

# Walt Whitman: The Poet of Protection and American Identity



## Protection 6 by J.T. Whitman

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language	: English
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Walt Whitman, the iconic American poet, is renowned for his groundbreaking literary contributions and his profound influence on the shaping of American identity. However, beyond his poetic brilliance, Whitman was also a fervent advocate for the protectionist movement, a belief that held significant implications for his literary works and his vision for the nation's economic and cultural development.

## The Rise of Protectionism in the United States

During the late 19th century, the United States underwent a period of rapid industrialization, leading to increased competition from foreign manufacturers. In response, protectionists advocated for government policies that would safeguard domestic industries from foreign competition, fostering economic growth and preserving American jobs.

Protectionists argued that tariffs on imported goods would level the playing field, allowing American businesses to thrive. They believed that protecting domestic industries would not only strengthen the economy but also promote national self-sufficiency and independence.

## **Whitman's Commitment to Protectionism**

Walt Whitman emerged as a staunch supporter of protectionism, aligning himself with the views of his fellow American intellectuals and industrialists. He firmly believed that protective tariffs were essential for the prosperity of the nation and the well-being of its citizens.

Whitman argued that protectionism would create a more equitable society by shielding American workers from unfair competition. He believed that a strong domestic economy would benefit all Americans, regardless of their social class or economic status.

## **Influences on Whitman's Protectionist Views**

Whitman's unwavering support for protectionism was influenced by several factors, including:

- His upbringing in a working-class family in Brooklyn, New York, where he witnessed firsthand the struggles of American laborers.
- His close association with industrialists and businessmen, who advocated for protective tariffs to protect their investments.
- His belief in the superiority of American products and the importance of promoting American industry.

## **Protectionism in Whitman's Poetry**

Whitman's commitment to protectionism found its way into his literary works, particularly his groundbreaking collection, *Leaves of Grass*. Throughout his poems, he celebrated American industry and the strength of American workers.

In his poem "Song of the Exposition," Whitman extolled the virtues of American manufacturing and the role of protectionism in fostering national pride:



***“Our tall machinery quivering with iron nerves,***

***Our endless processions of wagons and barges bringing forth...***

***This vast and teeming stream of workshops, factories, markets, ships, railways,***

***Our sturdy armies and fleets, and our common people...***

***This great unitary land.”***

Whitman's poetry not only praised American industry but also condemned the negative effects of foreign competition, which he believed threatened the nation's economic well-being and cultural identity.

### **Protectionism and American Identity**

For Whitman, protectionism was deeply intertwined with his vision for American identity. He believed that a strong and prosperous nation was

essential for the preservation of American values and the pursuit of a more just and equitable society.

Protectionist policies, Whitman argued, would foster a sense of national unity and pride, as Americans rallied around the common goal of economic self-sufficiency. He believed that a protected American economy would create a more prosperous and cohesive nation, where all citizens could share in the fruits of progress.

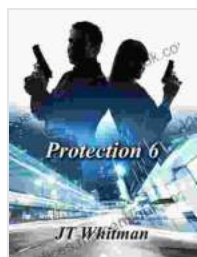
## **Legacy and Impact**

Walt Whitman's advocacy for protectionism had a profound impact on American literature and the nation's economic development. His unwavering stance helped shape the political landscape of the late 19th century, influencing policy decisions and igniting debates about the role of government in the economy.

Today, Whitman's legacy as a poet of protectionism continues to inspire discussions about the importance of economic nationalism and the preservation of American industry. His insights into the relationship between economic policy and national identity remain relevant in contemporary debates about globalization and the future of the American economy.

Walt Whitman, the celebrated American poet, emerged as a fervent champion of protectionism, believing that it was essential for the economic well-being of the nation and the preservation of American identity. His unwavering stance influenced his literary works, shaping his vision for a prosperous and unified nation. Whitman's legacy as a poet of protectionism continues to resonate, inspiring discussions about the role of government in

the economy and the importance of national self-sufficiency in shaping American identity.



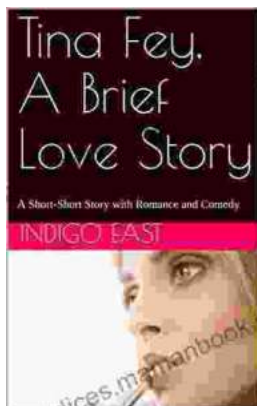
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