

ANALYSIS

The Structure of *Leaves of Grass* (1881)

Walt Whitman (Twayne, 1962) 76-91

James E. Miller, Jr.

In a critical reading of Whitman, it seems safe to make two important assumptions: the last or deathbed edition represented his book as he wanted it preserved, and this edition should serve as the basis for any critical estimate. Whitman's biography is largely irrelevant to his artistic achievement, and his book should be read on its own terms, not as it exemplifies or interprets his life. It should prove of some value to take a critical ramble through the whole of the last lifetime edition of *Leaves of Grass*, observing its themes, imagery, music, and catching whatever we can glimpse of its elusive structure.

The moment we open the *Leaves* and glance at the first page we know that we are looking at a poetry different in kind from what went before. Whitman was the first poet in history to exploit to the full the possibilities of free verse. And there is a rare compatibility between his form and his themes; the long, unrestrained line in its free flow captures in its very form the spirit of democracy and freedom that Whitman breathed into his verses. But though Whitman's poetry represented radical departures from the past, at the same time it kept firm hold on many poetic traditions. A glance on any page of *Leaves* reveals the use of such standard devices as assonance, alliteration, repetition, inverse word order, parallelism, and many others. And though Whitman freed himself from the measured foot, his poetry is filled with rhythm of its own, strong in the ear even if elusive to the eye. Whitman's revision of "Out of the Cradle" to "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" is indicative of his genius for instinctively achieving the inherently musical line.

The Modern Man I Sing

The cluster of poems opening *Leaves*, "Inscriptions," and the following long poem, "Starting from Paumanok," form the introductory portion of the book. These poems have their primary meaning only in relation to the poetry which follows them--for they provide a greeting to the reader and inform him of the themes, images, ideas, and attitudes that lie ahead. For this reason, these opening poems tend to be dependent and are rarely printed in isolation.

"Inscriptions" opens with "One's-Self I Sing," a succinct statement of the thematic heart of *Leaves*, and follows immediately with "As I Ponder'd in Silence," representing the poet's claims to the Old World muse that his poetry, like that of the past, also celebrates war--"Waged in my book with varying fortune, with flight, advance, and retreat, victory deferr'd and wavering." The suggestion is clear that *Leaves* is the modern, New World epic to serve America, as the great epics of the past served their countries. In the third poem, "In Cabin'd Ships at Sea," the poet sends his book (with its "tones of unseen mystery") to sea--introducing one of the major symbols of *Leaves*. Poem follows poem in inscriptions, some dedicating the book, some dwelling on vital themes, some glancing at the past, others peering into the future. Theme, idea, symbol, and image weave in and out, in and out, building to the fervent climax of the section with its intimate dedication to the reader.

"Starting from Paumanok" begins in autobiographical form, but it soon embraces "a soldier camp'd or carrying my knapsack and gun, or a miner in California"--a clear indication that the "I" is a composite American who embodies in some complex way the whole American (and finally, the whole *human*) experience. "Solitary, singing in the West, I strike up for a New World" is the carefree, vigorous exclamation of modern man meeting life, "what has come to the surface after so many throes and convulsions," on its own terms for what it offers. The sections of "Paumanok" comprise a systematic outline of the themes of *Leaves*, and the poet summarizes:

My comrade!

For you to share with me two greatneses, and a
third one rising inclusive and more resplendent,
The greatness of Love and Democracy, and the greatness of
Religion.

These three terms provide a key to the three major parts of *Leaves*--"Love," as it applies to the original emphasis on self-hood; "Democracy," as it suggests the shift to national crisis; "Religion," as it identifies the final turn to spirituality. "Starting from Paumanok" appropriately concludes with an evangelistic appeal for the reader to "haste on" with the poet into the main body of the *Leaves*.

I Celebrate Myself

The first major part of *Leaves* is by far the bulkiest, extending from "Song of Myself" through "Children of Adam," "Calamus," the song section (eleven poems), and through the clusters "Sea-Drift" and "By the Roadside." These poems take their unity (a unity out of a wide diversity) from their overall dedication to the sketching of a New World Personality, a new conscious selfhood that provides a model for America and for modern man.

This Personality may be linked to the hero of the Old World epics, as he is meant to serve as the ideal. But herein lies the paradox. As a hero of the New World democratic society, this Personality is not placed above men but is identified with the mass as one of the common people. His glorious selfhood is no more than what is available to all mankind, but he perceives it, heightens its meaning, celebrates it--and in this lies his heroism.

This Personality is sketched forth in all its complexity of intellectual being and variety of emotional response to the world and its ways. "Song of Myself" gives birth and original shape and identity to the Personality; "Children of Adam" provides an original relationship with women; "Calamus" calls for radically new relationships with men. The eleven songs, from "Salut au Monde!" through "A Song of the Rolling Earth," send the Personality forth to find his *place* on earth; the clusters from "Birds of Passage" through "By the Roadside" engage the Personality in *time* in an identification with a variety of moments in flux. Thus this first great section of *Leaves* provides the outlines of the epic hero of democracy.

"Song of Myself," "Children of Adam," and "Calamus" form the first and basic phase of the identification of the New World Personality. In "Song of Myself" the poet magnifies himself:

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

But the self-celebration is to serve as a signal for each man to discover his own divine selfhood. "Song of Myself" represents an awakening of the self, a coming to consciousness for the first time of the real meaning of being alive and in the flesh, of seeing and hearing, of tasting and feeling. This awakening to consciousness penetrates beyond the senses. It dives deep within, and it soars far beyond; and it discovers secrets and uncovers mysteries--the eternity and infinity of the self, the glories of the body and soul, the completion of life through death. When at the beginning of the poem the poet says, "I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin," he is purposefully juxtaposing his physical birth of thirty-seven years ago with his new birth in the identification for the first time of his selfhood--a birth into a new consciousness miraculously brought about by leaning and loafing and observing a spear of summer grass.

"Children of Adam" and "Calamus" move the Personality created in "Song of Myself" from his self-imposed, imaginative isolation and provide him with lovers and comrades. The cluster "Children of Adam" sketches forth yet another ideal for the newly aware self--the ideal of the sexual innocence and pleasure of Adam before the Fall--

To the garden the world anew ascending,
Potent mates, daughters, sons, preluding,

The love, the life of their bodies, meaning and being.

The New World Personality is to recreate the original garden in his relationship with women, and all the elements of nature are to participate in phallic and procreative celebration:

Bridegroom night of love working surely and softly into the
prostate dawn,
Undulating into the willing and yielding day,
Lost in the cleave of the clasping and sweet-flesh'd day.
This is the nucleus--after the child is born of woman, man is
born of woman,
This the bath of birth, this the merge of small and large,
and the outlet again.

As in "Song of Myself," there is a rebirth in "Children of Adam"--or simply a continuation of that reawakening begun earlier. It is, again, a birth of the consciousness to new intensities of awareness, new perceptions into the meaning of human relationships. And this birth of a new consciousness continues into the cluster of companion poems "Calamus," the male replacing the female in the central role. In the "Calamus" poems Whitman sketches, as counterpart of "Adam's" garden, the "paths untrodden" of ponds and calamus--another kind of innocent Eden:

Clear to me now standards not yet publish'd, clear to me
that my soul,
That the soul of the man I speak for rejoices in comrades,
Here by myself away from the clank of the world,
Tallying and talk'd to here by tongues aromatic,
No longer abash'd, (for in this secluded spot I can respond
as I would not dare elsewhere)

The spiritual "calamus" attachment of man to man is to be no less passionate and intense than the "Children of Adam" attachment--and will, in the mass, similarly result in a new kind of society--a "continent indissoluble," "the most splendid race the sun ever shone upon," "divine magnetic lands." Thus the spiritual comradeship of democracy fused with the sexual innocence of the Garden make up the New World society of the freshly created Personality.

The song section of *Leaves*, following "Calamus," makes up another loosely unified section in the book's structure and contains some of Whitman's greatest poetry. The Personality steps forth in his newly won identity to greet the world in "Salut au Monde!"--"What do you see Walt Whitman?.../ I see a great round wonder rolling through space..." The image of earth dominates the entire song section, appearing and reappearing in a variety of guises, reaching a climax in the final poem, "A Song of the Rolling Earth":

Tumbling on steadily, nothing dreading,
Sunshine, storm, cold, heat, forever withstanding, passing,
carrying,
The soul's realization and determination still inheriting,
The fluid vacuum around and ahead still entering and dividing,
The divine ship sails the divine sea.

Images of place dominate the poems from "Salut au Monde!" to "A Song of the Rolling Earth." Immediately after the first poem, appears "Song of the Open Road," and the Personality is launched on his journey:

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

And this "long brown path" leads to "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," in which the poet absorbs into his soul the images that identify the scene--the clouds, the sun, the people, the boat, the water.

"Song of the Answerer," "Our Old Feuillage," and "A Song of Joys" form a kind of interlude on the poet's journey over the earth: in the first, an encounter with the poet-as-Answerer; in the second, a celebration of "these compact lands tied at the hips with the belt"; in the last, commemoration of the joys of living--"O the joy of my soul leaning pois'd on itself, receiving identity through materials and loving them, observing characters and absorbing them." The next four poems seem to roam the earth in search of the soul's joys. "Song of the Broad-Axe" asserts, "Welcome are all earth's lands, each for its kind"; "Song of the Exposition" commemorates a celebration of America's industrial achievement; "Song of the Redwood Tree" presents a "California song"; and "A Song for Occupations" catalogs the joys of all human activities the earth over. Throughout the entire song section, the New World Personality seems to be roaming the earth, listening, observing, absorbing, discovering himself anew through discovery of *place* in all its mystic complexity. He cries out in "A Song of the Rolling Earth": "Whoever you are! motion and reflection are especially for you, / The divine ship sails the divine sea for you."

The clusters "Birds of Passage," "Sea-Drift," and "By the Roadside," broken by the single poem "Broadway Pageant," all together form the final part of the first great section of *Leaves*. Throughout this section, significantly made up in the main of clusters of short poems, the dominant image is no longer space, but time. Indeed, the titles of the clusters--all suggesting movement, first by air, then by water, and last on land--provide a series of images of decreasing speed: the effect is to pass from swift movement, to a slow pace, to, finally, a full stop. All of these images are suggestive of time, and the implication is that the Personality (or the reader) is moved swiftly through involvement with time, is next drifting in time, and at last is sitting silently by, observing ("I Sit and Look Out").

"Birds of Passage" contains in some ways Whitman's most philosophical poems, dominated by the long and abstract "Song of the Universal" with its introduction of "mystic evolution" suggesting the meaningful unfolding (or unspiraling) of time. "A Broadway Pageant" seems in context to be merely a moment in mystic evolution, only symbolically significant (the Japanese ambassadors visiting New York heralding a new movement from east to west, Orient to America). In the "Sea-Drift" poems, Whitman seems at his most hesitant and uncertain, emotionally drifting because of a failure of personal or creative involvements. No longer taking the sweeping and spiraling philosophical view of passing events both joyous and tragic, the personally engaged poet is too emotionally close to time to see it in terms of the all-swallowing, all-healing mystic evolution. "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" and "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life" are among Whitman's most moving lyrics, and they portray a Personality deeply involved in his personal entanglements. By comparison, "By the Roadside" is impersonal and disengaged, a cluster of poems of observation and objective commentary. These transient moments of mystic evolution, miscellaneous and passing, are noted and then left by the poet--he sees, hears, and is silent. Near the end of this cluster, the Personality may well muse: "Locations and times--what is it in me that meets them all, whenever and wherever, and makes me at home?"

The Throes of Democracy

The Personality given birth and identity, bodied forth on the earth and linked to mystic evolution in the first major section of *Leaves*, is, in the second section (extending from "Drum-Taps" through "Autumn Rivulets") introduced into a particular historical moment of a particular nation in crisis. In a sense, the New World hero sketched out in the abstract in the opening of *Leaves* is put to the test of war and national crisis in the succeeding pages. For the first time the poetry of *Leaves* becomes unrelievedly topical, tied to the actual happenings that shook the foundations of the nation. "Drum-Taps" is inseparably linked with the Civil War, "Memories of President Lincoln" with the death of the wartime president, and "By Ontario's Shore" and "Autumn Rivulets" with America after the war as she paused on the threshold of her future and as she undertook the undramatic tasks of rehabilitation.

"Drum-Taps" comprises one of the greatest bodies of war poetry ever written. It not only introduces a new subject into the *Leaves* but represents a radical change in the mood, tone, and themes:

No poem proud, I chanting bring to thee, nor mastery's
rapturous verse,
But a cluster containing night's darkness and blood-dripping
wounds,
And psalms of the dead.

But "Drum-Taps" is more than merely a miscellaneous collection of poems inspired by the war. In the first place, some unity is given to the cluster by the use of the sound image--the drum-tap--at intervals throughout, from the opening light stroke on the "stretch'd tympanum" through the "Beat! beat! drums!" to the "blow of the great convulsive drums" in the "Dirge for Two Veterans." And paralleling this dramatic variation in the drumbeat is the shifting mood and feeling of the hero--that Personality created by the earlier poems here intensely and emotionally engaged. The opening poems reflect a kind of thrill and excitement in anticipation of the adventure of war:

Mannahatta a-march--and it's O to sing it well!
It's O for a manly life in the camp.

But gradually this attitude shifts and the mood deepens, as the poet draws closer to the reality of war, in such poems as "By the Bivouac's Fitful Flame"; and the emotional involvement reaches a poignant climax in the moving dramatic soliloquy for a dead comrade-soldier in "Vigil Strange on the Field One Night." In the latter part of the cluster, there is not only a rising feeling of waste and tragedy but also a detachment that embraces the misery of foe as well as friend--"For my enemy is dead, a man as divine as myself is dead."

This sense of national tragedy carries over from "Drum-Taps" to "Memories of President Lincoln," with its four poems dramatizing the grief of the nation at its tragic loss. "Hush'd Be the Camps To-day," "This Dust Was Once the Man," and "O Captain! My Captain!" are competently executed expressions of public sentiment on a high public occasion. But there is absent from them the deep involvement of the emotions on the personal level. Only by reducing the tragedy to the smaller compass of the individual human level was Whitman able to capture the intense and genuine feeling of the event. But as he reduced the loss to his own personal involvement in "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," at the same time he magnified the meaning of the tragedy beyond the national level by his ingenious use of symbolism, by "Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant" of his soul.

The opening lines of "By Blue Ontario's Shore" suggest the nature of the major shift in emphasis in this second section of *Leaves*:

By Blue Ontario's shore,
As I mused of these warlike days, and of peace return'd and
the dead that return no more,
A Phantom gigantic superb, with stern visage accosted me,
*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.*

Such confrontation of the muse in this section of *Leaves* parallels the confrontation in "Inscriptions" (where, in answer to the "Phantom," the poet asserted that his "war" was waged "For life and death, for the Body and for the eternal Soul." "By Blue Ontario's Shore" thus strikes the chord that draws the poems from "Drum-Taps" through "Autumn Rivulets" into a unified section of *Leaves*; and, at the same time provides a long invocation (much of it mined from the 1855 Preface) for American poets--"Bards of the great Idea." "Autumn Rivulets," whose long second poem, "The Return of the Heroes," sets the tone and mood of the section, is a cluster of primarily national poems, "songs of continued years" after the great

struggle of the war, a miscellany as is suggested by the opening poem of the cluster, "As Consequent (Etc.)":

...from the sea of Time, collecting vasting all, I bring,
A windrow-drift of weeds and shells.

These poems are the "wayward rivulets" of the nation's autumn, after the high summer passions of the Civil War; they are "waifs.../ Wash'd on America's shores"--far more national and less personal than the "chaff, straw...and the sea-gluten" of his earlier "Sea-Drift" poems.

The second section of *Leaves* represents in one sense the fulfillment of the prophecies of the first. The poet in the beginning had juxtaposed as the New World ideal the "simple separate person" with the "word Democratic, the word En-masse." Individuality and the mass were emphasized throughout the early *Leaves*, with "Song of Myself" dramatizing the one and the "Calamus" vision of "companionship thick as trees" dramatizing the other. In the poems beginning with "Drum-Taps" there is a concrete realization of this ideal--the "mass" provided by the great army that arose to protect the Union; the "simple separate person" embodied idealistically in Abraham Lincoln, a man of the people who became the national leader and martyr. The national crisis of the Civil War did seem, then, a proof of the poet's confidence, a demonstration of the ability of democracy to produce both great men and great masses when the need arose.

The Way from Life to Death

The third major thematic division of *Leaves*, announced in "Proud Music of the Storm," runs through a number of individual poems and concludes with the cluster "Whisper of Heavenly Death." "Proud Music of the Storm" represents a dream vision of the poet, in which a great symphony of sounds, a blending of "hidden orchestras" and "Nature's rhythmus," enters his "lonesome slumber-chamber" and "seizes" him:

Come forward O my soul, and let the rest retire,
Listen, lose not, it is toward thee they tend,
Parting the midnight, entering my slumber-chamber,
For thee they sing and dance O soul.

From the extraordinary parade of sights and sounds originating the world around, the poet awakes with "the clue" he had long sought:

Haply what thou hast heard O soul was not the sounds of winds,
Nor dream of raging storm, nor sea-hawk's flapping wings
nor harsh scream,
...
But to a new rhythmus fitted for thee,
Poems bridging the way from Life to Death, vaguely wafted
in night air, uncaught, unwritten,
Which let us go forth in the bold day and write.

Like the Phantom of "Inscriptions" and "By Blue Ontario's Shore," the storm-music provides the poet's soul with a "new rhythmus," the theme of death and its meaning in a context of life.

"Passage to India," "Prayer of Columbus," "The Sleepers," "To Think of Time," and the cluster "Whispers of Heavenly Death," all are poems "bridging the way from Life to Death." "Passage to India" is one of Whitman's most ecstatic poems in which the poet notes the remarkable feats of engineers in physically rounding the globe and then calls for a parallel spiritual achievement. In his spiritual venturing and daring, the poet seems to peer into eternity as he experiences a foretaste of death:

O soul thou pleasest me, I thee.
Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking in the night,

Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death,
like waters flowing,
Bear me indeed as though the regions infinite,
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave me all over,
Bathe me O God in thee, mounting to thee,
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

Similarly "Prayer of Columbus" presents insight into the spiritual significance of death, as the old, feeble, destitute and ridiculed Columbus turns to the "ray of light, steady, ineffable.../ Light rare untellable, lighting the very light" in prayer, and glimpses the bridge "from Life to Death":

As if some miracle, some hand divine unseal'd my eyes,
Shadowy vast shapes smile through the air and sky,
And on the distant waves sail countless ships,
And anthems in new tongues I hear saluting me.

Whitman's dream-poem, "The Sleepers," derives much of its symbolic meaning from its placement in this thematic grouping of poems. The poet wanders all night in his vision--"confused, lost to myself, ill-assorted, contradictory, / Pausing, gazing, bending, and stopping." But before the vision is completed, it becomes clear that the experience is symbolic. The night which "pervades" and "infolds" the wretched and the sick, the insane and the dying, as well as the living and loving, represents the world of spirituality, tending always toward an all-encompassing unity; while the day represents the world of physical being and existence. At the end of the poem, as the poet awakens from his dream, he says of the night:

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.

As "The Sleepers" bridges the "way from Life to Death" through the symbolic drama of dreams, "To Think of Time" provides a bridge by direct contemplation of death--"To think the thought of death merged in the thought of materials." The poem is one long meditation on the intuitive assurance of eternity, concluding with a defiant affirmation:

I swear I think there is nothing but immortality!
That the exquisite scheme is for it, and the nebulous float
is for it, and the cohering is for it,
And all preparation is for it--and identity is for it--and life
and materials altogether for it!

A number of brief "bridges" are brought together in the cluster "Whispers of Heavenly Death," in which the "labial gossip of night" transfigures death into "Some parturition rather, some solemn immortal birth." At the beginning of the cluster the poet challenges his soul to "Walk out with me toward the unknown region"; and he images the sensation of death:

Then we burst forth, we float,
In Time and Space O soul, prepared for them,
Equal, equipt at last, (O joy! O fruit of all!) them to fulfill
O soul.

The dominant poem of the group is "Chanting the Square Deific," a sketch of the archetypal patterns of all religious myth--the Jehovah, the Consolator, the Satan, and the Santa Spirita--the "general soul" which finishes the square. Clearly the Santa Spirita is the unifying principle of the universe that provides a bridge from life to death. Near the end of the cluster, the poet makes "The Last Invocation":

Let me glide noiselessly forth;

With the key of the softness unlock the locks--with a whisper,
Set ope the doors O soul.

Special Songs Before I Go

With "Whispers of Heavenly Death" Whitman draws the main body of his *Leaves* to a close. The rest is farewell. He addresses America at the beginning of "Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood":

Thus varied chain of different States, yet one identity only,
A special song before I go I'd sing o'er all the rest,
For thee, the future.

In this last major review of his New World themes, the poet looks to "Time's spirals rounding" for the real fulfillment of the democratic promise. "From Noon to Starry Night" provides a cluster of miscellaneous poems that play variations on all his themes, a recapitulation of the main moods and feelings of the *Leaves*. The section opens with a call by the poet on "Thou Orb Aloft Full-Dazzling," the "hot October noon," to:

Prepare the later afternoon of me myself--prepare my
lengthening shadows,
Prepare my starry nights.

And the cluster closes with a retrospective view in "A Clear Midnight":

This is thy hour O soul, thy free flight into the wordless,
Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the
lesson done,
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the
themes thou lovest best,
Night, sleep, death and the stars.

And with this meditation, the poet is prepared for his final farewell in "Songs of Parting." Corresponding in nature and function to "Inscriptions" at the beginning, this last cluster contains a similar note of fervency and evangelistic appeal: "O book, O chants! must all then amount to but this? / Must we barely arrive at this beginning of us?--and yet it is enough, O soul." All of the poems deal, directly or indirectly, with death; and, near the end (as in "Inscriptions"), a number of brief poems establish an intimacy between the reader and poet, as he bids goodbye. The cluster then ends with "So Long!": "To conclude, I announce what comes after me." This prophecy outlines a fulfillment of all the *Leaves* have called for, a final achievement of the New World Personality and the democratic ideal. And the poet ends:

Remember my words, I may again return,
I love you, I depart from materials,
I am as one disembodied, triumphant, dead.

So the poet departs, his poem done. The annexes that follow are just that--additions essentially superfluous to the main structure. Though "Sands at Seventy," "Good-bye My Fancy," and "Old Age Echoes" contain some vivid and vigorous poems, they are simply what their titles indicate, miscellanies left over after the main business--the building of the *Leaves*--was concluded. A recapitulation of the structure of *Leaves* suggests the emotional logic in the ordering of its parts:

Introductory: The Modern Man I Sing

Inscriptions

"Starting from Paumanok"

I. I Celebrate Myself

"Song of Myself"

Children of Adam

identity and relations

Calamus

Songs (eleven poems)

space: the earth

Birds of Passage

"A Broadway Pageant"

Sea-Drift

By the Roadside

time: mystic evolution

II. The Throes of Democracy

Drum-Taps

Memories of President Lincoln

crisis

"By Blue Ontario's Shore"

Autumn Rivulets

continued years

III. The Way from Life to Death

"Proud Music of the Storm"

"Passage to India"

"Prayer of Columbus"

"The Sleepers"

"To Think of Time"

Whispers of Heavenly Death

Concluding: Special Songs Before I Go

"Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood"

From Noon to Starry Night

Songs of Parting

Afterthoughts: the Annexes

Sands at Seventy

Good-Bye My Fancy

Old Age Echoes

In effect the structure of *Leaves* is pyramidal, a metaphor that seems especially apt when the comparative bulk of the three basic parts is taken into account. Part I is a bit over twice the length of Part II, Part II double the size of Part III:

Part III

The Way from

Life to Death

Part II

The Throes of Democracy

Part I

The Modern Man I Sing: the New World Personality

The pyramid not only suggests the relative dependence of the various parts--the Personality must be created before he can be engaged in a particular time and place, and his being and existence and engagement must precede his envelopment in the world of spirituality--but it suggests, too, the proportionate preoccupations of Modern Man: mostly personal and involved with identity of self in life, but maturely concerned for the society and the state, and with profound moments of spiritual meditation on the bridges leading from Life to Death.