Understanding Whitman’s Poetry

By examining sectional divisions in Walt Whitman’s *Song of Myself*, we can show that 1891 revisions underscore the function of each section as a unit of meaning governed by its own rhythm (Strauch 64). Roger Mitchell calls this “group size pattern”:

Whitman is doing more than simply distributing a pattern of groups in some sensible fashion over the lines of a poem, creating what some critics are calling a group/line pattern.

Whitman is also conscious of the size of his groups and of their progression in terms of size pattern. (16)

Such an analysis demonstrates the method governing Whitman’s formation of stanzas and the meter governing the lines and verses of

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