

**IDENTITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THE PERSONALITIES OF
AMERICAN POET, WALT WHITMAN AND INDIAN POET,
RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

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Abstract

Despite diverse family backgrounds, Whitman and Tagore display considerable affinity in their approach to man and the problems of life. Both stand out as bards of personality and prophets of America and India. These diverse family backgrounds of the two visionaries have also been studied with a view to bring out the individual poetic perception of each, the entire humanity being their concern. Comparative literature takes a note of literary movements. Social and political movements undoubtedly influence literature. It can be seen in American and Indian literature that has been produced after the contact with the East and West, and of war and Independence. Widening of horizons, hopefulness and frustration, a certain purity and nobility of thought, an urge for a social revolution and reforms, may be taken as the result of these events in the national life

Keywords: American and Indian literature, Whitman and Tagore, East and West, America and India

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Introduction:

Whitman and Tagore emerged as a prophet and a seer on the horizon of the new world at the junction of the Orient and the Occident. They fascinated the world with their distinct approach towards poetry. During the mid Nineteenth Century, Walt Whitman (1819-1892) as well as Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) emerged as a prophet and a seer, on the horizon of the new world. They fascinated the world, with their distinct approach towards poetry. Poetry for them was an instrument of Divine expression. Walt Whitman and Rabindranath Tagore may regard as representative voices of the great democracies of the modern world, America and India. They fully absorbed the essence of the culture which nurtured them. It is very interesting and also illuminating to have a glimpse of the diverse family backgrounds of Walt Whitman and Rabindranath Tagore. Life of Walt Whitman and Rabindranath Tagore was full of rich experience and first-hand knowledge of remarkable variety without regular schooling both the poets gleaned knowledge from several field.

A long and constant struggle in the life was the destiny of the son of Louisa Van Veslor and Walter. Rabindranath, with rich 'Zamindari, aristocratic background; youngest child of wealthy parents was very sensitive not only to the divine beauty of human life, but also to its sublime possibilities. Rabindranath certainly had a very strong cultural and literary background, On the contrary, to Whitman, Poverty, insanity, illiteracy and the morbidities of life all around stirred within his restless soul.

A Composite personality like Whitman and Tagore baffle anyone who wishes to write about or speak about them. Both the poets certainly are among the greatest poets of the world. It is my endeavor to explore certain areas of intersection between Whitman Walt and Rabindranath

Tagore on the response to poetry. I hope that the exploration will shed considerable light on the philosophical outlook and the elements of Romanticism by bringing out hitherto similarities and contrasts.

There is no evidence to show that the ancient Indian thinkers were influenced by Plato and Aristotle or the other way. But it is not impossible to reveal affinities and parallelism and complementary doctrines. If poetry transcends national boundaries, its nature cannot remain confined within them. The Renaissance 'Rule' about the three dramatic unities is bound to vary from time to time and from place to place. Without such flexible attitude we cannot go far enough in comparative studies. We may safely separate parts of the thinkers Walt Whitman and Rabindranath Tagore without distorting their meanings.

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Walt Whitman and Rabindranath Tagore may regard as representative voices of the great democracies of the modern world, America and India. They fully absorbed the essence of the culture which nurtured them. It is very interesting and also illuminating to have a glimpse of the life of Walt Whitman and Rabindranath Tagore. Life of Walt Whitman and Rabindranath Tagore was full of rich experience and first-hand knowledge of remarkable variety without regular schooling both the poets gleaned knowledge from several field. Walt Whitman incorporated the democratic spirit of America and Modern India found its representative voice in Rabindranath Tagore.

Comparison can be made in two ways. I have taken two important poets of American and India, Whitman and Tagore, to compare similarities and contrasts with a view to integrate them in a single philosophical framework. To take up specific concepts and problems and find out how Whitman and Tagore have tackled them, with success.

The age in which Tagore was born was an age of cultural transition. The nascent India experienced a change of spirit and a reorientation of outlook through a splendid blending of the old and the progressive cultural treasures of the 19th century west. If, on the one hand there was the religio – intellectual movement led by Raja Rammohun Roy, there was the ignorance of the blind believers of the unjust and human creeds. This exercised a powerful impact upon the expanding intellectual horizon of Tagore. Not only American and Indian literature but world literature has been fascinated by two towering personalities, Walt Whitman and Rabindranath Tagore, both by their contrast and what they had in common. Externally and in the course of their lives there was a great deal of difference, and yet both were close to each other. Tagore had the affection and admiration for Whitman.

Both were rebels in their own way and fearless in denouncing what they considered evil. Both were attached to truth as they own it to the dynamic character of the living truth, and it is this that gave them their enormous strength. Both, fully conscious of the modern world and reaction to the spiritual tradition of America and India both the poets gave a spiritual basis to the demand for freedom. They laid stress on the life of Spirit believed in the religion of man. Both in varying degrees were against the bondage of tradition and denounced superstition and ritual.

Like Walt Whitman, Tagore was the poet and the singer, was man of action, the true revolutionary, single-minded in his aim and going as the arrow from the bow. To Tagore and Whitman poetry and music were the essence of life and their philosophy was one of living in harmony with nature. Both the poets crept into the hearts of those who were disinherited and whose life went one long tale of unhappiness. In America as well the Civil War had disrupted the normal life of the nation at all levels. It was an age of turbulent changes in America. Both the poets seek to span earth and heaven with Rainbow Bridge of synthesis and integration. Both of them glorify the innocence of childhood and value the dignity of human personality which as macrocosm reflects as the splendor of macrocosm. Whitman, himself actively participated in Army paymaster's office to serve wounded soldiers in the Civil War. Though Tagore did not directly participate in the battle of freedom. Tagore was the great sentinel, always pleading for the preservation of higher values.

Conclusion:

While Whitman never left the shores of his land, Tagore toured extensively all over the world. All through their life Whitman and Tagore maintained good health, high spirit, cheerful outlook and childlike spirit of wonder. Unlike the personality of Whitman, the life of Tagore presents a harmonious and 'integrated identity', with all the contradictions and tensions reconciled and resolved.

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