospitals—but the wounds and diseases of peace?)

Out of those generic influences, mainly in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, &c., arose the attempt at disunion. To philosophical examination, the malignant fever of that war shows its embryonic sources, and the original nourishment of its life and growth, in the north. I say secession, below the surface, originated and was brought to maturity in the free States. I allude to the score of years preceding 1860. My deliberated opinion is now, that if at the opening of the contest the abstract duality-question of *slavery and quiet* could have been submitted to a direct popular vote, as against their opposite, they would have triumphantly carried the day in a majority of the northern States—in the large cities, leading off with New York and Philadelphia, by tremendous majorities. The events of '61 amazed everybody north and south, and burst all prophecies and calculations like bubbles. But even then, and during the whole war, the stern fact remains that (not only did the north put it down, but) *the secession cause had numerically just as many sympathizers in the free as in the rebel States.*

As to slavery, abstractly and practically, (its idea, and the determination to establish and expand it, especially in the new territories, the future America,) it is too common, I repeat, to identify it exclusively with the south. In fact down to the opening of the war, the whole country had about an equal hand in it. The north had at least been just as guilty, if not more guilty; and the east and west had. The former Presidents and Congresses had been guilty—the governors and legislatures of every northern State had been guilty, and the mayors of New York and other northern cities had all been guilty—their hands were all stain'd. And as the conflict took decided shape, it is hard to tell which class, the leading southern or northern disunionists, was more stunn'd and disappointed at the non-action of the free-state secession element, so largely existing and counted on by those leaders, both sections.

So much for that point, and for the north. As to the inception and direct instigation of the war, in the south itself, I shall not attempt interiors or complications. Behind all, the idea that it was from a resolute and arrogant determination on the part of the extreme slave-holders, the Calhounites, to carry the states rights' portion of the constitutional compact to its farthest verge, and nationalize slavery, or else disrupt the Union, and found a new empire, with slavery for its corner-stone, was and is undoubtedly the true theory. (If successful, this attempt might—I am not sure, but it might—have destroy'd not only our American republic,

in anything like first-class proportions, in itself and its prestige, but for ages at least, the cause of Liberty and Equality everywhere—and would have been the greatest triumph of reaction, and the severest blow to political and every other freedom, possible to conceive. Its worst result would have inured to the southern States themselves.) That our national democratic experiment, principle, and machinery, could triumphantly sustain such a shock, and that the Constitution could weather it, like a ship a storm, and come out of it as sound and whole as before, is by far the most signal proof yet of the stability of that experiment, Democracy, and of those principles, and that Constitution.

Of the war itself, we know in the ostent what has been done. The numbers of the dead and wounded can be told or approximated, the debt posted and put on record, the material events narrated, &c. Meantime, elections go on, laws are pass'd, political parties struggle, issue their platforms, &c., just the same as before. But immensest results, not only in politics, but in literature, poems, and sociology, are doubtless waiting yet unform'd in the future. How long they will wait I cannot tell. The pageant of history's retrospect shows us, ages since, all Europe marching on the crusades, those arm'd uprisings of the people, stirr'd by a mere idea, to grandest attempt—and, when once baffled in it, returning, at intervals, twice, thrice, and again. An unsurpass'd series of revolutionary events, influences. Yet it took over two hundred years for the seeds of the crusades to germinate, before beginning even to sprout. Two hundred years they lay, sleeping, not dead, but dormant in the ground. Then, out of them, unerringly, arts, travel, navigation, politics, literature, freedom, the spirit of adventure, inquiry, all arose, grew, and steadily sped on to what we see at present. Far back there, that huge agitation-struggle of the crusades stands, as undoubtedly the embryo, the start, of the high preeminence of experiment, civilization and enterprise which the European nations have since sustain'd, and of which these States are the heirs.

Another illustration—(history is full of them, although the war itself, the victory of the Union, and the relations of our equal States, present features of which there are no precedents in the past.) The conquest of England eight centuries ago, by the Franco Normans—the obliteration of the old, (in many respects so needing obliteration)—the Domesday Book, and the repartition of the land—the old impedimenta removed, even by blood and ruthless violence, and a new, progressive genesis establish'd, new seeds sown—time has proved plain enough that, bitter as they were, all these were the most salutary series of revolutions that could possibly have happen'd. Out of them, and by them mainly, have come, out of Albic, Roman and Saxon England—and without them could not have come—not only the England

of the 500 years down to the present, and of the present—but these States. Nor, except for that terrible dislocation and overturn, would these States, as they are, exist to-day.

It is certain to me that the United States, by virtue of that war and its results, and through that and them only, are now ready to enter, and must certainly enter, upon their genuine career in history, as no more torn and divided in their spinal requisites, but a great homogeneous Nation—free states all—a moral and political unity in variety, such as Nature shows in her grandest physical works, and as much greater than any mere work of Nature, as the moral and political, the work of man, his mind, his soul, are, in their loftiest sense, greater than the merely physical. Out of that war not only has the nationality of the States escaped from being strangled, but more than any of the rest, and, in my opinion, more than the north itself, the vital heart and breath of the south have escaped as from the pressure of a general nightmare, and are henceforth to enter on a life, development, and active freedom, whose realities are certain in the future, notwithstanding all the southern vexations of the hour—a development which could not possibly have been achiev'd on any less terms, or by any other means than that grim lesson, or something equivalent to it. And I predict that the south is yet to outstrip the north.” (WHITMAN, 1996, pp.1018-1024)

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