

an overarching administered structure as implacable as total war, nothing is fixed. Paranoia generates its own scientific principles, themselves as vaporous as the smoke that rises from the bomb-craters: 'Paranooids are not paranoids (Proverb 5) because they're paranoid, but because they keep putting themselves, fucking idiots, deliberately into paranoid situations.' It might be true once, and then never again, or not at all. Who knows?

Mario Farina's study is substantially compromised, sad to relate, by the frankly ghastly English in which the Italian author has boldly tried to write it. Many sentences regularly need reading two or three times before their strangulated meaning emerges from the verbal contortions, and the regular recourse to superfluous parentheses – 'in fact' is a regular favourite of the author's – hardly helps. The blame for this state of affairs lies less with an academic chancing his arm in a second language than with an academic publisher that, while reserving the right to charge the earth for an intellectual work, sees no need for a qualified proofreader to make it sound coherent.

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE. By Sukanta Chaudhuri (Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 515 pp.

W. B. Yeats in his introduction to 'Gitanjali' noted that Tagore, "like the Indian civilization itself, has been content to discover the soul and surrender himself to its spontaneity" (Tagore xx). The book being reviewed here is a comprehensive collection of articles and essays by leading Tagore experts from India and Abroad. The book is classified into two parts: Part I Overviews and Part II Studies. The articles present both a diachronic and synchronic study of the life and works of Tagore. In the introductory chapter 'A Garland of Many Tagores' reflects the visionary poet's pluralistic attitude and belief in diversity through the words of Anisuzzaman, "We must look at the garland of many Tagores not as a string of disjunct elements but as an organic, integral whole" (Chaudhuri 22). 'Rabindranath and His Times' by Biswajit Ray provides the background to Tagore's personal life, his education and love for literature, his vision and creation in the changing world.

As a person who believed in modernity as "both contemporary and beyond time" (Chaudhuri 35) Tagore epitomizes the Indian philosophy of the changing times. 'Tagore's Poetry' by Sukanta Chaudhuri underscores Tagore's preoccupation with the themes of Divine-devotee relationship, love and nature. Banabini 'The Voice of the Forest' under the title 'The Life of Plants' represented through the lines, "Earth and Sky are sunk in deep sorrow...Mother Earth clasps the smallest blade of grass to her bosom and cries, 'I won't let you go.'" (Chaudhuri 65) and the respect for women's lives and women's being through the analysis of the text 'Manasi' (Woman of the Mind) may interest eco-critics and ecofeminist thinkers. Tagore's interest in music and songs is studied by Ashish Lahiri in his essay 'Something of a Musician -Tagore's Songs'. The author provides a comprehensive view of the musical tools used by Tagore that includes: *dhrupad*, the Hindustani classical music, the *kirtan*, inspired by his devotion to Radha and Krishna, the Bangla *Tappa*, the modern Bangla songs, the Baul folksongs of East Bengal, western music of Beethoven and Bach as mentioned to Romain Rolland and the South Indian Carnatic music. Tagore's belief in 'Unity in Diversity' is reiterated by his ideas in his essay 'Tapovan' (Forest of Purity),

Indian civilization has been distinctive in locating its source of regeneration, material and intellectual, in the forest, not the city. India's best ideas have come where man was in communion with trees and rivers and lakes, away from the crowds. The peace of the forest has helped the intellectual evolution of man...

The culture of the forest has fueled the culture of Indian society. The culture that has arisen from the forest has been influenced by the diverse processes of renewal of life, which are always at play in the forest, varying from species to species, from season to season, in sight and sound and smell. The unifying principle of life in diversity, of democratic pluralism, thus became the principle of Indian civilization. (Shiva 55-56)

Tagore was greatly influenced by the dramatic techniques of Shakespeare. His themes ranged from love, nature, society, and environment as discussed by Ananda Lal in his essay 'Rabindranath Tagore: Drama and Performance'. The plays uphold environmental consciousness and relevance to the 21<sup>st</sup> century readers.

Two of Tagore's finest and most difficult, politically symbolical works, *Muktadhara* (The Free Stream, 1922) and *Raktakarabi* (Red Oleander, 1924), emerged in the next decade. They forcefully indict the oppression of subjugated people and exploitation of the earth's resources – *Muktadhara* on damming rivers and *Raktakarabi* on digging mines – while embodying in their protagonists the spirit of self-sacrifice for a noble cause. It is chastening that, though Tagore raised these issues nearly a century ago, only in recent times has the world begun to rethink the value of massive dams and to realize the havoc caused by open mining (Chaudhuri 106).

Likewise, 'An Ecology of the Spirit Rabindranath's Experience of Nature' by Aseem Shrivastava underscores Tagore's ecological vision which may serve as a guiding principle for the modern-day environmental thinkers and ecocritics.

'Imagined Worlds: The Prose Fiction of Rabindranath Tagore' by Supriya Chaudhuri celebrates the short stories of the great artist who created the evergreen characters like Ratan in 'The Postmaster', Uma in 'Khata', Binodini in 'Choker Bali', Charu and Amal in 'Charulatha' many of them reincarnated in Satyajit Ray's classic films. Fakrul Alam provides an exhaustive overview of Tagore's Writings in English. The article begins with the discussion of his magnum opus 'Gitanjali' and its reception by the western audience.

Taking considerable liberty with the Bengali sources – the kind of liberty only a creative writer could exercise with his own work – Tagore made the English versions almost original compositions or, at the very least, considerably reworked versions of the intricate, emotionally intense, and musically rich Bengali poems. (Chaudhuri 160)

Alam goes on to discuss the less popular works with great literary merit and philosophical underpinnings that bear a resemblance to the transcendentalist ideas of Emerson and Whitman. Harish Trivedi's 'Tagore and Indian Literature: Influence and Presence' is a seminal essay for scholars of Indian literature and translation studies with emphasis on mediation, resistance and reception. Similarly, mutuality, transformation and co-construction of literary connections and communications across borders is the central concern of Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta. Tagore and the Visual Arts by R. Siva Kumar provides fresh perspectives on his paintings and art forms with images ranging from a doodle of *Raktakarabi* (Red Oleander) to a dramatic scene with five figures.

Part II provides wide-ranging research essays and articles on specific topics related to the works of Rabindranath Tagore, such as gender concerns of women, family, children with contemporary relevance for example the character of Chitrangada who utters, "I am the princess Chitrangada: not a goddess, nor any ordinary woman. You cannot raise me aloft by worshipping me, nor keep me neglectfully yet make me follow you (Chaudhuri 251). 'Women, Gender, and the Family in Tagore' Himani Bannerji enumerates the social reforms of Brahma Samaj and the influence on Tagore such as, "The most important legislations centred on women and the family. They comprised the banning of sati or widow-burning (1829), legalizing widow remarriage (1856), and determining the minimum age of marriage (1860) and the age of consent (1891). There followed legislation on polygamy, rape, and prostitution. presents his ideals of social reformation" (240). Likewise, the world of children becomes a pertinent area of study in Sibaji Bandyopadhyay's essay, 'On the Seashore of Endless Worlds Rabindranath and the Child'. For Sabyasachi

Bhattacharya, Tagore's nonfiction provides ample evidence of his view of history where she confirms "Tagore never wrote history in narrative form: his interventions in historiography were chiefly in the form of critique" (Chaudhuri 269).

Tagore's *View of Politics and the Contemporary World* by Sobhanlal Datta Gupta has some political lessons guided by his "spiritual aura" (Chaudhuri 285) to the present-day reality. Kathleen M. O'Connell's essay *Tagore's 'Santiniketan Learning Associated with Life'* painstakingly traces the origin, history, vision and mission of this alternative system of a poet's theory of education and its impact on the contemporary world. 'Tagore and Village Economy- A Vision of Wholeness' by Sourin Bhattacharya throws light upon Tagore's holistic philosophy of sustainable living and peaceful coexistence shaped by the life-affirming principles of *Shri Samaj* and *Atmashakthi*. Tagore's rendezvous with the western science and his association with Einstein is introduced by Partha Ghose in his essay, 'Rabindranath and Science'. Rabindranath Tagore's aesthetics and his role as a literary critic are discussed by Jayanti Chattopadhyay and Swapan Chakravorty. 'Rabindranath, Bhakti, and the Bhakti Poets' by France Bhattacharya outlines Tagore's understanding and integration of his religion, spirituality and mystical thought. These essays quintessentially showcase the multidimensional trajectory of literary sensibilities and critical responses of the scholars from the East and the West.

A literature student or scholar who is seldom introduced to Tagore may experience the same anguish of the persona in Song 50 of *Gitanjali*, "But how great my surprise when at the day's end I emptied my bag on the floor to find a least little grain of gold among the poor heap. I bitterly wept and wished that I had had the heart to give thee my all". This extremely readable book aspires to be a Bible in Tagore Studies and inspires young researchers and academicians to revisit and reread the literary classics and the life-affirming philosophies of the great visionary and master storyteller to suggest ways out of the challenges and crises of the 21st century and recreate a world "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high" (*Gitanjali* Song 35).

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IMPERFECT SOLIDARITIES: TAGORE, GANDHI, DU BOIS AND THE GLOBAL ANGLOPHONE. By Madhumita Lahiri. Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2020. 232 pp.

Translating is an academic exercise that involves riddling ramifications whether in language or in poetry. I use the term 'poetry' to juxtapose, and perhaps, draw forth a contrast against 'language' in its unquenched quest to reach at meaning and more intriguingly, to highlight its peculiar urge to reside through but out of language. Poetry, in words and sentiments, is thus about translating hidden/eclipsed/sheltered inscapes that are seldom transmissible; if at all rendered cognizable even from within the narrator or the 'self'. However, this longing to translate is central to the conception of a community and its self identification; in its loose definitions, its mapping of lapses/excesses on the co-ordinates of collective imagination and its association through the political interstices of differential commonalities. In Madhumita Lahiri's text *Imperfect Solidarities: Tagore, Gandhi, Du Bois and the Global Anglophone*, this idea of identification takes on the guiding motif to her argument that establishes her concerns exactly from where Benedict Anderson pauses for his theoretical respite. To Lahiri, this problem of identification and translation sprawls towards the 'undefined' and the delicate, the literary and the 'international'.

Hence, here the author explores a politics of excesses. The idea of how a community (both cultural and intellectual) can be formed through the presence of a vibrant print culture is presented