

MASTER IN ADVANCED ENGLISH STUDIES: LANGUAGES AND CULTURES IN  
CONTACT

UNIVERSIDAD DE VALLADOLID

Departamento de Filología Inglesa 2016-2017



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**Universidad de Valladolid**

Final Master Thesis

RHETORICAL DEVICES IN WALT WHITMAN'S POETRY: FROM EARLY  
REVOLUTION TO LATE TRADITIONALISM

Dilek Gallego Blázquez

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## Abstract

This research paper examines the rhetorical devices used in Walt Whitman's (1819-1892) early, mid and late poetry career. The aim of this study is to demonstrate the poetic revolution he started with the publication of the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* and his retreat towards a more traditional poetry a few decades later. For this purpose, I analyze the 1855 poems “A Song for Occupations” and “Great are the Myths” from Whitman’s early poetry career and the 1881 revised version of “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” (1859) and “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd” (1865) and the 1871 revised version of “O Captain! My Captain!” (1865) from his mid-late poetry career to demonstrate that there is a perceptible change in his use of tropes and schemes related to his poetics in those periods.

**Key words:** Walt Whitman (1819-1892), American Poetry, Poetic Revolution, *Leaves of Grass*, Preface to the 1855 Edition, Traditionalism.

## Resumen

Este trabajo examina los recursos retóricos usados en la carrera de poesía temprana, media y tardía de Walt Whitman (1819-1892). El objetivo de este estudio es demostrar la revolución poética que comenzó con la publicación de la edición 1855 de *Hojas de Hierba* y su repliegue atrás hacia una poesía más tradicional unos pocos años después. Por esta razón, analizo los poemas de 1855 “A Song for Occupations” y “Great are the Myths” de la carrera de poesía temprana de Whitman y las versiones revisadas del 1881 de “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” (1859) y “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd” (1865) y la versión revisada de 1871 de “O Captain! My Captain!” para demostrar que hay un cambio perceptible en su uso de tropos y esquemas relacionado con su poética en estos periodos.

**Palabras Claves:** Walt Whitman (1819-1892), Poesía Americana, Revolución Poética, *Hojas de Hierba*, Prefacio a la Edición 1855, Tradicionalismo.

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Do I contradict myself?  
Very well then. . . . I contradict myself,  
I am large. . . . I contain multitudes.

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*Walt Whitman*

“Song of Myself” (ll. 1324-26)

## 1. Introduction

Walt Whitman (1819-1892) is undoubtedly one of America's most significant nineteenth century poets. He is "the poet of the Body" and "the poet of the Soul" as he declares himself in his "Song of Myself" (*CPP*, 207, l. 422). On the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, I want to commemorate him and praise his poetry on which I have decided to write my master dissertation. His poems shed light on American literature, culture, politics, and history of his time. Whitman was a prolific and transcendent poet with revolutionary ideas who was embedded in the nineteenth century. Considering Whitman's time and his relationship with it, Erkkila defends the idea that Whitman debts his uniqueness to "his embeddedness in his time rather than his transcendence of it." (1989:10) To say this, she pretends "not to limit the significance of Whitman's work to a mirror reflection of his times." (1989:10). In my opinion What makes Whitman unique is his attempt to create a new American Literature free from external influences. For this reason, he was and still is the most revolutionary poet of his time, and certainly one of the most original.

Recent critical studies have emphasized the form, language and themes used in Whitman's poetry focusing mainly on his biography, his family background, his political thoughts, his Emersonian and transcendentalist ideas, and his (homo)sexuality. In addition, there has been some investigation that surveyed both revolutionary and traditionalist dimensions of Whitman's poetry in the context of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, though it is my view that those research papers are not detailed enough. In this paper, my aim is to show the revolutionary and traditionalist sides of Whitman's poetry through an analysis of the rhetorical devices used in two representative poems which I find interesting to study from his early, mid, and late poetry. In the analysis, since the number of rhetorical devices is immense, I will mainly focus on the tropes; metaphors, similes, personifications, and metonymies and the schemes; anaphora, hyperbatons, enumerations, alliterations, and apostrophes used in

those poems. Comparing the rhetorical analysis of the poems from Whitman's early and mid-late poetry, I will argue about the revolution Whitman started in American poetry in the 1850s and his retreat towards a more traditional poetry a few decades later. To do this, my primary source will be the 2008 edition of *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* of Whitman edited by Justin Kaplan which will be cited as *CPP* subsequently.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly, as I will argue, Whitman started his literature career breaking the traditional rules to be "the Great American Poet", a role he very much wanted to play, but the failures in sales of the subsequent editions of *Leaves of Grass*, national fragmentation during and after the Civil War, followed by personal traumas and his declining health leading to a paralytic stroke, his success in Britain and his role as the Good Gray Poet that he undertook in his old age, no doubt, influenced his shift towards a more traditional poetry as Kenneth Price argues in his book *Whitman and Tradition* (1990:70-96).

In the first chapter, I will talk about Walt Whitman's Poetic Revolution and discuss Walt Whitman's own ideas about his poetic revolution in his 1855 preface to *Leaves of Grass*-a piece of critical writing in which he sets his ideas about poetry, the poet, and America. For the understanding of Whitman's revolutionary poetics and language theory, my point of departure will be Mark Bauerlein's *Whitman and the American Idiom* (1991), where he argues over different stages in Whitman's literary career. For the understanding of Whitman's revolutionary content, my point of departure will be Betsy Erkkila's *Whitman the Political Poet* (1989).

In the second chapter, I will analyze the rhetorical devices that are present in Whitman's poems of his early poetry; "A Song for Occupations" and "Great are the Myths" of the 1855 edition. These are the first versions of poems that were rewritten in subsequent

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<sup>1</sup> I will quote from Walt Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*. Ed. Justin Kaplan. New York: The Library of America, 1982. It will be referred as *CPP* plus page number and line numbers when quoting poems.

editions. By analyzing these poems, I want to establish what is new in Whitman's poetry in comparison with his contemporaries and the literary traditions of his time.

In the third chapter, I will analyze the rhetorical devices that are present in his mid-late poetry. With the analysis of the poems which, in my opinion, are the finest Whitman ever wrote; the 1881 revised version of the 1859 poem "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking", the 1881 revised version of the 1865 poem "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd", and the 1871 revised version of the 1865 poem "O Captain! My Captain!", my intention is to demonstrate the use of a different poetic idiom (diction) style in Whitman's mid-late poetry in comparison with his earlier poetry; a style by no means new—rather it reminds of other poets' styles.

Finally, in the chapter of conclusions, I will summarize the results of my research and state my own conclusions about the development of Walt Whitman's early and mid-late poetry.

## **2. Walt Whitman's Poetic Revolution**

Walt Whitman was born in 1819- forty-three years after the Declaration of Independence and the birth of the United States of America as an independent nation. He grew up assuming the existence of the newly born country. Despite its declaration of independence, America was still dependent on England in aspects such as culture, language, and literature. Whitman thought that the creations of traditional British/European literature were ill-fitted to the tasks of American writers and outdated in the life of the new nation in both the social and the political environment/milieu. As Erkkila affirms, the publication of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 was "an act of revolution, an assault on the institutions of old-world culture that was as experimental and far-reaching in the artistic sphere as the American revolt against England had been in the political sphere". (1989:3) Therefore, Whitman knew that the

newly born America as an independent nation must have its own literature, free from external influences, and peculiar to America.

Both his family and later his job as a journalist apprentice contributed him to take the initiative of working on these ideas. The War of 1812 arose a nationalistic impulse in America which can be seen in the names of three of Whitman's brothers, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson. He was influenced by his family and by the political milieu in which he lived. Reynolds accounts

“As one who felt the disruptions of the decade on his very nerve endings, Walter Whitman was naturally drawn to the defenders of workers against the economic elite. He and his wife paid homage to both threatened agrarianism and ascendant populism by naming one son Thomas Jefferson Whitman and another Andrew Jackson

Whitman, nodding to the heroic past with George Washington Whitman.” (1995:27).

Erkkila also states that “it was from his father that Walt Whitman received his earliest training in the Enlightenment and revolutionary ideology that became the template of his life and work.” (1989:13-14) According to Erkkila, thanks to his family's democratic ideals and his journalist's apprentice: “Whitman began to develop a sense of self that was bound up with the political identity of America.” (1989:14).

In the formation of his revolutionary ideas, Ralph Waldo Emerson's essays “The Nature” and “the Poet” played an important role. Inspired by Emerson and the transcendentalism movement willing to lead great changes in American literature, especially in poetry; Whitman undertook the task of being “the Great American Poet” and published his *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 with a preface where he disseminates his ideas of the need for a “revolutionary formation” to be the inspiration of the (new) poets to come.

## **2.1.The Preface to the 1855 Edition of Leaves of Grass**

Whitman defended the importance of the independence of American Literature from British/European Literature for it didn't match Whitman's humanistic and democratic ideas at all. Because for him,

“politically, the British romantics were suspect, since Whitman believed they shared in the attachment to Old World feudalism that made British writers irrelevant, if not inimical, to the needs and concerns of nineteenth century democratic America. A notebook entry probably dating from 1855 or 1856 specifically rebuked Robert Southey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William Wordsworth for turning away from human rights in order to embrace 'kingcraft, priestcraft, obedience, and so forth'. (Notebooks 5:1778)” (LeMaster and Kummings, 75).

Therefore, he wrote the preface to the 1855 edition— a piece of critical writing in which he set his ideas about poetry, the poet, and America. The preface served as a declaration of literary independence and as an introduction to the book where Whitman announced America's need for new forms:

“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. . . accepts the lesson with calmness. . . is not so impatient as has been supposed that the slough still sticks to opinions and manners and literature while the life which served its requirements has passed into the new life of the new forms. . .” (CPP, 5)

He thought that the new life required new forms, applicable to poetry, a revolution required innovation. In accordance with this, with the publication of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, he started a revolution by breaking the rules of both traditional form and meter rules and language and content. In his notebooks, referring to *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman ensured that “every page of my book emanates Democracy, absolute, unintermitted, without the slightest

compromise, and the sense of New World in its future, a thoroughly revolutionary formation.” (Grief, 1984:1508)

America always mattered too much for him. With the idea of creating an independent America both in politics and literature, Whitman wanted these new forms to be free from external/British influence and peculiar to America. Considering both Whitman’s political thoughts and poetic revolution, Erkkila states:

“More than any other American writer of the nineteenth century, Whitman realized a truly democratic American literature would require not merely a revolution in content but also a revolution in literary form and traditional conceptions itself: ‘Of the traits of the brotherhood of writers savans musicians inventors and artists nothing is finer than silent defiance advancing from new free forms. . . The cleanest expression is that which finds no sphere worthy of itself and makes one’” (1989:5)

Being the patriotic poet, Whitman praised his compatriots and encouraged them to be poets. Besides, he showed his deep interest and love for his country by saying: “The Americans of all nations at any time upon the earth have probably the fullest poetical nature. The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem.” (*CPP*, 5)

In his search of new poets to come, Whitman disseminated his political and humanistic ideas of democracy, class and gender equality, and his opposition to slavery. He said that “in the make of great masters the idea of political liberty is indispensable. Liberty takes the adherence of heroes wherever men and women exist. . . but never takes any adherence or welcome from the rest more than from poets.” (*CPP*, 17) Influenced by Emerson and transcendentalism, he suggested that the expression of the American poet is “to be transcendence and new. It is to be indirect and not direct or descriptive or epic.” (*CPP*, 8) He reported that the United States most needed poets claiming that “their Presidents shall not be their common referee so much as their poets shall.” (*CPP*, 8), emphasizing the importance of

the poets as the nation's poetic voice. He defined his idea of the great poet as: "Of all mankind the great poet is the equable man. Not in him but off him things are grotesque or eccentric or fail of their sanity. Nothing out of its place is good and nothing in its place is bad." (*CPP*, 8)

Defending simplicity as his theory of poetic language, he stated that "who troubles himself about his ornaments or fluency is lost." and that "most works are most beautiful without ornament." (*CPP*, 11) Thinking that elaborated and adorned language could be an obstacle between the poet and the reader, he defended the simple and straightforward writing style in poetry by saying: "The art of art, the glory of expression and the sunshine of the light of letters is simplicity. Nothing is better than simplicity. . . nothing can make up for excess or for the lack of definiteness." (*CPP*, 13) According to him the greatest poet is who

"has less a marked style and is more the channel of thoughts and things without increase or diminution, and is the free channel of himself. He swears to his art, I will not be meddlesome, I will not have in my writing any elegance or effect or originality to hang in the way between me and the rest like curtains." (*CPP*, 14)

Bauerlein defends that Whitman's distrust to theory comes from the idea that "theory poses to naturality and all mystifications naturality founds and supports." (1991:2) In my opinion, it also shackles the poets' freedom of expression and obligates them to follow the tradition keeping them from being original.

Whitman reported his feelings about his mother tongue by saying "the English language befriends the grand American expression." (*CPP*, 25) He praised the English language and described it as "the powerful language of resistance. . . it is the dialect of common sense. It is the speech of the proud and melancholy growth faith self-esteem freedom justice equality friendliness amplitude prudence decision and courage. It is the medium that shall well nigh express the inexpressible." (*CPP*, 25)

At the end of the preface, Whitman's patriotic side spoke again; he emphasized the importance of the relationship between the poet and his country by saying "the proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it." (CPP, 26) He tried to inculcate in the readers his ideas of patriotism and nationalism, declaring them as musts in the proof of being a (true) poet. According to Whitman, the true poet is the one who knows the characteristics and needs of his nation and uses them as primary sources to his poetry to write poems, as products for the main source, the nation itself.

In conclusion, the preface offers valuable information about Whitman's approach to poetry. It is indispensable for the comprehension of Whitman's poetic revolution. In the following pages, I will discuss about how Whitman applied his revolutionary ideas he set in his preface to the poetry.

### **3. Analysis of Walt Whitman's Early Poetry: the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass***

The 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* consisted of twelve poems which had no titles or section divisions then as if they were a whole together. Whitman's careful and authentic word choice for the title of the book, *Leaves of Grass*, perfectly matches the originality and the wholeness of these poems, The title suggests a simple life in accordance with nature and it is related to the poet as described in the first poem of the 1855 edition (that would later become "Song of Myself"): "I loafe and invite my soul,/ I lean and loafe at my ease...observing a spear of summer grass" (CPP, 27, ll. 4-5). With special attention to the book itself, Erkkila describes both the form and visual aspects of the cover, frontispiece, and title page of *Leaves of Grass* (1855) as being revolutionary:

"Designed by Whitman and printed at his own expense, the volume was quarto sized, with clusters of leaves embossed on its dark green cover; the title, which was printed in gold, sprouted lush roots and leaves, suggesting the motifs of growth, fertility, luxuriance, and regeneration that figure throughout the poems. With its visual

iconography of roots taking shape of *Leaves of Grass* and its verbal pun on leaves as pages and pages as grass, the title challenged the traditional notions of poetic taste by suggesting the common, local, and democratic ground out of which American literature emerged.” (1989:3)

In the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman's name didn't appear neither in cover nor in title page. Instead, there was a picture of him in a sincere and informal posture engraved as a frontispiece for the book before the title page. Erkkila reassures that “Whitman inscribed his authorial signature not in a name but in an engraved frontispiece of himself (...) This working-class figure was part of Whitman’s revolt against the profession of authorship.” (1989:3-4) His daily look and informal pose, Erkkila argues, “represented a radical departure from the conventions of literary portraiture.” (1989:4) In my opinion, Whitman’s choice of a picture of himself instead of his name aimed to avoid formalities; not to be the author of the book but one of us. He believed that it could be another way of breaking the ice between the reader and the poet and giving more importance to the poems rather than their author; himself. Erkkila also attributes Whitman’s refusal of name formality; his choice of his nickname “Walt” instead of Walter to the same idea: “Whitman once again breaks literary rank, insisting on a familiarity and intimacy with his audience that defied the conventional distance, reverse, and formality that governed relations between writer and reader.” (1989:5).

In conclusion, the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* In the following pages, I will analyze the rhetorical devices which are present in Whitman’s early poetry to find out what is new in Whitman’s poetry. To do this, I will use two representative poems from the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, “A Song for Occupations” and “Great are the Myths”.

### **3.1.Rhetorical Devices in “A Song for Occupations” of the 1855 Edition**

“A Song for Occupations” is the second poem of the twelve untitled poems which were published in the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. The poem “seeks to recover wholeness

by affirming the dignity of human labor, as the process that generates both the material and social world.” (LeMaster and Kummings, 652). In this poem, Whitman conveyed his political and humanistic ideas to his poetry: “I bring what you much need, yet always have, / I bring not money or amours or drees or eating. . . . but I bring as good; / And send no agent or medium. . . . and offer no representative of value—but the value itself.” (*CPP*, 91, ll. 45-47), despite his difficulty in coming upon a title which suited it the best. Whitman first titled the poem as "Poem of the Daily Work of The Workmen and Workwomen of These States" in the 1856 edition. In subsequent editions, Whitman continued to change the title of the poem: it became “Chants Democratic” in the 1860 edition, “To Workingmen” in the 1867 edition, “Carol of Occupations” in the 1871 and 1876 editions; and finally, in the 1881 and subsequent editions, Whitman came to the title “A Song for Occupations” which he included in the 1891-92 “deathbed edition”.

Although the poem passed through multiple revisions both of its title and of its lines, the main idea of the poem, the theme and the message remained the same. The titles Whitman suggested for this poem show that there is a crucial progress throughout his poetry career in the target audience; the first title only refers to the people of “These States” while the last title holds a more universal point of view. In this poem written in free verse, Whitman deals with all kind of occupations; addressing the working class as his target audience.

Examining the punctuation used in the poem, we see that he prefers a two spaced or four-spaced ellipsis (instead of the traditional three-spaced ellipsis) to indicate a sort of blank in the discourse that there is something he does not want to say, a sort of surprise for the reader since he keeps silent as in a natural speech, inviting the reader to fill in the blanks. He also uses long dashes frequently as a sort of caesura instead of commas to achieve an overwhelming effect and to enhance readability.

In the following pages, I will analyse the rhetorical devices which are present in the 1855 version of “A Song for Occupations”.

### 3.1.1. Tropes

In the 1855 version of “A Song for Occupations”, Whitman asks a rhetorical question addressing the readers’ opinion about this poet-reader relationship: “This is unfinished business with me. . . . how is it with you? / I was chilled with the **cold types** and **cylinder and wet paper** between us. / I pass so poorly with paper and types. . . . I must pass with the contact of bodies and souls.” (*CPP*, 89, ll. 3-5; emphasis added).

He uses metonymies for the printed book and describes the writing types as “cold types” and his book as “cylinder and wet paper”. Moon reports that: “Claiming that bodies can and should be successfully incorporated in texts, Whitman repudiates the gesture with the same motion, claiming to shiver with the ‘chill’ of ‘the cold types’ and ‘wet paper’.” (1991:73) They are obstacles and suggest a gap between the poet and reader that cannot be bridged.

In the poem, Whitman also discusses the very clearly marked hierarchy of the social classes through rhetorical questions with the use of similes in them: “Were I **as the head teacher** or **charitable proprietor** or **wise statesman**, what it would amount to? / Were I to you **as the boss** employing and paying you, would that satisfy you?” (*CPP*, 89, ll. 9-10; emphasis added). He continues using similes to form a part of his readers’ lives by identifying himself with their colleague, brother, dearest friend, lover, husband or wife. He uses familiarization to break the traditional poet image belonging to a higher social class by saying:

“If you are a **workman** or **workwoman** I stand **as nigh as the nighest that works**  
**in the same shop,**  
 If you bestow gifts on your **brother** or **dearest friend**, I demand **as good as your**  
**brother** or **dearest friend,**

If your **lover or husband or wife** is welcome by day or night, I must be personally **as welcome;**" (*CPP*, 89, ll. 16-18; emphasis added)

In the line 35, He uses the words "grown, half-grown" as metonymies for "old and adolescent". He also uses a colloquial language; "babe" which is the informal form of the word "baby": "**Grown, half-grown** and babe—of this country and every country, indoors and outdoors I see. . . . and all else is behind or through them." (*CPP*, 91, l. 35; emphasis added).

In the lines 36-38, Whitman compares the women with the men and uses the simile to disseminate his idea of gender equality: "The **wife**— and she is not one jot less than the **husband**, / The **daughter**— and she is just **as good as** the **son**, / The **mother**— and she is every bit as much as the **father**." (*CPP*, 91, l. 35-36; emphasis added).

In the lines 171-177, personifications are present. Whitman makes use of them to emphasize the value and beauty of the human life more than anything in the world. In the lines 175 and 176, Whitman uses similes to convince the readers in what he thinks to be more important:

"When **the psalm sings instead of the singer**,

When **the script preaches instead of the preacher**,

When **the pulpit descends and goes instead of the carver** that carved the supporting desk,

When **the sacred vessels or the bits of the eucharist, or the lath and plast**,

**procreate as effectually as the young silversmiths or bakers, or the masons in their overalls**,

When **a university course convinces like a slumbering woman and child convince**,

When **the minted gold in the vault smiles like the nightwatchman's daughter**,

When **warrantee deeds loafe in chairs opposite** and are **my friendly companions**,"

(*CPP*, 98-99, ll. 171-177; emphasis added).

In conclusion, Whitman uses similes and metonymies to discuss the clearly marked hierarchy of social classes. As Sherry Ceniza discusses, the 1855 edition of “A Song for Occupations” “privileges the self over institutional inscriptions” (Kummings, 190). Therefore, Whitman uses personifications to criticize the materialistic world and to indicate how materialism makes us forget about our human values. He also uses rhetorical questions as tropes to ask leading questions to raise readers’ awareness about the ideas conveyed throughout the poem. To sum up, the most frequently used tropes in this poem, which are the simile, metonymy, and personification, suggest an idea of union in the poem, but the point is that the intellectual activity is more complex.

### 3.1.2. Schemes

In the 1855 version of “A Song for Occupations”, Whitman starts with the apostrophe: “Come closer to me,” to make a contact with the readers. Referring to Whitman’s picture at the beginning of *Leaves of Grass*, Moon claims that

“The discomfort of being a body pressed in an album (the album format of the actual book, the tall and narrow format of the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*) gives Whitman his poetic “cue” for pleading for “contact” with the “bodies and souls” of his readers. That is, Whitman’s rhetoric of difficulties of embodying a self in a text gives way here to a more direct rhetoric of an authorial seduction of readers.” (1991:73,74).

In my opinion, with his choice of apostrophe and this more direct rhetoric of an authorial seduction of readers, Whitman succeeds in making the readers feel his presence even in the “the cold types and cylinder and wet paper”.

Another scheme Whitman used throughout the poem is the anaphora which takes place with the repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive lines. Here are some examples; in the stanza below, anaphora is present with the repetition of the word “were” at the beginning of successive lines: “**Were** all educations practical and ornamental

well displayed out of me, what would it amount to? / **Were** I as the head teacher or charitable proprietor or wise statesman, what would it amount to? / **Were** I to you as the boss employing and paying you, would that satisfy you?" (*CPP*, 89, ll. 8-10; emphasis added). In the lines below, anaphora is present with the repetition of the word "if" followed by the pronoun "you" and a verb at the beginning of successive lines:

**"If you** have become degraded or ill, then I will become so for your sake;

**If you** remember your foolish and outlawed deeds, do you think I cannot remember  
my foolish and outlawed deeds?

**If you** carouse at the table I say I will carouse at the opposite side of the table;

**If you** meet some stranger in the street and love him or her, do I not often meet  
strangers in the street and love them?

**If you** see a good deal remarkable in me I see just as much remarkable in you." (*CPP*, 89-90, ll. 19-23; emphasis added).

In this stanza, the repetition of the definite article "the" followed by a noun at the beginning of successive lines makes anaphora occur: "**The** wife— and she is not one jot less than the husband, / **The** daughter— and she is just as good as the son, / **The** mother— and she is every bit as much as the father." (*CPP*, 91, ll. 36-38; emphasis added).

Polysyndeton, which is the excessive use of a conjunction between each word or phrase instead of commas, is also present with the repetition of "and" and "or" throughout the poem. It is used to create a feeling of multiplicity and to build up an energetic enumeration, which is another scheme, to make long lists. Polysyndeton performs several functions in the poem. Not only does it join words, phrases and clauses and thus brings continuity in lines, but it acts also as a stylistic device bringing an exhilarating rhythm to the verse with the repetition of conjunctions in quick successions: "Because you are greasy **or** pimpled— **or** that you was once drunk, **or** a thief, **or** diseased, **or** rheumatic, **or** a prostitute— **or** are so

now— **or** from frivolity **or** impotence— **or** that you are no scholar, and never saw your name in print. . . . do you give in that you are any less immortal?” (*CPP*, 90, l. 27; emphasis added)

In these lines below, anaphora takes place with the repetition of the definite article “the” followed by nouns, noun or adjective clauses at the beginning of successive lines and phrases to create a parallel structure. Whitman uses enumeration, what Whitman critics call “catalogues”, which also create parallelism throughout the lines (the establishment of similar patterns of grammatical structure and length) to list different occupations and for the description of some objects or devices used or related to those as an answer to the rhetorical question in the line 109: “(What is it that you made money? What is that you got what you wanted?)” (*CPP*, 95, l. 109). The long list in the poem, which starts in the line 110 and finishes in the line 158, converts the free verse into a descriptive prose because of the excessive use of visual imageries. Here is a part of the long list; the catalogue:

**The** anvil and tongs and hammer . . the axe and wedge . . the square and mitre and jointer and smoothingplane;

**The** plumbob and trowel and level . . the wall-scaffold, and the work of walls and ceilings . . or any mason-work:

**The** ship's compass . . the sailor's tarpaulin . . the stays and lanyards, and the ground-tackle for anchoring or mooring,

**The** sloop's tiller . . the pilot's wheel and bell . . the yacht or fish-smack . . the great gay-pennanted three-hundred-foot steamboat under full headway, with her proud fat breasts and her delicate swift-flashing paddles;

**The** trail and line and hooks and sinkers . . the seine, and hauling the seine;” (*CPP*, 95, ll. 118-122; emphasis added)

In this stanza, anaphora occurs with the repetition of “when” at the beginning of successive lines. It is used to extend different ideas of the same level or importance. It also suggests the idea of repetition, and of being a sort of religious psalm. It also creates rhythm:

“**When** the psalm sings instead of the singer,

**When** the script preaches instead of the preacher,

**When** the pulpit descends and goes instead of the carver that carved the supporting desk,

**When** the sacred vessels or the bits of the eucharist, or the lath and plait, procreate as effectually as the young silversmiths or bakers, or the masons in their overalls,

**When** a university course convinces like a slumbering woman and child convince,

**When** the minted gold in the vault smiles like the nightwatchman's daughter,

**When** warrantee deeds loafe in chairs opposite and are my friendly companions,”

(*CPP*, 98-99, ll. 171-178; emphasis added)

Another frequently used scheme is epistrophe, which is also called epiphora. It is the repetition of the same word or phrase at the end of the successive clauses or lines. It is generally used for emphasis and the establishment of rhyme. Here are some examples where epistrophe takes place: “Push close my lovers and take the best I **possess**, / Yield closer and closer and give me the best you **possess**.” (*CPP*, 89, ll. 2-3; emphasis added), “Were all educations practical and ornamental well displayed out of me, **what would it amount to?** / Were I as the head teacher or charitable proprietor or wise statesman, **what would it amount to?**” (*CPP*, 89, ll. 8-10; emphasis added), “All these **I see**. . . but nigher and farther the same **I see**; / None shall **escape me**, and none shall wish to **escape me**.” (*CPP*, 91, ll. 43-44; emphasis added), “The Congress convenes every December **for you**, / Laws, courts, the forming of states, the charters of cities, the going and coming of commerce and mails are all **for you**.” (*CPP*, 93, ll. 85-86; emphasis added), “All doctrines, all politics and civilization

exurge from **you**, / All sculpture and monuments and anything inscribed anywhere are tallied in **you**,” (*CPP*, 93, ll. 87-88; emphasis added).

To sum up, the most frequently used schemes in this poem are the anaphora, enumeration, polysyndeton, and epiphora. Both anaphora and epiphora serve to create a parallel structure and create the rhythm in the verse. Enumeration is used for cataloguing, to create long lists of words all of which have an evocative power individually but are still related to each other.

In conclusion, the analysis of rhetorical devices in the 1855 edition of “A Song for Occupations” show that the most frequently used tropes in this poem are the simile, metonymy, and personification and the most frequently used schemes are the anaphora, enumeration, polysyndeton, and epiphora. Considering the rhetorical devices which are present, Alan Trachtenberg argues that Whitman “grasped the difference, if not its cause, between use-value (the value itself) and exchange-value, and he joined in powerful tropes and a music of amalgamation, use with being, work with art,” to create a “heroic celebration of labor as life, work as art” in “A Song for Occupations” (1994:131). Despite Whitman’s attempt to use a natural language in the poem, his intellectual daring makes it a more complex poem.

### **3.2. Rhetorical Devices in “Great are the Myths” of 1855 Edition**

In “Great are the Myths”, which is the last poem of the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman conveys his search of greatness and beauty in every concept of the human life by giving his own explanations for all. It gives us clues about Whitman’s social, political, moral and human rights ideas. Dealing with our daily preoccupations, the positive point of view of the poem has a therapeutic effect on readers’ stress of life. Pollak discusses about Whitman’s intention in writing his “Great are the Myths” by saying:

“Representing himself as a naive believer in all the myths that have governed human history, including the immortality of the soul, the poet circumvents such conventional genres as the love lyric, the political or social satire, and the religious or philosophical meditation, to inscribe something significantly more abstract: an appeal to death itself as the joiner, destined to hold all the social parts together, even when—especially when—the poet himself cannot imagine their integration. (131)

The poem did not have any title in the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. In the subsequent editions, Whitman gave the poem its title “Great are the Myths” which is the first line of the poem. It can be considered to represent a hymnal title because of the presence of a reversed word order which is hyperbaton. Although it was one of the core poems of the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman eventually decided to leave out “Great are the Myths” in 1881 from later editions. The rhetorical devices used in the poem are shown in the following pages.

### 3.2.1. Tropes

The most frequently used trope in the 1855 edition of “Great are the Myths” is undoubtedly the simile. Here are some examples where it is used: “We are just **as** good and bad **as** the oldest and youngest or any,” (*CPP*, 142, l. 13; emphasis added), “That anguish **as** hot **as** the hottest and contempt **as** cold **as** the coldest may be without words,” (*CPP*, 143, l. 27; emphasis added), “The truth in man is no dictum .... it is vital **as** eyesight,” (*CPP*, 143, l. 36; emphasis added), “Sure as the stars return again after they merge in the light, death is great **as** life.” (*CPP*, 145, l. 67; emphasis added).

In the poem, metonymy is present in this line where the word “the muscle” is used for the strength: “Yours is the **muscle** of life or death .... yours is the perfect science .... in you I have absolute faith.” (*CPP*, 142, l. 6; emphasis added). “Wealth” is used as a metonymy for

rich people in the line 23: “**Wealth** with the flush hand and fine clothes and hospitality:” (CPP, 143, l. 23; emphasis added).

Personification of “truth” is present in the line 35: “The quality of truth in man supports itself through all changes, / It is inevitably in the man .... He and **it** are in love, and never leave each other.” (CPP, 143, ll. 34-35; emphasis added).

To conclude, the tropes which are used in this poem are the simile, metonymy, and personification. These tropes show the simplicity of Whitman’s language which is also a tool for the identification of the self and the nature and the relationship between the world surrounding the poet and himself, as if he were saying that there is a sort of union between the poet and the world.

### 3.2.2. Schemes

The 1855 edition of “Great are the Myths” is basically based on five schemes which are the anaphora, epistrophe or epiphora, apostrophe, antithesis, and hyperbaton. The use of polysyndeton and few alliterations are also present though these are secondary schemes.

Anaphora takes place with the repetition of the word “great” at the beginning of successive lines and clauses. Hyperbaton takes place in the sentences where the adjective “great” and “too” are used in a reversed word order: “**Great** are the myths .... I **too** delight in them, / **Great** are Adam and Eve .... I **too** look back and accept them; / **Great** the risen and fallen nations, and their poets, women, sages, inventors, rulers, warriors and priests.” (CPP, 142, ll. 1-3; emphasis added) “**Great** is the law. . . . **Great** are the old few landmarks of the law. . . . they are the same in all times and shall not be disturbed. // **Great** are marriage, commerce, newspapers, books, freetrade, railroads, steamers, international mails and telegraphs and exchanges. (CPP, 144, ll. 48-49), “**Great** is life . . and real and mystical . . wherever and whoever, / **Great** is death .... Sure as life holds all parts together, death holds all parts together;” (CPP, 145, ll. 65-66)

In these lines, anaphora occurs with the repetition of “what” at the beginning of successive lines and it creates a parallel structure: “**What** the best and worst did we could do, / **What** they felt . . do not we feel it in ourselves? / **What** they wished . . do we not wish the same?” (CPP, 142, ll. 14-16; emphasis added).

Apostrophe is present in the poem where abstract qualities are addresses as “you”. Here are some examples: “**Youth** large lusty and loving. . . . **youth** full of grace and force and fascination, / Do you know that old age may come after **you** with equal grace and force and fascination?” (CPP, 142 ll. 19-20; emphasis added). “O **truth of the earth!** O **truth of the things!** I am determined to press the whole way toward **you**, /Sound **your** voice! I scale mountains or dive in the sea after **you**.” (CPP, 144, ll. 39-40; emphasis added).

Another important scheme which Whitman describes as “paradox” is antithesis: “Do you call that a paradox? It certainly is a paradox.” (CPP, 145, l. 62). Here are some examples: “Great is **youth**, and equally great is **old age** .... great are the **day** and **night**; / Great is **wealth** and great is **poverty** .... great is **expression** and great is **silence**.” (CPP, 142, ll. 17-18; emphasis added), “Great is **wickedness** .... I find I often admire it just as much as I admire **goodness**.” (CPP, 145, l. 61; emphasis added.)

Another frequently used scheme is epistrophe. It serves to create a parallel structure as anaphora. Here are some lines where it is used: “Youth large lusty and loving .... youth full of **grace and force and fascination**, / Do you know that old age may come after you with equal **grace and force and fascination**?” (CPP, 142, ll. 19-20; emphasis added), “Before the perfect judge all **shall stand back**. . . . life and death **shall stand back**. . . . heaven and hell **shall stand back**.” (CPP, 145, l. 58), “Do you call that a **paradox**? It certainly is a **paradox**.” (CPP, 145, l. 62).

Symploce, which is the combination of anaphora and epistrophe, is also present throughout the poem. It is used to create a syntactic parallelism and to establish rhythm in the

poem. Here are some examples where it is used: “**Great are** the myths .... **I too** delight in **them**, /**Great are** Adam and Eve .... **I too** look back and accept **them**,” (*CPP*, 142, ll. 1-2; emphasis added), “**If there be** any soul **there is truth**. . . . **if there be** man or woman **there is truth**. . . . **If there be** physical or moral **there is truth**, / **If there be** equilibrium or volition **there is truth**. . . . **if there be** things at all upon the earth **there is truth**.” (*CPP*, 143, ll. 37-38; emphasis added), “**The eternal** equilibrium of things is **great**, and **the eternal** overthrow of things is **great**, (*CPP*, 145, l. 63).

There are few alliterations in the poem. In this line, alliteration is present with the repetition of “l” sound and “f” sound: “Youth **large** **lusty** and **loving** .... youth **full** of **grace** and **force** and **fascination**,” (*CPP*, 142, l. 19; emphasis added). In this line, there is alliteration with the repetition of “w” sound: “That the true adoration is likewise **without** **words** and **without** **kneeling**.” (*CPP*, 143, l. 28; emphasis added) In this line, there is alliteration with the repetition of “l” sound: “Justice is not settled by **legislators** and **laws** .... it is in the soul,” (*CPP*, 144, l. 51; emphasis added)

The most frequently used schemes in this poem are the anaphora, epistrophe, hyperbaton, and antithesis. Whitman uses the anaphora and epistrophe to create a parallel structure throughout the poem and to establish the rhythm in the free verse. He uses hyperbaton for emphasis. In the beginning, the lines containing antithesis seem to contradict each other without any sense; but they represent Whitman’s intellectual thinking of the wholeness of the nature; the antithesis which he describes as a “paradox” serves to indicate that everything in the nature coexists with its opposite. What Whitman attempts to do with the use of antithesis is to invite the reader to observe the contradictions to discover the opposite sides to find an answer to our existence.

In conclusion, being a democratic person himself, Whitman set up a specific poetic idiom (diction) in his early poetry career to reach a wide audience without any social class

discrimination to create a democratic poetry which can be described as “a poetry for all (Americans)”. The most frequently used tropes in Whitman’s early poetry, which are the simile, metonymy, and personification, show that Whitman made use of comprehensible tropes which are of daily use and more natural rather than metaphors and other tropes which change the literal meaning. Including the working class to his target audience, Whitman was quite careful in his choice of tropes to be as intelligible as possible to get the message of the poems across clearly. Price states “in his early poetry, Whitman used far more metonymies and fewer metaphors than other nineteenth century British and American poets. He turned to metonymy to attain that “transparent clearness,” for the metonymist may be said to present life rather than to interpret it.” (1990:21). Whitman's tropes follow his theory of poetic language which is “simplicity”. In these poems, he uses a vernacular language what he called to be “experimental” instead of archaic, elite and complex language which he considered to be “artificial”. About the language used in the book, Bauerlein points out that “the natural language Whitman envisions is candid and clean, innocent and vital and passionate; it is the language of *Leaves of Grass*.” (1991:33). Thanks to the presence of a new poetic idiom (diction), Erkkila also states, “the twelve untitled poems that follow the preface make good Whitman’s declaration of literary independence.” (1989:5). Although Whitman used a simple and natural language in his poems, the revolutionary content of these poems required intense intellectual activities for their comprehension from the part of the readers.

Whitman used his revolutionary free verse in his poems instead of traditional form and meter rules. Whitman’s most obvious stylistic features of his early poetry consisted of his untitled poems written in free verse with variations in line and stanza length. Erkkila demonstrates how Whitman’s literary independence was received by using a review of the 1855 edition from Putnam’s Magazine in September 1855:

“Defying the rules of rhyme, meter and stanza division and breaking down the distinction between poetry and prose, Whitman’s verse rolls freely and dithyrambically across the page in what one 1855 reviewer called 'a sort of excited prose broken into lines without any attempt at measure or regularity, and, as many readers will perhaps think, without any idea of sense or reason.’” (1989:5).

The most frequently used schemes which are the anaphora, epistrophe, enumeration, and polysyndeton show that Whitman creates his own stylistic features in his revolutionary free verse form. Even if he uses already existent schemes and he doesn’t introduce any new scheme, the novelty of these schemes is their application to the poetry. Anaphora, which is one of the oldest literary devices and has its roots in Biblical Psalms used to emphasize certain words or phrases, finds life and utility in Whitman’s poems. As Warren also affirms “Whitman abandons, almost completely, the metrical tradition of accentual syllabic verse and embraces instead the prosody of the English Bible.” (LeMaster and Kummings, 694).

Anaphora serves in several functions: it serves a device for the organization of ideas, the establishment of rhythm and the creation of an incantatory effect in his free verse poems. He also makes use of epiphora as an emphatic device to create a parallel structure which brings unity to his poems, establishes rhythm and end rhyme within the lines.

The catalogue technique is undoubtedly Whitman’s most innovative stylistic feature. Enumerations of people, things, ideas, visions and sounds together with syntactic parallelism set up by repetition techniques formed a significant part of the structure of his poems. Zweig reports “Melville celebrated the 'epic tools' of whale-fishing; not spears and shields, but try-pots, blubber spades, harpoons, and coiled ropes. This became Whitman's subject, too, as he “catalogued” the clanking, hammering, and smelting; the work shops and the skills” (1984:134). These long lists stand for the union of the multitudes in America as Whitman clearly stated in the preface: “The sailor and traveler. . the anatomist chemist astronomer

geologist phrenologist spiritualist mathematician historian and lexicographer are not poets, but they are lawgivers of poets and their construction underlies the structure of every poem.” (CPP, 15).

#### 4. The Analysis of Walt Whitman’s Mid-Late Poetry

Despite the beauty of his attempt to create a democratic poetry, the 1855 and 1856 editions of *Leaves of Grass* didn’t receive the interest they had deserved. Price enumerates the reasons of this failure as: “The radical experiments in form, the challenges to widely held values, the intellectual daring, and the hidden, complex meanings made *Leaves of Grass* ideally suited for unpopularity.” (1990:54). The commercial failures of the 1855 and 1856 editions of *Leaves of Grass* made him feel disappointed of America and of his role as the American poet, as can be seen in the poem “So Long!” (1860) where he states;

“When America does what was promis’d,  
 When there are plentiful athletic bards, inland and seaboard,  
 When through these States walk a hundred millions of superb persons,  
 When the rest part away for superb persons, and contribute to them,  
 When breeds of the most perfect mothers denote America,  
 Then to me and mine our due fruition.” (CPP, 609, ll. 5-10).

The commercial failures, Whitman’s troubles with his publisher Fowler & Wells, and the difficulties in finding a new publisher for his poems had a critical point in his progressive shift from his revolution towards traditionalism. But nothing would make him give up his dream to be “the Great American Poet” and Whitman unceasingly continued writing.

Bauerlein reports: “By 1857, Whitman had written dozens more poems, yet he would not find any publishing support for three more frustrating years.” (1991:118). It was undoubtedly in these years when Whitman was at his most creative and prolific. But there was a difference in Whitman as Price states: “When he emerged in 1859 with 'A Child’s Reminiscence' (later

'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking'), he appeared as a writer less opposed to literary conventions." (1990:61). Most scholars agree that Whitman has a different poetic idiom (diction) and style in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" which can be considered as the starting point of Whitman's progressive traditionalism. Price reports that "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" is "Whitman's crux poem, written when his powers were in an ideal balance, when he retained all the vitality of his work and before the musicality of his later style had become too excessive, mannered, and inflated." (1990:63).

In 1860, Whitman published the third edition of *Leaves of Grass* in Boston. As in the 1855 edition, the book didn't have the poet's name on it, but it had a portrait of Whitman as the frontispiece. Unlike the 1855 frontispiece where Whitman has an informal pose in his casual clothes representing him as a working class, the 1860 frontispiece depicts Whitman as a well-dressed poet in a formal pose representing him as an elite, a higher social class. Gregory Eiselein describes Whitman in the 1860 frontispiece as "a well-coiffured and genteel romantic poet wearing a large, loose silk cravat." (LeMaster and Kummings, 363). It can be said that the differences between the 1855 and 1860 frontispieces mirrors Whitman's disappointment on the working class from whom he didn't receive the interest he had expected. Therefore, in his search of public support and acceptance as a poet, his target audience also changed with the publication of the 1860 edition.

Everything affected his loved America also affected Whitman. Judging him disregarding the historical context of his time would be unfair. The American Civil War (1861-1865) was the turning point in Whitman's poetry career. It wasn't until 1862 when his brother George was wounded<sup>2</sup> Whitman witnessed the sanguinary side of the war in person. He visited his brother and other wounded soldiers in hospitals. Whitman's experience of the

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<sup>2</sup> Information from: *the Routledge Encyclopedia of Walt Whitman*, "The Civil War", p. 124.

war and later the assassination of the president Abraham Lincoln in 1865 would affect deeply his mid-late poetry.

There is no an exact start date for Whitman's late poetry; both 1871 and 1881 could be the start point because of Whitman's extreme self-revisions in these years. Price reports that "Crises may account for Whitman's extreme self-revision: national fragmentation in war was followed by the personal traumas of the Harlan debacle (whereby he lost his government job because of the supposed 'immorality' of *Leaves of Grass*) and of his declining health, leading to a paralytic stroke." (1990:70). He radically revised his poems by adding or omitting some words, lines and stanzas, changing the titles of the poems. He even left some of his poems out of *Leaves of Grass*; the 1855 poem "Great are the Myths" which he excluded from the 1881 and subsequent editions and the 1856 poem "Respondez" which he excluded from the 1881 and subsequent editions are some examples of these neglected poems.

In the following pages, I will analyse the rhetorical devices used in the 1881 revised version of the 1859 poem "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking", the 1881 revised version of the 1865 poem "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed" and the 1871 revised version of the 1865 poem "O Captain! My Captain" from Whitman's mid-late poetry to find out the differences in Whitman's poetic idiom and style in comparison with his early poetry.

#### **4.1. Rhetorical Devices in the 1881 Revised Version of "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" (1859)**

The poem "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" first appeared "under the title 'A Child's Reminiscence', in the *Saturday Press* in December 1859" (LeMaster and Kummings, 495). The second version appeared as "A Word Out of the Sea" in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Further changes were included in the 1867 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, but the title "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" did not appear until 1871. Further changes are made

in the poem in the 1881 edition while the final title remained the same.<sup>3</sup> Price states “both in structure and theme, “Out of the Cradle” illustrates that Whitman was consciously taking new directions.” (1990:63).

In “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking”, Whitman uses the nature as his primary source and deals with themes such as life, death, and as its title also suggests, rebirth. Referring to the poems “Starting from Paumanok” and “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking”, Warren reports that “In both texts, the genesis of the poet is a central concern, and in both he sings 'for those being born,' who are also those who will die.” (1990:159-60). For his “song”, Whitman uses the “mocking-bird” which is a thrush-like greyish-brown songbird, found mainly in tropical America. From this point of view, Whitman’s use of the mocking-bird can be considered as an attempt to establish an American symbolism. The poem goes about a memory of the poet when he was a child observing two mocking-birds; “two feather’d guests from Alabama”. Bauerlein states that in “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking”, “Whitman stages in a triple perspective (bird-boy-poet) the semiotic predicament characterizing the poet’s activity, the lapse of originality into quotation, expression into articulation, feeling to interpretation.” (1991:15) Whitman translates the mocking-birds’ songs and represents these translations in his lines in italics with a different tone of voice both when the couple the “he-bird” and “she-bird” keep together and when the “he-bird” becomes the “solitary singer” after the disappearance of the “she-bird” for an unknown reason as it is represented in the line forty-two: “May-be kill’d, unknown to her mate,” (*CPP*, 389, l. 42). For Whitman’s recollecting past observations and feelings in the poem when he was a child and his interpretation of such, Bauerlein calls this poem “Whitman’s Romantic crisis poem” and his “Tintern Abbey”. (1991:143).

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<sup>3</sup> Information from: *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Walt Whitman*, “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking”, p. 495.

In the following pages, I will analyse the rhetorical devices used in the 1881 revised edition of the 1859 poem “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” to find out the changes in Whitman’s poetic idiom (diction) and his stylistics features.

#### 4.1.1. Tropes

Could the theme of a poem be any kind of trope? Regarding one of the main themes of “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking”, Mack answers this question for us claiming that “death serves multiple functions in this poem. It is the metaphor for other forms of loss as well as the occasion for writing other losses” (2002:80). Whitman took the occasion to use the death theme as the main source for his poetic production. It is only from Whitman that the sorrowful word “death” becomes “delicious”.

Personification is the key trope in this poem. Whitman translates the mockingbirds’ song as if they talk to him. Whitman gives a voice to the nature in the poem; the poet and the nature are connected to each other as if they complete each other spiritually. The nature reacts to different situations in the poem the same way as the poet. This spiritual connection makes the feelings conveyed throughout the poem much stronger. For example, the personification of the moon is present in the line 10 and 89, “From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and **swollen as if with tears**” (CPP, 388, l. 10, emphasis added). In this line, hyperbole is also present because of the extravagant exaggeration of a possibility. Both the personification and the hyperbole create an atmosphere which has a sorrowful effect on the readers’ emotions.

Personification of the “mocking-bird” is present in the lines 59-60: He **call’d on his mate**, / He **pour’d forth the meanings** which I of all men know.” (CPP, 389, ll. 59-60, emphasis added).

Personification of “sea waves” is present in the line 163: “**Are you whispering it**, and have been all the time, **you sea-waves?**” (*CPP*, 393, l. 163, emphasis added). Personification of “the sea” is present in these lines:

“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,” (*CPP*, 393, ll. 165-168, emphasis added), “The sea **whisper’d** me.” (*CPP*, 394, l. 183, emphasis added).

Another frequently used trope is the metaphor. The word “cradle” both in the title and the first line can be considered as a metaphor for the nest. The phrase “Two feather’d guests” can be considered as a metaphor for “two mocking-birds” in the line 26; “**Two feather’d guests** from Alabama, two together,” (*CPP*, 388, l. 26, emphasis added). In these lines, “the old mother” is used as a metaphor for “the sea”: “With angry moans **the fierce old mother** incessantly moaning, / On the sands of Paumanok’s shore gray and rustling,” (*CPP*, 392, l. 133, emphasis added) and “The undertone, **the savage old mother** incessantly crying,” (*CPP*, 392, l. 141, emphasis added). In this line, “solitary singer” is a metaphor for the male mocking bird: “O you **singer solitary**, singing by yourself, projecting me,” (*CPP*, 393, l. 150, emphasis added).

Another trope Whitman uses in this poem is the periphrasis which is a roundabout way of referring to something by means of several words instead of naming it directly in a single word or phrase. Here are the lines where it is used: “Out of the **Ninth-month** midnight,” (*CPP*, 388, l. 3, emphasis added) “the Ninth month”, which is also the symbol of birth for the pregnancy lasts nine months, is used instead of “September”, “When the lilac-scent was in the air and **Fifth-month** grass was growing,” (*CPP*, 388, l. 24, emphasis added) “Fifth month”,

which is the last month of spring season in the Northern Hemisphere and of autumn season in the Southern Hemisphere, is used instead of “May”.

In conclusion, the most frequently used tropes are the personification and metaphor in this poem. Moreover, the hyperbole and periphrasis are present as more secondary tropes.

#### 4.1.2. Schemes

The most frequently used scheme in this poem is the anaphora. It is used to extend the main idea to two or more lines, and for enumeration; to list different ideas with the same level of importance. In these lines, it takes place with the repetition of the preposition “out of” followed by the definite article “the” creating a parallel structure to establish the rhythm: “**Out of the** cradle endlessly rocking, / **Out of the** mocking-bird’s throat, the musical shuttle, / **Out of the** Ninth-month midnight,” (*CPP*, 388, ll. 1-3, emphasis added). In the lines below, anaphora takes place with the repetition of the preposition “from” at the beginning of successive lines and phrases:

“**From** the memories of the bird that chanted to me,  
**From** your memories sad brother, **from** the fitful risings and fallings I heard,  
**From** under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with tears,  
**From** those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,  
**From** the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,  
**From** the myriad thence-arous’d words,  
**From** the word stronger and more delicious than any,  
**From** such as now they start the scene revisiting,” (*CPP*, 388, ll. 8-15, emphasis added).

In the lines below, anaphora takes place with the repetition of the conjunction “and” at the beginning of successive lines:

“**And** their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,

**And** every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,

**And** every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,

**And** every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them," (CPP, 388-89, ll. 27-30, emphasis added).

In the lines below, anaphora occurs with the repetition of the definite article "the" at the beginning of the successive lines and phrases:

**"The** yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, **the** face of the sea almost touching,

**The** boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the atmosphere dallying,

**The** love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultuously bursting,

**The** aria's meaning, **the** ears, **the** soul, swiftly depositing,

**The** strange tears down the cheeks coursing,

**The** colloquy there, **the** trio, each uttering,

**The** undertone, **the** savage old mother incessantly crying," (CPP, 392, ll. 135-145, emphasis added).

In these lines, apostrophe takes place for abstract ideas are directly addressed in the poem. "***O rising stars!*** / *Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.*" (CPP, 391, ll. 93-94, emphasis added). In the lines below, apart from apostrophe, anaphora is also present with the repetition of exclamation "O" at the beginning of successive lines and phrases:

***O darkness! O in vain!***

***O I am very sick and sorrowful.***

***O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!***

***O troubled reflection in the sea!***

***O throat! O throbbing heart!***" (CPP, 391-92, ll. 119-123, emphasis added).

In the lines below, epiphora is present with the repetition of the word “carols” at the end of successive lines. The repetition of the last word of a clause at the beginning of the next clause makes the anadiplosis take place:

*“Shake out **carols!***

*Solitary here, the night’s **carols!***

***Carols** of lonesome love! death’s **carols!***

***Carols** under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!”* (CPP, 391, ll. 99-102, emphasis added).

Another frequently used scheme in this poem is the hyperbaton which is the inversed word order. Here are some lines where it is used: “I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter, / Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them, / A reminiscence sing.” (CPP, 388, ll. 20-22), “Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.” (CPP, 389, l. 58), “Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,” (CPP, 390, l. 72), and “Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.” (CPP, 391, l. 98).

Another most frequently used scheme is diacope (epizeuxis) which is the repetition of the same word for emphasis. Aliteration is also present with the repetition of the same initial consonant sounds in two or more adjacent words. Here are the lines where it is used: “Shine! shine! shine!” (CPP, 389, l. 32), “Blow! blow! blow!” (CPP, 389, l. 52), “Soothe! soothe! soothe!” (CPP, 390, l. 71), “Loud! loud! loud!” (CPP, 390, l. 81), “Land! land! O land!” (CPP, 391, l. 90), “Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!” (CPP, 392, l. 127), “And again death, death, death, death,” (CPP, 393, l. 169), “Death, death, death, death, death.” (CPP, 393, l. 183).

Alliteration is frequently used in this poem. Here are some lines where alliteration is present: “Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving his bed wander’d alone, bareheaded, barefoot,” (CPP, 388, l. 4, emphasis added), “From your

memories sad brother, from the **fitful risings and fallings** I heard,” (*CPP*, 388, l. 9, emphasis added), “And thenceforward all **summer** in the sound of the **sea**,” (*CPP*, 389, l. 46, emphasis added), “Or **flitting from brier to brier by day**,” (*CPP*, 389, l. 49, emphasis added), “**Listen’d long and long**” (*CPP*, 390, l. 68, emphasis added), “O you **singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me**,” (*CPP*, 393, l. 150, emphasis added), “The word of the **sweetest song and all songs**,” (*CPP*, 394, l. 180, emphasis added).

In this poem, Whitman uses syncope to omit the “e” sound from regular past forms where it is not pronounced, and he uses an apostrophe instead. Here are some lines where the syncope is present: “Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving his bed **wander’d** alone, bareheaded, barefoot, / Down from the **shower’d** halo,” (*CPP*, 388, ll. 4-5, emphasis added),

“May-be **kill’d**, unknown to her mate,

One forenoon the she-bird **crouch’d** not on the nest,

Nor **return’d** that afternoon, nor the next,

Nor ever **appear’d** again.” (*CPP*, 389, ll. 42-45, emphasis added).

To sum up, the most frequently used schemes in this poem are the anaphora, hyperbaton, diacope and alliteration. Besides those, the epiphora, anadiplosis and syncope are present as more secondary schemes.

In conclusion, Whitman used a great deal of personifications in “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking”. Mentioning his most frequently used trope, Killingsworth suggests that “no other before or after Whitman experimented so widely and warmly with the use of personification, a key trope of identity that since ancient times has taught people to think of earth as a mother, a lover, and an analog of human body.” (Folsom, 2002:14). It is also one of the characteristic tropes of romanticism tradition. Price states that

“Whitman shows a new fondness for mood-impregnated, chiefly “nocturnal” imagery—the very imagery he occasionally objected to in Poe. He now uses such humanizing epithets and modifiers as “tender and pensive waves,” “the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they were alive,” and “the yellow half-moon, late-risen, and swollen as if with tears.” (1990:64).

Since Whitman also used metaphors and hyperboles, his poetic idiom became more allusive and complex. Another fact that had influence on his poetic diction is the use of archaisms for archaic words like “hither” and “ere” are used in the poem.

The most frequently used schemes in this poem are the anaphora, alliteration, and diacope. For Tennyson also used the diacope in his poem “Break, break, break”, Price reports that in this poem Whitman “displayed a growing tendency to absorb characteristics of Tennysonian verse and to achieve poetic effects akin he earlier denounced.” (1990:56) Whitman also applied syncope to the past regular forms where “e” sound is not pronounced. Regarding Whitman’s use of syncope and alliterations, Price explains: “His work became more obviously ornate, musical and 'poetic'. He used apostrophes and invocations, he developed a strong attachment to the incantatory use of words, and he even began to make unmistakable allusions to poems by Longfellow and Tennyson.” (1990:56). About Whitman’s consisted use of the present participle, Price discusses “He apparently also learned from Poe how to use the striking musical device of the present participle in the medial and final positions to produce the effect of rhyming. This device, used by Poe in “the Raven” appears in the famous strophe beginning 'The aria sinking.’” (1990:64-65). All these schemes show that Whitman was inspired by his contemporaries who were following the romanticism tradition.

#### **4.2.Rhetorical Devices in the 1881 Revised Version of “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd” (1865)**

Elegies are written for the loved ones who passed away. Whitman admired President Abraham Lincoln so much that he wrote "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" (1865) after his assassination on April 14, 1865; as an elegy to the fallen president. Written in free verse, divided into 16 sections and consisted of 206 lines in length, it is a long poem which is cited as one of the prominent examples of the elegy form in American Poetry. It contains many of the literary techniques associated with the pastoral elegy of which several features are like:

“the sympathetic mourning of the nature, with the use of the so-called pathetic fallacy; the placing of flowers on the bier; a notice of the irony of nature's revival of life in the spring, when the dead man must remain dead; the funeral procession with other mourners; the eulogy of the dead man; and the resolution of the poem in some formula of comfort or reconciliation.” (Adams, 1957:479)

Being an elegy, the main theme of “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd is death as “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking”. Whitman’s triangle “boy-poet-bird” perspective in “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” became a trinity of “lilac-western star-bird” symbols. Whitman used blooming lilacs as a symbol of spring referring not only to the season when the president was killed but also to the continuum of life. He used the “(western) star” as a metaphor for president Lincoln. He used the bird “hermit thrush” as a symbol of the spiritual contact between the self and the nature. As in “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” with the mocking-bird’s song, he translated the hermit thrush's song in the second half of the fourteenth section. The poem does not possess any metrical pattern except from this part of the poem which is written in italics and in quatrain meter consisting of four lines in each stanza. According to Harry R. Warfel, writing this poem,

“Walt wanted to use the occasion to state again one of his over-riding themes:  
Death and life are the twin poles of the turning universe; in the ever-alternating

process of human development there is death and there is birth. Out of death comes life; death is a mother to be cherished, not feared. The passing of Lincoln, therefore, could serve as a central incident to give impact to his idea, but the poem would be about all people and not merely the President. And the theme would be presented through pictures.” (1965:1).

In the following pages, I will analyze the rhetorical devices used in the 1881 revised version of the 1865 poem “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd”.

#### 4.2.1. Tropes

“When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd” is basically based on the metaphoric use of language. Whitman never mentions Lincoln’s name although the poem is written as an elegy to him; instead, he uses metaphors for Lincoln. In this line, “the great star” is used as a metaphor for Lincoln: “And **the great star** early droop’d in the western sky in the night,” (*CPP*, 459, l. 2, emphasis added). Whitman uses the verb “droop” which can be considered as an antonym of the verb “bloom” to refer to Lincoln’s death. Therefore, these metaphors mean that “the great star” is Abraham Lincoln, “early droop'd” early died, “in the western sky” in America. In this line, it is clearly stated that Lincoln died earlier, but there is no reference to how he died since everybody dies but only some dies assassinated. Death is inevitable where there is life, it is the common point of human beings no matter how they die; Whitman’s approach to the death theme makes the poem more universal. Irony is present with the use of the contrasts in nature for grief; lilacs bloom while others droop.

Throughout the poem, many metaphors are used instead of mentioning Lincoln directly. The words “star”, “orb” and “comrade” and the phrase “large weet soul” are used as metaphors to allude him. Here are some lines where the word “star” is used as a metaphor for Lincoln: “O **powerful western fallen star!**” (*CPP*, 459, l. 7, emphasis added), “O **great star** disappear’d—O the black murk that hides **the star!**” (*CPP*, 459, l. 9, emphasis added), “But a

moment I linger, for **the lustrous star** has detain'd me, / **The star my departing comrade** holds and detains me.” (*CPP*, 462, l. 69-70, emphasis added). In the line 70, the word “comrade” is also a metaphor for Lincoln as in the line 197: “**O comrade lustrous with silver face** in the night.” (*CPP*, 466, l. 195, emphasis added). Another metaphor in this line is the phrase “silver face” depicting his face as shiny as silver. The word “orb” is also used as a metaphor for Lincoln: “**O western orb** sailing the heaven,” (*CPP*, 461, l. 55, emphasis added), “As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where **you sad orb**,” (*CPP*, 461, l. 64, emphasis added). The phrase “the large sweet soul” is a metaphor for Lincoln: “And how shall I deck my song for **the large sweet soul** that has gone?” (*CPP*, 462, l. 72, emphasis added).

Metaphors are not only used for Lincoln, but also for the “death” itself, people who died during the Civil War, and “the hermit thrush”. In these lines, “the black murk” and “deliveress” are metaphors for “death”: “**O great star disappear'd—O the black murk** that hides the star!” (*CPP*, 459, l. 9, emphasis added), and “*Approach strong deliveress*,” (*CPP*, 465, l. 147, emphasis added). In the line 59, “As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side, (while **the other stars** all look'd on,)” (*CPP*, 461, l. 59, emphasis added), the phrase “other stars” is a metaphor for other people who died during the Civil War. In these lines, the word “singer” is a metaphor for “the hermit thrush”: “**O singer bashful and tender**, I hear your notes, I hear your call,” (*CPP*, 461, l. 67, emphasis added), “**O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!**” (*CPP*, 463, l. 105, emphasis added), “And **the singer** so shy to the rest receiv'd me,” (*CPP*, 464, l. 126, emphasis added). In the line 192, the word “psalm” is used as a metaphor for “the song of the hermit bird”: “As **that powerful psalm** in the night I heard from recesses,” (*CPP*, 466, l. 192, emphasis added).

Another frequently used trope is the personification. In the line 8,

personification of “night” is present: “O shades of night—O **moody, tearful night!**” (*CPP*, 459, l. 8, emphasis added). In these lines, personification of “the hermit thrush” is present: “**A shy and hidden bird** is warbling a song.” (*CPP*, 459, l. 19, emphasis added) and “And **the singer so shy** to the rest receiv’d me,” (*CPP*, 464, l. 126, emphasis added). In the line 48, the word “sane” is used as a personification of the “death”: “For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you O **sane and sacred death.**” (*CPP*, 461, l. 48, emphasis added). It also gives the sense of reconciliation with the death and the acceptance of it as a part of mortal lives. Price explains: “Having witnessed amputations, gangrene, and piled limbs outside of Civil War hospitals, Whitman seeks release and praises death as the 'strong deliveress'. When life appears purposeless and profane, death looks 'sane and sacred'.” (1990:78). In the line 93, personification of “the sun” is present: “Lo, **the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,**” (*CPP*, 463, l. 93, emphasis added).

Few similes can be found in the poem. Here are some lines where it is used: “With **the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil’d women** standing,” (*CPP*, 460, l. 36, emphasis added), “For **fresh as the morning**, thus would I chant **a song** for you O sane and sacred **death.**” (*CPP*, 461, l. 48, emphasis added), “Death’s outlet song” is “Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven, / **As that powerful psalm** in the night I heard from recesses,” (*CPP*, 466, 191-92, emphasis added).

Periphrasis which is a roundabout way of referring to something is also present in the poem. In this line, it takes place where the phrase “the Fourth-month” is used instead of April: “With **the Fourth-month** eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and bright.” (*CPP*, 462, l. 82, emphasis added). In the line 98, the phrase “man and land” is a periphrasis of “the world”: “Over my cities shining all, enveloping **man and land.**” (*CPP*, 463, l. 98, emphasis added).

Hyperbole which is the extravagant exaggeration of fact or of possibility has several functions in the poem. In these lines, the hyperbole adds extra drama to grief exaggerating the possibility of contacting with dead people: “As you droop'd from the sky low down **as if to my side**” (*CPP*, 461, l. 59, emphasis added), “As **I held as if by their hands** my comrades in the night,” (*CPP*, 464, l. 133). In these lines below, there are imageries depicting the American Civil War and hyperbole is used to make a point of the enormity and disgrace of wars: “I saw **battle-corpses, myriads of them,** / **And the white skeletons of young men,** I saw them, I saw **the debris and debris of all the slain soldiers of the war,**” (*CPP*, 466, ll. 177-80, emphasis added).

And finally, erotema which is the use of rhetorical questions asked to the reader as transition or a thought or an emotion provoking trope is used throughout the poem. These rhetorical questions are asked not for the answer but the effect. Here are some lines where erotema is used: “O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved? / And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone? / And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?” (*CPP*, 462, ll. 71-73), “O what shall I hang on the chamber walls? / And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls, / To adorn the burial-house of him I love?” (*CPP*, 462, ll. 78-80).

In conclusion, there are too many tropes in “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd”, but the most frequently used ones are the metaphor and personification as it can be seen. This allusive language referring to people or things indirectly makes it a quite complex poem.

#### 4.2.2. Schemes

In “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd”, the schemes are mainly based on repetition techniques. One of them is anaphora which is the repetition of the same word at the beginning of successive lines. I will give a few examples for it is excessively used throughout

the poem. In these lines below, anaphora is present with the repetition of the exclamation “O”, which becomes a powerful rhetoric for grief, at the beginning of successive lines and phrases. Apostrophe is also present for addressing inanimate objects and abstractions such as “the star”, “the night”, “the murk”, “the soul”, and “the cloud”:

“**O** powerful western fallen star!

**O** shades of night—**O** moody, tearful night!

**O** great star disappear’d—**O** the black murk that hides the star!

**O** cruel hands that hold me powerless—**O** helpless soul of me!

**O** harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.” (*CPP*, 459, ll. 7-11, emphasis added). In these lines below, anaphora takes place with the repetition of the preposition “with” at the beginning of the successive lines and phrases:

“**With** the pomp of the inloop’d flags **with** the cities draped in black,

**With** the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil’d women standing,

**With** processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,

**With** the countless torches lit, **with** the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,

**With** the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,

**With** dirges through the night, **with** the thousand voices rising strong and solemn,

**With** all the mournful voices of the dirges pour’d around the coffin,” (*CPP*, 460, ll. 35-41, emphasis added). In these lines, anaphora occurs with the repetition of the present participle form of the verb “pass” at the beginning of successive lines and phrases: “**Passing** the visions, **passing** the night, / **Passing**, unloosing the hold of my comrades’ hands, / **Passing** the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul,” (*CPP*, 466, ll. 185-88, emphasis added).

Another repetition technique which is epiphora (epistrophe) is also used in the poem but not too frequently as the anaphora. In these lines below, epiphora is present with the

repetition of the past form of the verb “suffer” at the end of the successive lines and clauses: “The living remain’d and **suffer’d**, the mother **suffer’d**, /And the wife and the child and the musing comrade **suffer’d**, / And the armies that remain’d **suffer’d**.” (CPP, 466, ll. 183-185, emphasis added). In the line 188, epistrophe is present with the repetition of the noun “song” at the end of successive phrases: “Victorious **song**, death’s outlet **song**, yet varying ever-altering **song**,” (CPP, 466, l. 187, emphasis added).

Diacope (also known as epizeuxis) is another repetition technique which is used in the poem. It takes place with the uninterrupted repetition of the same word. Here are some lines where it is used: “With the **tolling tolling** bells’ perpetual clang,” (CPP, 460, l. 43, emphasis added), “*Undulate round the world, serenely **arriving, arriving**,*” (CPP, 464, l. 136, emphasis added). “*And for love, sweet love—but **praise! praise! praise!***” (CPP, 464, l. 141, emphasis added).

Alliteration which is the repetition of the same sound in multiple words is present throughout the poem. Both in the title and the first line of the poem, consonance takes place with the repetition of “l” sound at the beginning of successive words: “When **lilacs last** in the dooryard bloom’d,” (CPP, 459, l. 1, emphasis added). In this line, consonance is present with the repetition of “f” and “w” sounds at the beginning of successive words: “In the dooryard **fronting** an old **farm-house** near the **white-wash’d** palings,” (CPP, 459, l. 12, emphasis added). In this line, consonance takes place with the repetition of “s” sound at the beginning of successive words: “For **fresh** as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you O **sane** and **sacred** death.” (CPP, 461, l. 48, emphasis added). In these lines, consonance occurs with the repetition of “f” and “c” sounds at the beginning of successive words; “**F**rom the **fragrant** cedars and the ghostly pines so still, /**C**ame the **carol** of the bird.” (CPP, 464, ll. 130-31, emphasis added).

Hyperbaton which is the inversion of the normal order of words is present throughout the poem. Here are some lines where the hyperbaton is used: “A sprig with its flower I break.” (*CPP*, 459, l. 17). “Night and day journeys a coffin.” (*CPP*, 460, l. 32). “Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,” (*CPP*, 461, l. 47). “Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes, / With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,” (*CPP*, 461, ll. 52-53). “Came the carol of the bird.” (*CPP*, 464, l. 131).

Syncope takes place with the dropping of the unstressed vowel “e” sound from the regular past forms by using an apostrophe instead for embellishment. Here are some lines where it is used: “When lilacs last in the dooryard **bloom’d**, / And the great star early **droop’d** in the western sky in the night, / I **mourn’d**, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.” (*CPP*, 459, ll. 1-3, emphasis added),

“They themselves were fully at rest, they **suffer’d** not,

The living **remain’d** and **suffer’d**, the mother **suffer’d**,

And the wife and the child and the musing comrade **suffer’d**,

And the armies that **remain’d suffer’d**.” (*CPP*, 466, ll. 181-84, emphasis added).

In conclusion, the most frequently used schemes are the anaphora, alliteration, hyperbaton, and syncope. In the poem, anaphora serves to create a parallel structure to establish rhythm and to bring unity. Alliteration or head rhyme gives the poem a gratifying musical effect. Hyperbaton is used for emphasis while syncope is used for embellishment. As Price confirms: “As early as 1865, while retaining his long free-verse line, he turned increasingly to inversions, literary diction, and other poeticisms. He turned also to a more overtly allusive style, signaling a renegotiation of his relationship with other poets.” (1990:70).

#### **4.3.Rhetorical Devices in the 1871 Revised Version of “O Captain! My Captain!”**

**(1865)**

Whitman wrote “O Captain! My Captain!” in 1865 together with “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd” as an elegy to the fallen president Abraham Lincoln. It was “first appeared in the *Saturday Press* (4 November 1865) and subsequently in *Sequel to Drum-Taps* (1865-1866).” (LeMaster and Kummings, 1998:473). In 1871, Whitman revised the poem giving it its final form and “placed it in “President Lincoln’s Burial Hymn” in *Passage to India* (1871) and finally in the Memories of President Lincoln cluster in *Leaves of Grass* (1881).” (LeMaster and Kummings, 1998:473).

The 1871 version of the poem consists of three stanzas in double quatrain. There are eight lines per stanza, but the first four and last four lines are grouped together and follow different metric patterns. The last four lines of each stanza are indented which give the poem a visual beauty for its structure.

In the following pages, I will analyze the rhetorical devices used in the 1871 revised version of the 1865 poem “O Captain! My Captain!”.

#### 4.3.1. Tropes

Both in the title and throughout the poem, Whitman makes use of a traditional metaphor the word “Captain”, always in capital letters, as a clear metaphor for Lincoln, for it is used instead of the word “president”: “O **Captain!** my **Captain!** our fearful trip is done,” (*CPP*, 467, l. 1, emphasis added). In this line, “our fearful trip is done” is a metaphor for the Civil War ended as if he informs Lincoln about the news that he couldn’t see. In the second line, “the ship” is a metaphor for “the country” which overcame every difficulty and won “the prize” which is the end of slavery: “The ship has weather’d every rack, the prize we sought is won,” (*CPP*, 467, l. 2). In the third line, he uses “the port” as a metaphor for “the union” of the country which is near: “The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,” (*CPP*, 467, l. 3). In the line 4, the word “vessel” is a metaphor for “the country” which came safely through the storms of the Civil War: “While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and

daring;” (*CPP*, 467, l. 4). In the line 11, Synecdoche is present since the word “shores” is used to refer to the people there: “For you bouquets and ribbon’d wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,” (*CPP*, 467, l. 11).

To sum up, the whole poem is based on traditional metaphors. Whitman’s allusive language makes it a more complex poem.

#### 4.3.2. Schemes

In the poem, anaphora is present with the repetition of the definite article “the” at the beginning of successive lines and sentences: “**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,” (*CPP*, 467, ll. 2-3, emphasis added). It is used for enumeration of different events happening at the same time. In these lines, anaphora takes place with the repetition of the preposition “for” at the beginning of successive lines and sentences: “Rise up—**for** you the flag is flung—**for** you the bugle trills, / **For** you bouquets and ribbon’d wreaths—**for** you the shores a-crowding, / **For** you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;” (*CPP*, 467, ll. 10-12, emphasis added).

Hyperbaton is frequently used throughout the poem. Here are some lines where it is used: “The port is near, **the bells I hear**, the people all exulting, / **While follow eyes the steady keel**, the vessel grim and daring; (*CPP*, 467, l. 3-4, emphasis added), “Rise up—**for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills**, / For you bouquets and ribbon’d wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding, / **For you they call**, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;” (*CPP*, 467, ll. 10-12, emphasis added).

Alliterations take place with the repetition of the same sound throughout the poem. Here are some lines where it is used: “Rise up—**for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills**,” (*CPP*, 467, l. 10, emphasis added), “The ship is anchor’d **safe and sound**, its voyage

closed and done, / From fearful **trip** the victor **ship** comes in with object won;" (*CPP*, 467, ll. 19-20, emphasis added).

In this poem, Whitman uses syncope to omit the "e" sound from regular past forms where it is not pronounced, and he uses an apostrophe instead. Here are the lines where it is used: "The ship has **weather'd** every rack, the prize we sought is won," (*CPP*, 467, l. 2, emphasis added), "For you bouquets and **ribbon'd** wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding," (*CPP*, 467, l. 11, emphasis added), "The ship is **anchor'd** safe and sound, its voyage closed and done," (*CPP*, 467, l. 19, emphasis added).

In conclusion, Whitman used the anaphora to establish rhythm and internal rhyme in the poem. He used hyperbaton for the sake of both internal rhyme and emphasis. The alliteration also contributes to the musicality of the poem. Syncope is used for embellishment.

## 5. Conclusion

In the 1855 preface of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman asserted that America, being an independent country, should have its own literature. He declared the literary independence of American literature from the British and European influences in his preface to the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* and put it in practice in the twelve poems of this edition. Defying the literary tradition of his time which was under external influences, Whitman started a poetic revolution in American poetry with the publication of his book where he introduced the free verse form to American poetry as an alternative form and set up a new poetic idiom (diction) based on "simplicity". As he announced in his preface, he didn't want "any elegance or effect or originality" to be an obstacle between his readers and him. To the first poem which later he called "Song of Myself" he started with the line: "I celebrate myself," (*CPP*, 27, l. 1) suggesting his self-assumptions which later he continued stating to be the main aim of the book: "And what I assume you shall assume," (*CPP*, 27, l. 2). Whitman celebrated himself, his political and humanistic ideas; the importance of democracy, his opposition to

slavery, the gender equality, the self as the centre of the cosmos, his assumptions about social constitutions like marriage and religion, the body as sexuality and the soul as spirituality.

Whitman knew that the “simplicity” was vital in getting the message of the revolutionary content conveyed by these poems across and a poetic idiom based on the simple, vernacular language would help him set up a democratic poetry to reach a wider range of audience without any social class, gender, or age discrimination.

The analysis of rhetorical devices which are present in the 1855 poems “A Song for Occupation” and “Great are the Myths” from Whitman’s early poetry show that Whitman made use of intelligible tropes and created his own stylistic features in his early poems that are coherent with his poetics as he stated this in the 1855 preface. The most frequently tropes are the simile for comparison, antithesis for contrast, metonymy for “transparent clearness”, and the personification for it is the common and easily perceptible, and avoided the metaphors or other tropes which deeply changed the literal meaning. However, there was a point Whitman missed. The intelligibility of these poems didn't only depend on the poetic idiom used in them, but also on their content. The content of 1855 poems required intense intellectual activity for their comprehension from the part of the readers and they were too revolutionary and complex for the conservative target audience which was basically the working class. The most frequently used schemes are the old literary devices anaphora, hyperbaton, enumeration, and epiphora show that Whitman was inspired by the structure of the Biblical Psalms and created his own stylistic features in his revolutionary free verse form. Whitman's consistent use of these schemes created a parallel structure which brought unity to the poems. These schemes also contributed to the establishment of the rhythm of everyday speech in the poems thanks to the repetition techniques and the inversion. One of the most revolutionary stylistic features of Whitman’s free verse, the catalogues, his long lists emerged from both the repetition techniques and enumeration.

On the other hand, the analysis of the rhetorical devices in the 1891-92 “deathbed” edition of the poems “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” (first appeared in 1859, revised in 1881), “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd” (first appeared in 1865, revised in 1881) and “O Captain My Captain” (first appeared in 1865, revised in 1871) from Whitman's mid-late poetry show that Whitman, using more conventional tropes and schemes of the literary traditions, shifted progressively from his poetic revolution towards a more traditional poetry. He gave up using the ellipsis and decreased significantly his use of long dashes in his mid-late poems; the punctuation which formed one of the most obvious stylistic features of Whitman’s early poetry. In his revisions, he omitted the frequent use of conjunctions and replaced them by commas; shifting from polysyndeton to asyndeton. In “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking”, which is the starting point of Whitman's progressive traditionalism, he blended the literary tradition of romantic poetry with his own poetic diction and style. He started using archaic words, the allusive trope metaphor which he refused to use in his early poetry, internal rhymes with the use of anaphora and the repetition of present participle forms, head rhyme with alliterations in his poems.

In “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd” and “O Captain! My Captain” Whitman turned more to allusive tropes such as the metaphor, irony and hyperbole which he refused to use in his early poetry for not being natural but artificial. He started to use archaic words, his poetic idiom (diction) became more literary and his poems much more complex. Whitman’s target audience clearly shifts from being the working class to a higher social class. Especially in “O Captain! My Captain” which is Whitman's most traditional poem, he used traditional metaphors and renounced his revolutionary free verse form for double quatrain form with end rhymes. Some would describe this progress as if Whitman contradicted himself while I, agreeing with Vendler, prefer to defend his open-mindedness to change and his containing “multitudes”.

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