



The Alternate Nation of Abanindranath Tagore

Debashish Banerji

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This volume provides a revisionary critique of the art of Abanindranath Tagore, the founder of the national school of Indian painting, popularly known as the Bengal School of Art. The book argues that the art of Abanindranath, which developed during the Bengal Renaissance in the 19th/20th centuries, was not merely a normalization of nationalist or orientalist principles, but was a hermeneutic negotiation between modernity and community. It establishes that his form of art-embedded in communitarian practices like kirtan, alpona, pet-naming, syncretism, and storytelling through oral allegories-sought a social identity within the intersubjective context of locality, regionality, nationality, and trans-nationality. The author presents Abanindranath as a creative agent who, through his art, conducted a critical engagement with post-Enlightenment modernity and regional subalternity.



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