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Mohammad A. Quayum (Ed.) 2020. **Tagore, Nationalism, and Cosmopolitanism: Perceptions, Contestations and Contemporary Relevance.** Routledge.

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The field of literary criticism is replete with works on Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore happens to occupy an iconic status, not just within the field of literature but also as an activist who stoked, spread, and strengthened India's independence movement. Yet, his writings and epistemological commitments fervently deny the nationalistic jingoism. For Tagore, "there is only one history—the history of man. All national histories are merely chapters in the larger one." It is due to his universalistic ideas that he was also known as "India's internationalist par excellence."

Tagore's aversion to nationalism as pure and divisive category underpins not just his writings but his socio-cultural activism as well. He believed that "the test of civilization is freedom, freedom of the spirit and of the mind and of the body." His idea of humanism identified and promoted diversity, "If you have a mission which includes all humanity, acknowledge the existence of differences of opinion." It is, therefore, not surprising to find Tagore as an educationist going on to establish three educational institutions – Santiniketan, Visva-Bharati and Sriniketan – all focused on promoting cosmopolitan practices.

Tagore's ideas continue to be relevant today. It would not be wrong to add that he is more needed in our times that reeks of a strong liking to discord and strife than to accord and peace. Therefore, it is immensely pleasant to see Mohammad A. Quayum's new edited volume, *Tagore, Nationalism, and Cosmopolitanism: Perceptions, Contestations and Contemporary Relevance* (2020). Quayum's stature as a literary critic is well-established and his contributions to South Asian and postcolonial literature are highly noteworthy. He is one of the few scholars in South Asia who has convincingly demonstrated his commitment to literature.

The fourteen chapters in this volume parse Tagore's writings thematically, thus offering readers to examine the roles of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. The first part of the book projects Tagore as "an avowed critic of nationalism" (12) The chapter by Sabyasachi Bhattacharya casts aspersions on projecting Tagore's idea of nationalism as a fixed category. This is obvious given Tagore's refusal to see nationalism as a closed project, rather he viewed it as an open-ended exercise. The next chapter by Serajul Islam Choudhury identifies Tagore as an ambivalent figure due to his rootedness in Indian identity while critical of the Western

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notion of nationalism. However, Choudhury rightly advocates that Tagore's aversion to Western nationalism is linked to the anarchy rendered by hypercapitalism.

Mohammad A. Quayum's "Imagining 'One World': Rabindranath Tagore's Critique of Nationalism" offers a balanced yet deeply engaged chapter that examines Tagore's critique of nationalism and his alternative rendition of cosmopolitanism. This comes out as an immensely rich piece, for it draws several parallels of Tagore with Gandhi and his notion of *Swaraj*, and other postcolonial critics of nationalism including Ernst Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Tom Nairn, and Leela Gandhi. Tagore's relevance in contemporary times is convincingly laid down in this theoretically rich chapter. Kathleen M. O'Connell's next chapter, "Visva-Bharati: Tagore's Response to Aggressive Nationalism?," explores the liberal and utopian underpinnings in Tagore's educational writings and practice. Likewise, the next chapter by Christine Marsh focuses on Tagore's community-building model as an alternative to nationalism, depending as it is on self-reliant mechanisms.

The following chapter by Narasingha P. Sil, "Pilgrim Man: Rabindranath Tagore's Cosmopolitanism and Cosmic Consciousness," attempts to critique Tagore's notion of nationalism. Conversely, Satish C. Aikant's chapter advances Tagore's notion of cosmopolitanism. This chapter offers a superb understanding of Tagore's quest for universal identity. Understandably Aikant underlines that tradition and modernity are not dichotomous but a syncretic fusion. The following chapter by Bindu Puri tries to blur Aikant's argument by questioning Tagore's cosmopolitan allegiance to world citizenship. For Puri, Tagore's world citizenship is based on a love for Indian culture and values.

The next section opens with Shanta Acharya's chapter that analyses his poems and lectures on nationalism to establish Tagore as a universal man. Likewise, Dipankar Roy examines Tagore's journey from national consciousness to international consciousness.

Lalita Pandit Hogan explores Tagore's cosmopolitanism by analysing his short stories, "The Ghat's Story" (1884), "Inheritance" (1892) and "Hungry Stone." In the next chapter by *Anindya Bhattacharya*, one can witness a critique of the notion of modernity as it sets out to examine Tagore's travelogues "to deconstruct the cluster of ideas associated with colonial modernity" (237)

Saurav Dasthakur advances Bhattacharya's argument by questioning and critiquing the idea of "World-History." Focussing on Tagore's song-texts, *Gītābitan*, this chapter puts forth alternative concepts of *Itihāsa* and *Swadeshi samaj*, thus celebrating him as a champion of a cosmopolitan world. The last chapter by Srimati Mukherjee explores cinematic adaptations of Tagore's novels cinematic adaptations of two of Tagore's novels to highlight the flawed and at times, self-serving nature of nationalism.

This volume is a refreshing account of Tagore's relevance to the contemporary times. It offers a range of critical lenses to approach and understand Tagore anew. Quayum's own rich understanding of Tagore makes this volume a rich addition to the field of world literature.

