

Book Review: An(other) Quest for the Political: Ranjan Ghosh's Detechnification of Pedagogy Through Tagore

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While reading Ranjan Ghosh's book *Aesthetics, Politics, Pedagogy and Tagore: A Transcultural Philosophy of Education* (2017) one may follow the (in)fusion approach and the philosophy of trans introduced by Prof. Ghosh himself (Ghosh 2016). One may break the epistemic securities of ideas within their safe contours of tradition and belonging to infuse and activate other ideas – other spaces. Thus, the philosophical potentialities, the potency of philosophy or philosophical thinking as potentialities (following Agamben) would be directed towards an undecidable future – the realm of a confrontation with non-knowledge.¹ The future resides in the openness of possibilities of meaning that is hidden and which surfaces in the literariness of our readings. Activating ideas with other ideas would make the (im)possible meanings move from depth to the surface. Ghosh's work points towards such inadvertent hybridity of ideas. As Ghosh with his inimical style charges Tagorean ideas on pedagogy and philosophy (linked inseparably as both form together a realm of practice and also transforms the same to address the famous Marxian gap between interpretation and change in "The Thesis on Feuerbach") with his readings of thinkers across the continents (resonating with the title of his other book, co-authored with J. Hillis Miller, *Thinking Literature Across Continents*) the spectre of debates and discussions on Tagore's philosophy and its relevance in the present world surfaces, transcending the limits of his book. Ranjan Ghosh's book invites such textual and ideational transcendence and inquiry. In a recent special supplement on Tagore in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Pradip Kumar Dutta, in his introduction, comments on the "new generation of work on Tagore" after his 150th birth anniversary which focuses more on "the less familiar area of Sriniketan, the rural development wing of the global pedagogic institution that Tagore called Visva-Bharati" but which "does not leave out the more familiar world of Santiniketan, but views it from the perspective of materialist aesthetic practices" (Dutta 2017, 38) as he claims to have been done in the collection he was introducing. He also points out how in the eve of his 100th anniversary in 1961, the anniversary edition published from Sahitya Akademi "does not have a single essay on his institution-making." Ranjan Ghosh's book effectively addresses that lacuna. As he does so, writing in English for a wider global audience, his work pushes us to address a larger question of postcolonial scholarship and its politics. It becomes an addition to our postcolonial speculations on identity, marginality and thinking of the other.

This review essay would attempt to examine in the light of Ranjan Ghosh's book how far Tagore helps us to deal with the complex question of identity and marginality that disturbs and unsettles postcolonial democracies. In the traditional field of discussing the politics of Tagore he is mainly identified as a man of ideas. Those who hail him as a poet-philosopher and make him a cultural icon prefer him for his great ideas and those who are critical of him are so for his benevolent but impractical ideas. There has been a tradition of Marxist critiques in Bengal who denounced Tagore for being a bourgeois ideologue – a landlord by birth, carrying social and cultural privileges of his upper class, upper caste, and colonized bourgeois identity. While some negate him for his privileged position and the focus of his literary work being largely the middle-classes, others see his good intentions limited by his economic and ideological confines. However, Ranjan Ghosh's book ascertains Tagore's thinking as a different sort of practice – a practice that insinuates a crossing over. Prof. Ghosh does so by focusing on Tagore's prose writings and his ideas on learning, educating and pedagogy. Tagore for him is a poet philosopher as he infuses the poetic function of creation, in identity formation and knowing oneself through education. Ranjan Ghosh's book generates further possibilities of reading Tagore's philosophy as an aesthetic practice to keep open the future that is to come. Derrida's idea of *democracy to come* may become the aesthetic imaginary for self-formation in Tagore where the subject is not decidable and determinable fully by the network of power and remains open to the future while not erasing its past and present. While Derrida's work focuses on *democracy to come*, Ranjan Ghosh focuses on Tagore's ideas to show how the selves of the subjects of *democracy to come* could be created poetically. Here we may move from Derrida to Agamben to

suggest that only through an acknowledgement of the closure of the subject we can imagine the 'open' (Agamben 2004). The closure is not denied in Tagore and his philosophy is less postmodern and less collaborative with late capitalist indeterminacies and insecurities but the closure is constantly kept open to the other – to the non-being of ecological world or the political world of the marginalized. Being a *bhadrolok* bourgeois, Tagore did not evade completely like a western liberal, the limits of knowing and wanted to work through those limits (Dhar and Chakrabarti 2017). This enquiry is diverted towards exploring Ranjan Ghosh's work as opening up the possibility of seeing Tagore as a philosopher of limit or as Anup Kumar Dhar and Anjan Chakrabarti suggest: "Tagore laid claim to the counterhegemonic language of the foreclosed" (498). We shall read Ranjan Ghosh's concern with Tagore's philosophy and pedagogy as an aesthetic practice through this "language of the foreclosed" as it brings together ethics, politics and aesthetics towards another philosophy of learning.

Ranjan Ghosh's book, in order to engage with the foreclosures that Tagore worked through, goes back to history. He interrogates the very notion of history as recording – as archiving and record keeping as it has been formulated in the west (Ghosh 2007). History perhaps is not the only form of thinking the past and *itihasa* as a concept draws closely to it which Tagore repeatedly brings up in his writings. The notion of *itihasa* is closely connected with Tagore's philosophy, politics and aesthetics. It informs his pedagogic model of indeterminacy, creativity and openness to future. *Itihasa* is a past which is literary and which has to be produced. It contains the workings of the mind. Indian way of recording the past has been in terms of what Romila Thapar calls *itihasa-purana* tradition which follows a tradition of story-telling and does not hide the historian's ideology and desire in the making of it (Thapar 2000). It does not claim exactitude and lays bare, the ideological contradictions and confrontations of the writer of history. Instead of the linearity that Tagore criticizes in Western enlightenment rationalist model of history, as Ranjan Ghosh points out, we can observe in *itihasa-purana*, cycles too large to determine immediate human society. Therefore, it allows imagination and openness to possibilities. Yet, it confirms larger structures of universality which one might imagine. Imagination becomes the poetics of this history as *itihasa*. Imagination and making of history cohabits the making of the self in Tagore's pedagogy, where one would have a tradition – a culture and a past which needs constant reinvention. Tagore's philosophy at large challenges western enlightenment obsession with truth as exactness and as preordained, similar to Kantian *apriori* and posits truth as a matter of searching and making. This can be thought of as the political strategy, Tagore employs against the colonial system of education, based on the charting of knowledge and the ego of the knowing self, from whom the object of knowledge is distanced in terms of power. Tagore's intervention challenges this Foucauldian paradigm of *knowledge/power* that constitutes modern politics. Thus he establishes his abode of Visva-Bharati in Shantiniketan (abode of peace) as a place where the relationship between man and nature is of cooperation and togetherness – establishing *sambandhas*, instead of domination.

Education, as Ranjan Ghosh shows in this form of thinking, is processual and is open to the future where knowledge points towards the limits, and limits of power expose the self to its myriad other which reconfigures the self. This education is aesthetic in nature. Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, in her writing has defined aesthetic education as an "uncoercive rearrangement of desires" (Spivak 2012, 108). In Ranjan Ghosh's understanding of Tagore, the process is not only uncoercive but also creative and poetic, making the self pass through multiple uncertainties. Ranjan Ghosh talks about a "now-ing of history" (Ghosh 2017, 14) which reconstitutes and remakes the past in terms of the present and opens it up to the future. In modernity, the self is defined in terms of tradition and past. While Tagore was a devoted critic of nationhood, he retained the idea of a *swadeshi samaj* or one's own land.² While he was a trenchant critic of identitarianism, he still retained the notion of inheritance and belonging. In terms of India's own thinking of past, this can be measured. Niharranjan Ray focused on the Bengali cognate word *kulashila* to understand the nature of *itihasa*. *Kula* means clan and is connected to customs and *shila* is related to the word *anushilan* meaning practice (Ray 2003, 30-37). Tagore was against numerical customs as dead habits but he did not give up custom and renewed it with the way it is created and practiced. Both past and the self are elements that need to be created through practice. Thus Ranjan Ghosh rightly distinguishes Tagore from the vision of a

swadeshi education that is nationalist and argued for a *swaraj* that is self-reconstruction (Ghosh 2017 146). The past and tradition could only be acquired through this process of self-reconstruction. This understanding of knowledge and education is anti-metaphysical in nature and did not depend on onto-epistemology. It follows the Heideggerian path of thinking as dwelling.³ The idea of dwelling, of emplacement, of *choric* possibility of time is something Ranjan Ghosh hints upon. History for Tagore happens through the experience and this experience is not of a larger dimension but of everyday – the *pratyohik*. Experience is a category which goes against the authenticity and objectivity of enlightenment historiography as it erases the self. Tagore's philosophy engages history as an active part of self-making. The possibility of Tagore's philosophy of history and its connection with his pedagogy which Ranjan Ghosh establishes is pregnant with the possibility of reflecting upon the relation of the self with the other – a road to deal with difference in the post-identitarian world, charged with colonial, racial, cultural, caste and class hierarchies. Is this idea of amalgamation – of endless threads of *sambandhas* to deal with difference only an impractical dream of a poet-philosopher who wanted good for all and failed to face the evil of modernity or is his philosophy of *sahitya* is charged with a larger idea of goodness (*sahitya* apart from togetherness, etymologically also suggests *hit* or good)⁴ which is aesthetic and creative, questioning the structures of exploitation and difference? In case of the latter possibility how Tagore being a privileged colonial bourgeois, enjoying property rights and separated from a large chunk of impoverished people of this country, economically and culturally can induce an aesthetic model of self-reflexivity is an important question left to be asked. This is the question which may lead us to understand Tagore's idea of the University that is radical and contextual in the context of the postcolonial world of difference.

Ranjan Ghosh's book, through Tagore's conceptualization of education, makes a critique of the mathematization of knowledge and the premeditative idea of a University, based on purpose and utility. For Ranjan, "Tagore, like a poet with a dream, had set sail on a journey – in risk adventure and romance – whose educative mission was not just the 'transfer of skills' and formal prescriptive vocabulary of learning but a commitment to an 'art' that did not reduce life to mere 'maps' and 'boxes'" (Ghosh 2017, 109). Tagore's concerns deeply embed our current relationship with knowledge and reduction of political subjects into potential information for benefit of the governance and inducing what Foucault calls "technologies of the self" (Foucault 1988, 16-49). Knowledge in this paradigm becomes a way of acquiring and engaging with power and is chiefly purposeful. This encourages a digitization and corporatization of knowledge, as we move from the idea of a university, based on statist utility and proper growth of civilization, based on nation-state towards a more trans-local notion of education which would cater to the demands of world capitalism and corporate institutions. Derrida discussed how allocation of funds happen in higher education to silently encourage a certain purposeful research or to admit the apparently purposeless research to the larger benefit of mankind, thus circumscribing research within an idea of reason, based on causality and purpose (Derrida 1983). It subscribes the self-making of man to a kind of Heideggerian 'enframing' (in "The Question Concerning Technology") that shuts the possibility of man towards undecidable and multiple myriad futures that are supposed to come (Heidegger 1993, 311-341). The Heideggerian principle of poetry was pitted against such incalculability. Calculability can only produce foreclosures and inability to see and approach the other. The Derridean idea of University is against such rationality and stresses on vision as a metaphor of knowledge where everything can be viewed with a continuous clarity. He puts human capacity to listen and the ability to close their eyes against such an absolute clarity. It resists continuous vision and therefore allows one to close their eyes and listen. Ranjan Ghosh's book seems to be showing us how Tagore's idea of education is based on such alternation between closure and openness – not denying the vision of selfhood, history and culture but at the same time, adjusting that vision constantly through the presence of the other. This happens through the acknowledgement of the gap between knowing and not knowing, instead of assuming absolute knowledge.

Here we need to think Tagore as a man of his time where his bourgeois self had to survive the tussle between his privileged subject position of being an upper caste, upper class, English educated landowner and Universalist, egalitarian liberal self, acquired through liberal humanist education

(Mukherjee 1950). He was privileged in terms of property and culture and a portion of Bengali critiques harped on this privilege to be critical of his writings as he did not give up his private property. Pradip Kumar Dutta, while discussing Tagore's cooperative philosophy, asserts that Tagore thought the land belongs to tenants but he feared that "the net result of distributing his land would be the domination of the moneylenders who would buy out the smallholdings of the peasants" (Datta 2017, 41). So that kind of economic reform could not be taken up by Tagore alone and the apparently powerful too, is subjected to the larger system of operations. But he identified this irredeemable difference between the Zamindar and the tenants as "a problem of relationship" (Datta 2017, 41). It can be put in the larger corpus of postcolonial crisis of possession and dispossession of cultural capital as well. Culture in colonial Bengal was a ploy to cover up the privileges of property and caste position and a way of disciplining the comprador class of bourgeois (Bandyopadhyay 1994; Sartori 2008). It worked as an ideology to perpetuate the marginalization of those who are dispossessed of this culture and education and also to discipline the upholders of this culture to invite support from them and perpetuate power. Asok Sen while discussing the politics of Tagore, asserts that Tagore's intervention into power is chiefly ideological (Sen 2017). His aesthetics, politics and pedagogy can be read following Ranjan Ghosh as an ideological auto-reflexive gesture. His dealings are on how to think of knowledge despite its constitutiveness and collaboration with power. Partha Chatterjee rightfully calls Tagore a positivist thinker.⁵ But though Tagore works from within the structures of power, he potentially hints at how the inside space of this structure – this apparatus – this *dispositif* is wired linguistically, to act against its own foreclosure.

Tagore's aesthetics is not simply a politics of aesthetics that often the post-modern and post-colonial scholars would reflect upon but it is an aesthetic politics, a politics that remains aesthetically informed and resists the immanent structures of violence in our doings and thinking. He poses this aesthetics beyond his creative writings and extends it to the practice of teaching where teaching becomes creative and a form of unwriting of the selves. The selves are unwritten in the process of teaching, not simply to go to a primordial cleanliness, free of earthly contradictions and crisis, but to erase the walls of self-hood. Tagore, as Ghosh shows, always believed in porous boundaries. His structure of university has been so much more attuned to the idea of a *tapovan* – a forest where boundaries are invisible and constantly in situational shift, unmediated by instrumental and technological walls, imposed from above and outside. His politics could be understood as post-deconstructive, in Ghosh's reading. Tagore was a positivist in his theology but his positive thoughts were informed by Upanishadic ideas of the search for the ideal Being and therefore may come close to a negative theological practice, in search of an ideal Being that can never be reached. Pradip Kumar Datta discusses this relationship between *atman* and *brahman*, converted into an ethical principle. He says – "The perpetual expansion of relationship is modelled on the Brahman-atman relationship...The perpetual expansion of relationship is modelled on the Brahman-atman relationship" (Datta 2017, 42). Datta asserts that the self in search of an ideal Being is thus processual. Ranjan Ghosh asserts in very similar terms – "the spirit in Taittiriya Upanishad where we find the urge to know, grow and integrate with the Brahman – it is realized from the root *brh* which means to 'burst forth', to 'grow'" (Ghosh 2017, 94). But, to read this negative theological move as a complete unsettlement of existing paradigm of knowledge or to read Tagore's positivism as an absolute deployment of knowledge and thus in the process, as an affirmative of power would be wrong. It is neither. Ranjan Ghosh's work points out this truth about Tagore's philosophy of learning. As he was against a premeditated order, guiding and directing our nationalism and as he preferred instead, a nation based on a society of dialogue and commitment to listening, his educational philosophy was deeply affected by a resistance to epistemic violence. The space of Shantiniketan and its philosophy of integral, holistic and anti-hierarchical learning vouchsafe for that. Boundaries of class and culture as well as that of teacher and student depended on mutual spacing and plotting of the selves. Selves were under production in the process and were deeply aware of an other who could not be absorbed into a structure.

Rabindranath was not concerned with the modern dynamics of power and viewed the traffic between the public and the nation-state with inadvertent skepticism and a sense of fallenness. He was

an idealist in his way of understanding the world and wanted to keep faith in a universal moral law. But his concern with modern existence and politics was informed by an aesthetics which Ranjan Ghosh illuminates in his book. Nevertheless, the question of the political cannot also be served fully by this aesthetic concern either. It has to be thought through the dynamics of power and its instrumentality. Partha Chatterjee, while discussing Tagore's thinking on nationhood, opined that Tagore was against the modern instrumentality of power which he called '*kol*' or machine and instead of negotiating with it, denied and rejected it (Chatterjee 2008). For him Tagore could not deal with the modern instrumentality of governmental power and could only reject it, envisioning a greater good which is utopian and could not escape the messy regime of *biopower*. But to challenge the workings of the instrument may not be in Tagore, a denial of the instrumentality and its existence. Even if Tagore suggested so in parts of his thinking, we are not supposed to take it literally. On the contrary, we must think this denial of instrumentality as a symbolic gesture towards a certain utopian politics where the idea of the political is mediated by an aesthetic concern. Neither does the aesthetic question concerning human life, pedagogy, values and society exist in a pure space, nor is the political concern totally unmediated by an inherent and immanent structure of faith – an ideology. It is supposedly directed by a totality of a blind machine like power structure (that Tagore calls "*kol*" or instrument). The aesthetic concern has to be connected with deeper political concerns – the identity politics, the struggle between the privileged and the disempowered or the question of control and discipline versus freedom and autonomy. Though Tagore's analysis does not fall in line with the Marxist idiom of class-struggle or Foucauldian analysis of power we cannot deny his encounter with power and his response in the form of a responsibility to it. One cannot deny power but he or she can always attempt to overcome it in forms of desire for transcendence. This desire for transcendence is as much an aesthetic concern as it is of politics.

Ranjan Ghosh's book attempts here to connect both. Thus he talks about "the intrusion – compulsive and fractious-of 'literary' into 'history'." We therefore cannot accept Partha Chatterjee's critique of Rabindranath's prose works and his reflections on nation-state as purely disconnected from today's politics, as Chatterjee marks a clear split between Tagore's political and creative writings in terms of the discursive worlds they belong to. Precisely this discursive split is what Tagore wanted to challenge by invoking his aesthetics in politics or bringing the same aesthetic concern in the realm of pedagogy, education and discipline as they are deeply connected with power. Ranjan Ghosh rightly calls for Tagore's pedagogy to be informed by his self of a poet and a philosopher. While Chatterjee measures the realm of the political in Foucaultian terms and resists idealist form of politics, we also must remember that the political subject is not a naturally given category but is a constituted form, born out of negotiation of the individuals and their everyday experience with the historical and political forces, incumbent on them. Pedagogy and discipline are practices which may contribute to shape up human beings and also allow them to affect history and politics in their own way. The ways of man are nothing but a negotiation between their ability to choose – to take decision and the sinister grid of power that wants to direct and decide their choices. This negotiation is also a form of aesthetic practice and the very question of construction of man is also related to the opposing forces of determinism and creativity in strife but at the same time, informing each other. Ranjan Ghosh's reading of Tagore's ideas on pedagogy premises largely upon this aesthetic practice of making the subject through his encounter with the everyday. Tagore's politics is this politics of the impossible and can be understood in terms of a Derridean encounter between the real and the imaginable of democracy – the democracy that is here and now and the democracy that is to-come – *avenir* (Derrida 2002, 256). While Derrida was to seek a linguistic, hermeneutic and epistemological possibility of transcendence that is immanent within the structure of power that has been insurmountable and that has silenced its 'other', Tagore's thinking looks for a utopian space away and beyond the present workings of power; an invitation which may challenge the apparatus and transform it from inside. It is an aesthetic practice to be made incumbent upon power which may have a transformative potential. Tagore could understand intuitively how the working of the power itself works at an individual level to use pedagogic and disciplinary procedures to make individual subjects subjected to a certain order of power and consider it immutable. It is also a kind of *poesis* – a making. Contrary to this, as a countermove Tagore instituted another form of making – a certain construction of the self that can

question this immutability of power – its totality and absolutism through the negotiation of the choice making subjects with the world and its supposedly insurmountable laws.

The idea of choice is related to the question of democracy and Derrida questions the affirmative form of democracy where the will of the people is valorized as conscious and based on reason. He discusses how the illiberal can be a choice of the democratic subject and that the end of democracy may happen through the electoral process of the citizens as subjects of free choice and the sovereign chosen by them (Derrida 2005, 9-10). It is difficult now in the age of post-subjective speculations, in a world that is post-ideological to assume the subject of choice as rational in the western liberal sense of the term following Hobbes, Comte, Mill, Kant or Rousseau. The transcendental good faith in man has been stolen in the post-world-war century and the question of evil associated with humanity could not be avoided any more. So in what ways the subject could be shaped, what kind of disciplinary mechanism would work, or if it is possible to have a pedagogy that probes to rethink our disciplinary formation of subjecthood are important and impending questions. If capitalism is intricately tied to modern democracy, and as we have seen in last part of the 20th century, there is no pure realm of sustainable Communist utopia uncontaminated by the onslaught of capital, what then should be the road to challenge the structure that one belongs to? Tagore's idea of *pratyohikota* or everydayness as discussed by Ranjan Ghosh does not initiate otherness in experience on its own, but it is the practice of the self which produces experience through encounter and imagination of the everyday and makes it meaningful. The bigger dialectic of history depends on these smaller encounters in what Asok Sen, following Althusser, calls the logic of *overdetermination* (Sen 2017). Thus the everydayness largely depends on how one would think or encounter it. The process of thinking it aesthetically would help one cross the boundaries of the self – the self that is bounded and determined by bio-power in terms of identities and differences. Incessant autocriticality becomes the strategy for Tagore's pedagogy and this selfhood is made through an aesthetic reading of the experiences gathered from the everyday. Tagore had faith in humans on this ability of gathering. It forms the crux of Tagore's transcendental humanism, beyond the enlightenment idea of a given humanity empowered to understand and use the rest of the nature. Tagore's project of teaching and learning at Shantiniketan insinuates such an aesthetic practice of self-making.

However, the question of class and caste in course of Tagore's aesthetic mediation into politics cannot be ignored. Tagore's idea of *tapovan* and ancient Indian form of learning cannot be thought beyond caste and colonial realities. Anup Dhar and Anjan Chakravarti in their article rightly pointed out, quoting Ambedkar that the idea of *samaj* itself may be wired in caste foreclosures (Dhar and Chakravarti 2017). So, we should always be wary of the idea of a holistic approach to education to be founded on universal moral codes. The irony of postcolonial predicament is that forms of subversion that tend to become a principle and a code remain haunted by the caste and colonial privilege which enabled the education of the liberal subject. The same applies to Tagore's good intention and attempt to cross the epistemic barrier between the self and the other in learning. The problem is not that his project of Shantiniketan failed by the onslaughts of machinic tools of pedagogy produced by modern democracy which makes its apparatus such as to make people in a particular pattern. The problem is not Tagore's utopianism which contradicted with the post-imperial reality. The problem is, if we put it in realist terms, such pedagogy would not have many takers in a deeply divided society where trust between communities – spaces between differences becomes infested by mistrust and strife. Post-imperial bio-governance accentuates that strife by confining identities in boundaries in the name of security. Tagore's politics invited on the other hand the immanent and unignorable *thanatos* – the acknowledgement of death drive, only passing through which would make us move towards the *eros*. The pedagogic structure of Tagore as we get from Ranjan Ghosh's reading is oriented towards a giving up of the self for the new – a desire for death of the rigid unbending self towards a new birth. This ever-expanding newness is an approach towards an other by becoming someone else. This has been the teachings of Lalou and Kabir, the Bauls and Fakirs of Bengal – the wondering minstrels who looked at the very notion of identity and self with skepticism. One cannot forget that these educators and their pedagogic practices have been anti-Brahmanic and emanated

from lower caste culture. We do not have here the time or space to measure the impact of these cults on Rabindranath which would demand broader horizons.

Following Partha Chatterjee's argument we must however measure Tagore's ideas in terms of the discursive world he belonged to – his readings and engagements and not totally, in terms of his class and caste position. *Episteme* has a life of its own. Discourse must not be reduced to literary genres simply, as it has been done by Partha in his separation of Tagore's literary writings from his essays. Tagore's thinking on the practices of learning – on selfhood as a form of practice of the being as becoming in this world is based on an aesthetic practice which has a discursive history. The same practice informs his politics as well where he tries to think his *swadesh* as something that has to be acquired through imagination. Both the Being and the home has to be gathered and made and the task of the educator is to guide the student in the same – to train her in the art of self-making from everyday encounter with difference. The self is made out of those differences. We see the same at the end of Rabindranath's *Gora*, where the protagonist learns to shed his ethnic identity to embrace India as a cauldron of differences. Nation, when drifted from West as a notion and applied to India, becomes deeply troubling and violent. Tagore repeatedly asserted this in his essays on nationalism. But in case of Tagore's idea of *swadesh*, it is about a land, made out of the experiences of cohabitation and differences. It is always under construction and is not a finished singularity. Tagore's views on education is to orient us towards such cohabitation and uncovering of selfhood. It is aesthetic but also ethical and political. It is not about a definitional attitude towards knowledge and is more about a process of creation of forms of knowing and its methods – an incessant creative struggle to unravel selfhood. It is more about imagination and less about a description of the world.

Notes:

¹ Agamben writes “To be potential means: to be one's own lack, to be in relation to one's own incapacity. Beings that exist in the mode of potentiality are capable of their own impotentiality, and only in this way do they become potential. They can be because they are in relation to their own non-Being. In potentiality, sensation is in relation to anesthesia, knowledge to ignorance, vision to darkness” (Agamben 1999, 182). In an interview he argues that “Philosophy isn't an essence, but an intensity that can suddenly give life to any field: art, religion, economics, poetry, passion, love, even boredom” (Agamben 2017). This radical potentiality is very much there in Ranjan Ghosh's work on Tagore.

² Ambedkar criticized Tagore's idea of *swadeshi samaj* or *palli samaj* and his preference for an organic reconstruction of rural society as society itself may be violently exclusive of certain groups like the Dalits in its very ideation. Anup Dhar and Anjan Chakrabarti comment on this to invite the concept of *phronesis* from Aristotle, as elaborated by Heidegger in describing Tagore's political project. Rural reconstruction as *phronesis* would then become “reasoning based on concrete action, as distinct from speculative reason. In yet another but related sense, it is reason, based on experience as distinct from abstract deductions” (Dhar and Chakrabarti 2017, 56). It is largely analogous to Ranjan Ghosh's logic.

³ See Heidegger's essays “What Is Metaphysics?,” “Building Dwelling Thinking,” “What Calls for Thinking?” and “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking” in *Basic Writings* (Heidegger 1993).

⁴ Vinay Dharwadker Writes “It is derived from Sa + hita, where the prefix designates ‘with, together or along with’, and hita means ‘that which is beneficial, advantageous, good, fit, proper, salutary’. *Sahitya* is, therefore, something of mutual benefit to both elements in a combination...” (Dharwadker 2015, 238)

⁵ See two essays by Partha Chatterjee in Bengali on Tagore's idea of nationhood titled “Rabindrik Nation Ki?” (“What is Tagore's Idea of Nation?”) and “Rabindrik Nation Prosonge Aro Du Char Katha” (“A Few More Words on Tagore's Idea of Nation”) (Chatterjee 2008)

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