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Part : V

ALIENATION
FREEDOM
&
LOVE

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PART - V :Alienation, Freedom and Love

I

In the preceding sections we have endeavoured to give a descriptive account of Rabindranath's philosophical views, without giving arguments for the position he holds. In this section we propose to offer an argumentative clarification of the major concepts and important propositions of Rabindranath's philosophical point of view.

Let us first consider his views about our knowledge of the world and that of other selves as embodied in such concepts as 'Man's Universe', 'Creative Unity', 'Love', and such assertions as "Reality is human". Kant's notion of Transcendental Philosophy is concerned with "human knowledge" and it makes a law that the conditions under which objects of human knowledge are thought determine the domain and nature of the objects of knowledge. Objects can be said to be known, or spoken of "solely from the human standpoint". The world we know is the human world, for our idea of the world is a human idea. Berkeley shows that nature as it exists empirically for our everyday perception is the work or creature of mind. Nature in Galileo's sense, the purely quantitative material world of the physicist, is an abstraction from this, it is so to speak the skeleton or armature of the nature we perceive through our senses, and create in perceiving it. By the operation of our mental powers we create the warm, living, coloured, flesh-and-blood natural world which we know in our everyday experience; and then by the operation of abstract

thinking we remove the flesh and blood from it and are left with the skeleton. Now, if nature is created by mind as the product of this thinking activity, *what* mind is it that thus creates nature? Obviously, it is not the self-contained mind of this or that human individual. The creator of the physical world is not any human or finite mind, but God conceived as absolute subject or thinker. Kant is more cautious and logical than Berkeley and he insists that the mind which makes nature is a purely human mind, but this is not the mind of the individual human thinker but a transcendental ego, mentally as such or pure understanding, which is immanent in all human thought.

Rabindranath's notion of the universal mind has a close affinity with Kant's view. Rabindranath holds that science "represents the rational mind of the universal man", and says further that for accurate knowledge we do not depend on the limited individual mind. He emphasizes that the "impersonal aspect of truth dealt with by science belongs to the human universe", for "Science can only organize into rational concepts those facts which man can know and understand, and logic is a machinery of thinking created by the mechanic man" (*Religion of Man*, p.19). About the universal law of causality he remarks that it is a generalisation which has been made possible by a quality of logic which is possessed by the human mind. It is obvious that Rabindranath is speaking about the *a priori* categorical nature of the causal apprehension of events. Again, Rabindranath employs the Kantian concept of the finality of nature as a transcendental principle of cognition. He presupposes *a priori*

the adaptation of nature to our cognitive faculties and endorses the view that the universal laws of understanding are equally laws of nature. For him, it is a great fact that we are in harmony with nature and man can think because his thoughts are in harmony with things. In the act of knowing we look for a system, and the "search for systems is really a search for unity, for synthesis; it is our attempt to harmonise the heterogeneous complexity of outward materials by an inner adjustment" (*Ibid*, pp. 25-26). Both Kant and Rabindranath share the view that judgement in general is the faculty of thinking the particular under the universal. Rabindranath says, "The logical relationship present in our intellectual proposition and the aesthetic relationship indicated in the proportions of a work of art, both agree in one thing. They affirm that truth consists, not in facts, but in harmony of facts" (*Creative Unity*, p.32). The statement covers both determinant and reflective judgements that Kant spoke about. Truth, for Rabindranath, is that "which governs numberless facts". Kant remarks that "we are rejoiced where we meet with systematic unity" (*Critique of Judgement*, v.184). Kant's associating the feeling of pleasure with the concept of the finality of nature is significant. Rabindranath says that in knowing the impersonal world, "we become aware of the extension of our own consciousness and we are glad" (*Man*, p.40). "This discovery of a truth is pure joy to man – it is a liberation of his mind" (*Sādhanā*, p.22). We find Kant making the remark, "the discovery that two or more empirical heterogeneous laws of nature are allied under one principle that embraces them both, is the ground of a very appreciable pleasure, often even of admiration" (*Critique of*

Judgement, VI .25).

II

we have so far harped on the agreement of the views of Kant and Rabindranath over a variety of details, and it may be hoped that the survey of the agreement brings out the sense of Rabindranath's notions of Man's Universe and Kant's idea of "knowledge from the human standpoint". Such passages as the following are Kantian : "The world we know or hope to know sometimes through scientific experience is itself a human world. *Man* alone perceives this world in the form of *his* thought within the scaffoldings of his misunderstanding and Reason" (*Man*, p.41). But the agreement is not without obvious differences. For our purpose, however, the agreements are instructive.

Both Rabindranath and Kant subscribe to the transcendental ideality of Unity. The problem of unity has a bearing on the problem of nature. The unity which we are now considering is not the category of unity, but that "combination" which precedes all concepts of combinations. Kant himself remarks, "the category (of unity) already presupposes combination. We must therefore look yet higher for this unity, namely, in that itself contains the ground of the unity of diverse concepts in judgements, and therefore of the possibility of the understanding, even as regards its logical employment" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, p.131). In a passage of similar intention Rabindranath has said, "Facts occupy endless time and space; but the truth comprehending them all has no dimension; it is one" (*Creative Unity*, p.4). He holds that the truth of this world is in the relatedness of

things, "All our knowledge of things is knowing them in their relation to the universe, in that relation which is truth" (*Ibid*, p.6). This unity is presupposed by any employment of categories, and to this effect Rabindranath says that "No amount of analysis can reveal to us this mystery of unity" (*Ibid.*). About the categorical unity, which, for Rabindranath, is "harmony of facts", he tells us that "All proofs of truth are credentials of relationship" (*Ibid*, p.32). We have already drawn attention to Rabindranath's concept of Personality, which is functionally similar to Kant's Transcendental Apperception. It may be recalled in this connection that the concept of Personality stands for "the consciousness of unity in ourselves".

The problem of unity is old enough in philosophy. Another parallel of Rabindranath's concept of personality is Leibniz's notion of a monad, which is a living unity, except for the fact that in Rabindranath's case it is not windowless. It is true that Rabindranath does not always distinguish between science, cosmology and ontology. In point of fact we have in him a most intimate intermingling of them. Like Parmenides, he stands half way between an intuitive attitude and a conceptual formulation about the unity of the world and the essence of this unity. Unity or harmony was an important concept with the Pythagoreans, and Aristotle brings out the kernel of the concept in the first book of the *Metaphysics*. The Pythagoreans held, like Rabindranath, that an intuitive grasp of unity of being yields deep joy. Rabindranath tells us that "an unobstructed

vision of unity, the reincarnation of the real, is a joy for ever" (*Religion of Man*, pp.183-84). Or, "joy is the realisation of the truth of oneness". And, the "principle of unity is the mystery of all mysteries" (*sādhanā*, pp.116-17). Philo speaks of the *arche* of all things, and also calls unity itself *arche*. For Aquinas, as for Rabindranath, all transcendental concepts, being, true, good are convertible terms.

We can distinguish between substantial unity and phenomenal unity. Substantial unity is the unity of the living and is expressed in a Leibnizean monad or in Rabindranath's personality. Phenomenal unity is the unity of natural appearances in so far as it is studied in the natural sciences founded on mathematics. Rabindranath seems to speak about both of these unities. For Kant nature consists exclusively of relations, and relations are unities. The discussion of unity in the Transcendental Analytic is the unity of natural appearances alone. The unity of relation originates in thinking. The causal relation is a relation, its essential significance lies in the fact that it establishes a unity. But this unity is not given in things, it rests on the production of this relation in thinking. We have cited a passage from Rabindranath illustrating this view. Again, the concept of nature as expounded in the Transcendental Deduction highlights the fact that nature is not things, but solely order and regularity, conformity to law. This order and regularity consists in a connection of appearances such that appearances are subjected to a thoroughgoing unity. Connections, and hence the unity produced by the connection, do not lie in the things themselves but are put

into them by us. This connecting is the essential feature of our thinking. For, 'Understanding' means 'the faculty of rules', hence all unities flow from thinking, and it is the understanding which prescribes laws to nature.

Two points might be noted in this connection. We can ignore the terminological differences as to whether in presenting laws to nature understanding *creates* or *makes* nature. But it is evident that Kant is emphatic on the *spontaneity* of the unifying act of understanding, and Rabindranath says that the "principle of unity" is "creative" (*Religion of Man*, p.14). He too holds that "Relationship is the fundamental truth of this world of appearance" (*Ibid.*, p.22). Not only is unity "the property of soul, and not of things" (*Personality*, p.66) but also it is a fact that science is possible on this account, for "the scientist seeks an impersonal principle of unification, which can be applied to all things". Speaking of unity, Rabindranath explicitly says that "it is therefore employed as the basis of our scientific knowledge. When taken out of its concrete association and reduced to symbols, it reveals its grand structural majesty, the inevitableness of its own perfect concord. Yet there is not merely a logic but also a magic of mathematics which works at the world of appearance, producing harmony -- the cadence of inter-relationship" (*Religion of Man*, p.140). This is the Kantian thesis that the laws which the understanding prescribes are nothing but relations, and they are the ground only of appearances. It is in this sense that the "world we know is necessarily a *human* world" (*Man*, p.42).

Nature and the understanding, for Kant, are conjoined in this relational character. He asks, "how could we bring about synthetic unity *a priori*, if subjective grounds of such a unity were not contained *a priori* in the original sources of knowledge in our mind and if these subjective conditions were not at the same time objectively valid, being the grounds of the possibility of knowing any object at all in experience ?" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A 125). The conditions *a priori* of a possible experience and the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience are identical because thinking and the objects of thought are simultaneously relational in character. Hence, all unities are unification, all being is unity and thus unification. This note again is not unheard of in Rabindranath. "when our Universe is in harmony with Man..... we know it is truth". Again, "what we call truth lies in the rational harmony between the subjective and objective aspects of reality" (*Religion of Man*, pp.22-23). Or, "we could have no communication whatever with our surroundings if they were absolutely foreign" (*Sādhanā*, p.5). The world and the man make "one great truth". "As we know the truth of the stars we know the great comprehensive mind of man" (*Religion of Man*, p.24).

We can now turn to the difference between their views. Does Rabindranath use the words like nature, universe, the world etc. in the same sense as Kant? He seems to speak of two natures : (a) "that Nature which has its channel of information for our mind and physical relationship with our living body"; and (b) "that which satisfies our personality with manifestations

that make our life rich and stimulates our imaginations" (*Ibid.*, p.18). The first is the domain of the cognitive mind, and the second is that which is realised in "creative imagination". But the division is not as straightforward as it seems, for we are told also that "the doctrine of the plurality of worlds that are absolutely unrelated to each other" cannot be proved, even if it were true". He remarks that "our universe is the sum total of what man feels, knows, imagines, reasons to be, and of whatever is knowable to him now or in another time" (*Ibid.*, p.23). We find then that by 'universe' Rabindranath means a wider domain than he usually does by 'nature'. In this conception of 'universe' the cosmological aspect of unity becomes evident, and it is not without reasons. Its cosmological aspect is perhaps easiest to understand from the romantic attitude. But there are ontological assertions also. For example, "The details of reality must be studied in their differences by science, but it can never know the character of the grand unity of relationship pervading, which can only be realised immediately" (*Ibid.*, p.102). The ontological assertions of unity of the world can have only intuitive certainty. It is an ontological thesis because it says that all is unity, and like the Pythagoreans, Rabindranath believed that we can have an intuitive access to it. The nature of the intuitive grasp of the ontological unity is what he intends to convey by such phrases as "creative unity", "mystery in the depth of existence" of "infinite being which unites in one stream of creation my mind and the outer world". Of course, the concept of mind, for him, has a much wide connotation than the cognitive mind or the 'Understanding' of Kant, which apprehends nature as

scientific or rational unity.

The word *nature* has by no means a completely identical meaning for him and Kant, Rabindranath's idea of nature may rather be conveniently likened to that of Aristotle's. It is a living nature. The nature that is treated in the Aristotelian physics is that which contains its ground of movement in itself. Aristotle's definition of physics is seen to be the science of the living. But when Kant asks about the existence of nature, he is not asking about the existence of the living nor about the existence of creation (since God cannot be the creator of appearances) but the existence of nature as it is presented in pure mathematical natural science. The Kantian concept of nature bears on the conformity of law. Kant defines *nature* as "the conformity of appearances to law in space and time" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B 165). Rabindranath does admit such a view of nature, but this view he would hold, is not exclusive of other ways of knowing. His concept of "universe" includes the Kantian nature.

Rabindranath's *universe* has comparably similar reasons for being entertained as does Kant's idea of 'the world'. Kant distinguishes between 'nature' and 'the world'. When he considers appearances from the point of view of the inner connection according to laws, Kant calls them a nature. Nature is the connection of appearances. According to laws, it expresses the inner connection of appearances. Space and time are the forms of

appearances, and every appearance is connected with every other appearance. In short, Kant's proof that nature has the character of appearance is dependent on space and time. Again, appearances can be considered from the point of view of whether they form a whole, a totality, and when Kant is considering appearances from the point of view of totality he calls them a world. "world" thus means the totality of appearances, but essentially with reference to totality. A similar problem could be encountered in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*; whether the *world* is coextensive with *reality*. If not, then one is either wider or narrower than the other. The world, said Wittgenstein, is the totality of facts; Wittgenstein's 'world', one might venture to suggest, corresponds to Kant's nature. But the puzzle is not so simple. Because in the *Tractatus* we read also "The sum-total of reality is the world" (2.063). The world as the totality of facts must determine what is the case, and also whatever is not the case (1.12). In this sense, the world includes only existing states of affairs, and the same states of affairs *determine* the world of non-existing states of affairs. Then, these two worlds together constitute reality (2.06). If we accept this interpretation, then *reality* is stretched beyond existing states of affairs, and consequently, we could not say which proposition is true by "comparing with reality" (2.23). The stronger thesis seems to be that the world and reality are identical. But when a false proposition is a description of a possible fact (because what is true is identical, for Wittgenstein, with what actually exists) and such possible facts cannot be outside the world because what is beyond the world is also beyond language; a possible fact, being a

genuine description, resides inside the world. A recent writer has suggested that Wittgenstein has used the term 'world' in two different senses. In a *broad* sense the world is identified with description, including, therefore actual and possible, or true and false description, though outside reality. According to 5.5571 the world reaches as far as language, and hence description, reaches. In a *narrow* sense the world is only an actual world. Kant's *nature* is Wittgenstein's world in the narrow sense of the term.

The *world*, for Kant, is a concept of antinomic character, suggesting that there is in the theory of science an *a priori* and in ontology a limitation. By the phrase 'antinomic character' is meant that the source of the concept is particularly invidious and worrying. Every cosmological *a priori* proposition, claiming to be a metaphysical truth, embodies a logical mistake. The magnitude of the world in space and time is taken by us as capable of being comprehended by a process of measurement which, we think, can be completed and we think also that *its completion* can be experienced. Now the process of measuring the world in space and time cannot be completed in experience. The concept of its completion is thus an idea to which nothing in experience can correspond. The idea of the completion of an unlimited process is that of a *non-phenomenon*. Kant distinguishes between a legitimate and an illegitimate use of the ideas of Pure Reason. The misuse of the Ideas to which nothing in experience can correspond consists in their spurious application to alleged objects of experience. It consists in

using them after the fashion of *a posteriori* concepts which are applicable to experience because they are abstracted from it. The idea of the world is liable to such an illegitimate use, and generates an illusion of metaphysics. Rabindranath's concept of the universe is not intended to bear any theoretical claim. For example, he remarks that the *infinite* "is not the magnitude of extension", in it the "comprehension of the multitude is not as in an outer receptacle but as in an inner perfection that permeates and exceeds its contents" (*Religion of Man*, p.66). The infinite is not an object of intellectual knowledge, intellect "can give us information about things which can be divided and analysed, and whose properties can be classified, part by part" (*Sādhanā*, p. 137). Thus such ideas as the infinite etc. cannot have a *constitutive* use as categories. They do not impart any "information" as Rabindranath would say. What purpose do they serve then?

Now, although the ideas of Reason cannot be applied to what is given in perception, they have "an excellent and unavoidably necessary regulative use, namely, to direct the understanding to a certain good..... which serves the purpose of giving the greatest unity and the greatest breadth at the same time" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B 672). Without being committed to the principles of absolute metaphysics (and Rabindranath would certainly accede to it) we should consider the Ideas of Reason as indicating unreachable goals which yet we can approximate. In a similar way we may use the Idea of the totality of all things, or the world. Far from being harmful, this use of the Ideas may have

not only great systematic but also great heuristic usefulness. Rabindranath's *universe* is intended as a regulative model. The difference between his notion of nature as studied in science and the *universe* may be explicated by quoting *in extenso* a passage from his *Personality* : "this world (used interchangeably with the universe) which takes its form in the mould of man's perception still remains only as the partial world of his senses and mind? It is like a guest and not like a kinsman. It becomes completely our own when it comes within the range of our emotions. With our love and hatred, pleasure and pain, fear and wonder, continually working upon it, this world becomes a part of our personality. It grows with our growth, it changes with our changes. We are great or small, according to the magnitude and littleness of this assimilation, according to the quality of its sum total. If this world were taken away, our personality would lose all its content"(p.15). This passage at once reminds us of Berkeley's nature of experience. This world that Rabindranath speaks of is not a transcendent world, the only difference between this world and that which is studied in science is one of point of view. This view of the world has an ancient heritage. According to the Greeks, the universe formed a whole. It was a cosmos or order, the Greek words for 'world' and 'order' are the same. But it was a living hole, an 'animated order'. It is the world of Kant's *Critique of Judgement*. In the first *Critique* Kant had argued that logical categories such as genera and class were *a priori*. In the *Critique of Judgement* he has to explain how such categories should be found to apply to nature at all. The concept of the finality of nature was designed

to answer this question. It was as if nature somehow was favourable to our judgement in the conformity of her particular laws. Kant defined the concept of finality as a presupposition necessary to the possibility of experience as a *system*. The necessary presupposition is a part of the equipment of what he called our 'reflective' judgement. This was a 'regulative' faculty entrusted with keeping order over operations of our understanding with a view to ensuring that the "rules" are kept. The explanation is difficult and somewhat strained. Nevertheless we can understand why Kant was obliged to put it forward. He, in the first place, was trying to preserve the integrity of the Critical method; and secondly, he was endeavouring to avoid the introduction of the smallest suggestions of a mystical "purpose" in nature. Rabindranath, since he was not directly concerned with eliminating metaphysics, could say : 'Somewhere in the arrangement of this world there seems to be a great concern about giving us delight,..... over and above the meaning of matter and forces,....." (*Religion of Man*, p. 104). The word "seems" in the passage is crucial. It might be interpreted in the Kantian fashion, namely that concern about giving us delight is not so much a fact in nature, but an as-if presupposition of our approach to nature, it is wholly non-teleological. But Rabindranath, like Lotze, believes in the identical character of emotions. When he speaks of "the world" or "the universe" he does not have in his mind the picture of another world - a transcendent one. It is the same world of "nature" which forms the legitimate subject - matter of "critical reason". "It cannot be gainsaid", says Rabindranath, "that we can never realize things in this world

from inside (things in themselves), we can but know how they appear to us" (*Religion of Man*, p. 116). But to argue that the concepts of understanding are applicable only to the world of phenomena, a world to the formation of which those same concepts have been devoted, does not prove that the world cannot be known except by the critical part of a mind. The word 'know' need not be limited to signifying acquaintance with the phenomenal world unless one chooses to overlook the total powers of the human spirit. To say that a certain class of things is scientifically unknowable does not imply that it is otherwise unknowable. Mapping of the world of nature is not the only activity of the human spirit. And, discursivity of the human intellect does not lay bare all the wealth of the concept of man. Rabindranath says that nature "affects him (man) differently in its different aspects, in its beauty, its inevitable sequence of happenings, its potentiality; and the world proves itself to him only in its varied effects upon his senses, imagination and reasoning mind" (*Ibid.*, p. 23). A revision of our theory of knowledge is prescribed by implication.

The ultimate problems of thought are those about which man most passionately desires knowledge. Men do not desire simply to know the theoretically knowable, they wish to apprehend reality. This reality, according to Rabindranath, is human. Its domain consists of persons and the self. If the powers of the human spirit are genuinely endowed with the capacity for knowledge, that to which our faculties are directed must be real and accessible. Knowledge, said Taylor, is vision. All forms of knowledge that fail to yield the visionary quality, the flash of insight, the peculiar

incandescence of certainty, represent not knowledge but pseudo-knowledge (*Philosophical studies*, p. 398). In recent times, Friedrich Waismann, reasserted that there "are many things beyond proof". He advocates the view that "the living centre of every philosophy is a vision". He says, "If I were asked to express in one single word what is its (philosophy) most essential feature I would unhesitatingly say vision. At the heart of any philosophy worth the name is vision and it is from there that it springs and takes its visible shape. When I say "vision" I meant it; I do not romanticize (*Logical Positivism*, ed. Ayer, p. 374). Rabindranath also looks for the visionary quality of knowledge of what he calls Reality.

Let us state his assumptions regarding our knowledge of reality. Whenever we are in any degree conscious, we are *aware*, and we are aware of something. The "something" of which we are aware may be of many kinds; it may be bodily sensations, mathematical propositions, music, or the flower in front of us. We may be aware of our friends or of moral obligations. Some of the things of which we are aware may be voluntarily called up, as when we remember or imagine constructively, or they may be involuntarily received, as when we open our eyes upon the sunset. In either case, there is something which is given to our awareness in the sense that it is distinct from it, and is that of which we are aware.

The object of awareness is always complex, and is nearly always apprehended as complex. In normal experience, not

only is it a complex world with which we are presented, but is experienced as complex (Rabindranath does not accept Hume's two-fold thesis of separability and atomiticity of the perceptual data). The object of awareness is given in a *gestalt*, within which and related to which, are given the parts of the complex. The complex of which we are aware is always a field within which the parts exist. The parts may be subsequently discriminated by name, but the field is not something which is formed out of their addition; the parts are discriminated within the whole. The idea of the pattern of the *gestalt* is more evident when we are perceiving or thinking of a work of art, or a living organism. In Rabindranath's words, "clearness is not necessarily the only, or the most important aspect of truth" (*Personality*, pp. 6-7). Or, "A leg dismembered from the body is a caricature of itself" (*Creative Unity*, p. 31). (In his autobiography, *Jivan Smriti*, he gives his childhood impression of visiting the Calcutta Medical College in course of his lessons in anatomy and seeing a dismembered leg on the operation table). From the point of view of the subject, all and any knowledge contains an intuitive element, meaning thereby not some 'occult' faculty or anything infallible, or anything confined to the apprehension of one kind of truth, but simply the power of seeing many things together, at once, at the same time. The commonest and clearest example of intuition in this sense is ordinary perception. The processes of perception, of thinking, and particularly of reasoning take time. But there is a real sense in which our intuitive apprehension of any situation takes no time, it has the power of being aware of many in one, timelessly. It is this

which may be named intuition. Were it not for this power of being a sense detached from time and space, we should never be able to think at all. Thinking is relating; there must be intuitive grasp of thinks in relation to each other if there is to be any thing at all. The power of seeing things together is basic to the human mind. This seems to be one of Rabindranath's very important assumptions.

The mind is also obliged to attend to one thing at a time, and one thing after another, discursively, although intuition is also always at work at every point in the process. By ranging about the items of the intuited field, we clarify our apprehension of parts of a field, and come to have fresh and more illuminated intuition. The development of human understanding, the illumination of the intuited field, requires articulation of conceptual language and speech. Human articulation is always in terms of symbols of one sort or another, and the study of symbols is part of the study of knowledge. Though articulate human knowledge uses symbols, it does not imply that 'knowledge', at least of some kind, does not precede human symbolic articulation. It may be that though we cannot refer to any *instance* of a piece of 'knowledge' without using symbols in expressing it, what is symbolically articulated does not comprise the whole of the knowledge. The symbols express aspects of a given field which is much larger than what is expressed. The bounds of the real are not coextensive with any symbolic formulation. This was denied by Kant in as much as he held that the bounds of sensibility are coextensive with the real. Rabindranath would say that we must not suppose that the nature of reality is exhausted

by the kinds of "scientific" knowledge which we have of it. It would be a restrictive view, a kind of dogmatism. Speaking about human reality, Rabindranath remarks, "we know it, not because we can think of it, but because we directly feel it. And therefore, even if rejected by the logical mind, it is not banished from our consciousness" (*Religion of Man*, p. 130).

Now, we may turn to the word "knowledge". Rabindranath makes a number of uses of the word and exhorts us to have an open mind in considering them. The clearest, and the commonest, example of the use of "knowledge" is the knowledge "that something is the case" – which he names as "information" or "description". Illustrations can be found in logic and mathematics, in positive scientific statements and in commonsense. In this use of "knowledge" one is clearly referring beyond any mental state to some matter of fact distinct from the mental state. "There is the world of science, from which the elements of personality have been carefully removed. We must not touch it with our feelings" (*Personality*, p. 16).

But there are many other senses of "knowledge" than the knowledge that "something is the case". We have already spoken of the "awareness" of a given field, which is a cognitive awareness. Again, we speak of "knowing" in the sense of recognizing a face, without necessarily describing it. We speak of "knowing" a person, a piece of music, of moral good and evil. We speak of "knowing how" to do something when we may be quite unable to make exact true statements about it. Then there is a whole range of knowledge –

knowledge through experience, experience of love, of religion, of art and so on.

Rabindranath considers experience – experience of, e.g., art, religion, friendship etc. as cognitive. Pure music, which has no theme outside the musical ones, is a fully developed articulation of meaning, which we certainly come to “know” through experience. Such cognitive experiences may contain feeling. But they should not simply be labelled as “feeling” and left at that. The word “feeling” is very unsatisfactory and highly ambiguous. It may mean sensation or may refer to emotions. In such cases the meaning of feeling is largely *intransitive*, i.e., if I say I feel pleasure or an emotion, the grammatical object on the whole refers to subjective states. Since Rabindranath is a believer in a non-solipsistic world, he cannot mean “feeling” in the intransitive sense. He says “there is the vast world, which is personal to us. We must not merely know it, and then put it aside but we must feel it – because, by feeling it, we feel ourselves” (*Personality*, p.16). Or, “our delight is in realizing ourselves outside us” (*Ibid*, p.68). Such uses of the word “feeling” are transitive. In these uses one seems to be meaning that through the feeling of one’s own states, and including them, one is aware of things other than one’s states. We “feel” the appropriateness of a sequence of music or of the positive moral quality of love, or of the religious “numinous”. Value-judgements, for Rabindranath, are not purely emotive, there is always an objective reference built into it. In aesthetic experience, he holds, we are made to realize the world as more fully and richly real than we do in normal experience. Art is no

less a deepening of world-consciousness than it is a clarification of self-consciousness. Emotions, in Rabindranath's philosophy, are the principal instruments of man's unification and harmonization with the world. He insists on a semantic function of emotions, and conceives aesthetic emotion as a form of knowledge, just as Jacques Maritain holds that there is such a thing as poetical knowledge. It is of "knowledge through emotion" that Rabindranath speaks.

Aesthetic emotion is transitive, spiritualised and intentional emotion. His words for this are feeling, love, imagination, and intuition. In Bengali he uses the term "*anubhuti*", and reminds us that etymologically it means to grow into conformity with another object. Thereby he differentiates his view from the currently prevalent view of emotion as a purely subjective state, complete in itself, having no necessary reference beyond. Everything around is real, yet we do not see reality in its immediacy, in its purity. It is only in artistic creation that reality comes before our consciousness unveiled, and we see it face to face. In such passages Rabindranath is referring to the kind of knowledge that is immanent in and consubstantial with poetry, one with its very essence.

Does not all this run counter to the commonly accepted notion of the subjectivity of emotions and the objectivity of knowledge, the former being variable, whereas the latter universal? This is a large question and cannot be touched on within the space left. We have already seen that Rabindranath takes objectivity in the sense of impersonal knowledge of science. But in the final outcome he does not admit the sharp demarcation of experience into

subjective and objective compartments. He maintains that there is a great deal of the play of the subjective even in the fields where objectivity is supposed to have its sovereignty. For this, his concept of mind is responsible. He says, "We imagine that our mind is a perfect mirror. On the contrary it is the principal instrument of creation" (*Personality*, p.47). And, thus, "when we are intensely aware of reality we are aware of ourselves" (*Religion of Man*, p. 134).

We are now led to his view of the interplay of ways of knowledge and experience. Our distinction between the use of "knowledge that" and other kinds of knowledge, such as "knowing" a person, "knowing" a work of art, "knowing" good and evil etc. does not imply that one kind of knowledge is exclusive of another. There is a constant overlap and interplay. The interplay is of many factors and kinds. Important is the distinction between grasping the parts of the complex as a single whole, and the discursive treatment of the parts. Each of these is wholly indispensable and the two are inseparable. We select this or that aspect of a whole situation, attend to it, subsume it under concepts, and arrive at fresh, enriched intuitions in which parts attended to become re-related to the intuited whole. The interplay between what is given in intuition, and our active analytic-synthetic work on it, is constant. This happens in the most ordinary experience. Even when we are immersed in enjoying nature so much so that "The ever-lasting universe of things flow through the mind", there is always the implicit recognition of the elements. One need not

be analysing them. The discursive thinking of science is only a much more developed attack on the elements of ordinary experience.

Rabindranath gives an example of the interplay between discursive and intuitive thinking. The world has both personal and impersonal aspects of truth, and we may adopt the respective points of view according to the situation. "The father has his personal relationship with his son; but as a doctor he may detach the fact of a son from that relationship and let the child become an abstraction to him, only a living body with its physiological functions" (*Religion of Man*, pp. 99-100). The case can be generalised. The doctor comes to his patient with a great deal of scientific knowledge in his mind, certain parts of which are relevant to this particular instance. On the other hand, the patient, although a 'case' is not merely an instance of, say, a diseased person. The patient is an individual whose individual case-history must be studied. He has to be known as an individual as well as an instance. Clinical expertise requires general and individual knowledge and the right interplay between them, to be united in intuitive insight. Again, there may occur, and there may be necessary, a different kind of knowledge, some degree of personal involvement with the patient. The good doctor may on occasion come to understand his patient much better and be able to have access to him and do more for him if he is humble and human enough to be a person with the person who is his "patient". To put objective understanding out of central focus for the time being, and to cultivate friendship may

indirectly illuminate objective understanding.

In the realm of *moral*s there is much overlap between knowledge of facts (knowledge that) and knowledge of a different kind, knowledge of moral *values*. If we have to decide what is right to do we must have knowledge of facts – say of the fact that other people need help. But we must also “know” (or believe) that in those circumstances it is *right* to help the person in trouble, and in such and such a way, and in so knowing possess an acquaintance with moral value. This knowledge is knowledge of some kind of truth; but Rabindranath, being a non-naturalist in ethics, would, of course, say that knowledge that one *ought* to do something is clearly not the same kind of knowledge as knowledge of bare facts.

Rabindranath urges that discursive knowledge must be assimilated to intuition. He comes closer to Whitehead who says the intolerant use of abstractions is the major vice of intellect and reasserts the relation of abstractions to concrete experience. In philosophy, Rabindranath is a critic of abstractions. We shall now briefly indicate his view of language in the context of his theory of knowledge.

In awareness, according to Rabindranath, there “goes on a continual adaptation, a transformation of facts into human imagery, through constant touches of his (Man’s) sentiments and imagination” (*Religion of Man*, p.133). Again, “all things that are real to me are for myself eternal, and therefore worthy of a language that has permanent meaning” (*Ibid*, p.135). Let us explain.

we have seen that in all knowledge there is an element of the given which impinges upon us, which we receive and which is not dependent upon what we do or how we express it or the language we use to describe or indicate it. Nevertheless, acquaintance with the *given* is certainly always developed and made in some degree explicit in expression or language, and the content of the acquaintance is always qualified by the effects of past expression. Allowing this, it will be convenient to distinguish between two sorts of language. One of these is the "language" which may be said to "embody" experiences and meanings felt to be valuable and important. The language of the arts is one important example of this (Rabindranath's conception of "language" includes not only the verbal language of common sense, science, philosophy, but also non-verbal "language". Sometime the "embodiment" language, as in the case of poetry, is verbal language; in most arts it is not, for example, painting, dance, sculpture etc.). Ritual is expressive of religious meaning, and it is expressive in action rather than in words, though it sometimes used words. Again, moral and religious meaning, recognised to be valuable and important, can be expressed in personal behaviour and in quality of character.

The second kind of language which Rabindranath would like to distinguish is the language of concepts and categories, in which we elucidate, explain, and, by means of words, label and put in their place and relate to other ideas, the date which are received in acquaintance with the given. This is the abstract discursive language of science and philosophy and to some extent

of ordinary common sense. It is the language of propositions in which truths are affirmed or denied, hypotheses stated, deductions made, inferences examined and tested. We might call it categorizing or categorical language.

When we come to experience human reality our knowledge is expressed in terms of the embodying language. Rabindranath uses the words ‘expression’ and ‘language’ interchangeably. We may recapitulate his stand. What we call ‘knowledge’ is always a situation much larger than expression in either embodying or categorical language, it is a situation of impression, receptivity, of activity and enterprise, of feeling, imagining, thinking, of learning through experiences. What is called “vision” is the “knowledge” of a total life of experience, sometimes dark, sometimes illuminated by the meeting of a mysterious self with a mysterious being beyond, may be an “I” with a “Thou”, a receiving, responding, contemplating, questioning, doubting, affirming, rejecting, assenting, an agony and joy of involvement. It is human life in infinite engagements; we cannot speak out it without interpreting it. In this sense the two kinds of language constantly interplay. When Rabindranath reminds us that both reason and imagination are to be combined in knowing, what he names is a *religion of man* – a sound philosophy of human nature must include recognition of the fundamental human needs, for love, adventure, justice, truth and beauty and must consult personal experience. It cannot ever be a wholly impersonal inquiry. Professor Polanyi has shown how even apparently impersonal scientific knowledge is unavoidably

coloured by the personal commitments of the scientist. But this does not mean our experience of the human reality will not be transsubjective. "Men are never true in their isolated self, and their imagination is the faculty that brings before their mind the vision of their own greater being" (*Religion of Man*, p.134). "He (man) misses himself when isolated; he finds his own larger and truer self in his wide human relationship" (*Ibid.*, p.15).

A few remarks about Rabindranath's concept of imagination may now be appropriately made. But before the remarks can be made, quite a few important notions must be explained. The imagination, Rabindranath points out, is the faculty of apperceiving value. We have noticed that words like unity, harmony, perfection, reality, man etc., in his philosophy, are cognate value terms. Though like any non-naturalist, he insists on differentiating *values* from *facts*, yet he invests values with an ontological significance. But this does not commit him to a naturalistic fallacy of any sort. The reason lies in the Indian philosophical heritage, and secondly it follows from the complication of ontology and value, entailed by his definition of *Reality*. The term *Sat* (existence) also means "good" – whatever exists is justified by its very existence. *Satya* is the compound of *Sat*, means *sat-like*. Not only is all Being *Sat*, good, but as much it is also *satya*, "real" and "true". Because it is life, every dynamic expression of life is true and good. Again, the word *bhavya*, from the root *bhu*, being existing, means not only "what will happen in the future" but also "what is auspicious", implying that the best is yet to be.

Let us see what Rabindranath means by *reality*. The criteria of the *real* are immediacy and indubitability. "The reality of my own self is immediate and indubitable to me. whatever else effects me in a like manner is real for myself, and it inevitably attracts and occupies any attention for its own sake, blends itself with my personality, making it richer and larger and causing it delight" (*Religion of Man*, p.131). In this passage, what strikes us at once is the emphasis that the real is real *to* a person, and as such, it is different from mere truth. Reality "is truth made our own". Secondly, the domain of the real is constituted by the world including one's self and other persons, but in every case it is the subject which is the point of reference. The world is real, as noticed earlier when it is *known* not by the mind only but also "when it comes within the range of our emotions". The *real* world is an extrascientific world, though not a transcendent one. For example, the truth of science and *truth* of personal knowledge do not contradict. The astronomical account of the venus and the morning star which I compare to a sacred tear-drop – "both are facts in their own ways and equally true, though the latter one is *real* for me, it is something made by own, by my touching it with my feeling and emotion. The "reality of the world belongs to the personality of man and not to (his) reasoning", while its truth may so appear as if it subsisted in itself. Our epistemic endowments are tailor-made for experiencing things in such a way that the knowing-self seems to dwindle almost into oblivion. The Kantian alienation of the starry heaven above from the moral law

within me becomes unavoidable because the bearer of the moral law, the freedom of man, is conceived as exclusively rational. And the rational man is not necessarily the whole man. A man is a full person, not just a cognitive mind, and it requires all the resources of a full person to understand him. If such a conviction is adopted, in epistemology, "knowledge" can no longer serve as the central concept. Because of the influence of science, we usually mean by "knowledge" a clear grasp of the actual state of affairs in this or that region of experience, which gives reliable guidance to action. Rabindranath considers it to be a utilitarian or pragmatic view of knowledge, and urges for a more inclusive concept. The subject that "knows" is participating in the quest of knowledge, and the nature and significance of his knowledge cannot be unaffected by it. He does not deny objective truth, nor does he impugn its value. Within limited areas, such as mathematics and the exact sciences, the ideal of objectivity is valid and can be closely approximated. But as one approaches the region where Man's deeper values are at stake and his choice of self is involved, such objectivity becomes impossible and undesirable. Here one's thinking is existential and truth must be individually realised. And this truth (made our own) includes all other truths, for at each stage of progress toward a person's authentic self the objective order acquires a different meaning and takes on a different relation to the rest of his experience. The Kantian alienation between *nature* and *freedom*, referred to above, is transcendental, for example, in the *Savitri* (also called

Gāyatri, *Rg-Veda*, iii, 62,10) hymn. The prayer asks that the objective world-order represented by the *Savitar* ("the stimulator God" as the name derives from the root *Su*, "to Stimulate") the God (the Sun), and man's thought (used in a wider sense than discursive) may be realised as an inalienable unity. The spiritual reality consists of the harmony of the individual and the universal. The world is not "an unwilling and alien arrangement of things" (*Sādhanā*, p.5) but "a fundamental unity of creation" (*Ibid.*,p.7) and it implies "the world with the man as one great truth" (*Ibid.*,p.5). To know the world as real is to transcend the alienation between man and nature, i.e., to know it as "our own". Rabindranath remarks that "there is a rational connection between him (man) and nature, for we never make anything our own except that which is truly related to us" (*Ibid.*,p.6).

The necessary and sufficient conditions for identifying the real, i.e. immediacy, indubitability and the resultant non-hedonistic delight are nowhere so satisfied as in the case of self-knowledge. Self-knowledge, as Rabindranath avers, is not the assertion of a degenerate proposition like the Cartesian *Cogito*, which is impossible to deny. Self-knowledge is the paradigm of knowledge. BY self-knowledge Rabindranath does not mean having access to a private incommunicable world of one's experiences, or an immediate awareness of a disembodied ego, or "thinking" oneself to belong to the realm of freedom. It is to be conscious of the fact that one is a person and thereby to refuse to be exhaustively identified by any finite set of

descriptive statements. The concomitant feeling of immeasurability of the dimension of the person attests the ‘surplus’, the value-zone, which includes, and stretches beyond the descriptive core of identification of oneself as man. Consequently, the out-stripping of the set of descriptive statements entails that one’s consciousness of oneself as a person transcends one’s ego, one’s lonely “self”, and alienation from others. Man, thus, is a paradoxical being. “It is the personality of man, conscious of its inexhaustible abundance; it has the paradox in it that it is more than itself” (*Personality*, p.38). Again, personality or the dealienated soul of man “is the centre of all reality for me”. The “soul-consciousness”, is not an “abstraction”, loss of individuality or a “negative kind of universalism”. Rabindranath apprehends such misgivings, and points out that “It is not an abstract soul but it is my own soul which I must realize in others. I must know that if my soul were singularly mine, then it could not be true; at the same time if it were not intimately mine, it would not be real” (*Ibid.*, p.67). The built-in meaning of the *reality* of I averts the danger of solipsism and what is required now is to point to an actual or possible experience which would serve as the criterion of significance for the point of view. According to Rabindranath non-hedonistic joy is the certifying mark of reality, and since, “our delight is in realizing ourselves outside us”, “when I love, in other words, when I feel I am truer in some one else than myself, then I am glad” (*Ibid.*, p.68). Love illuminates our consciousness of reality, and

the cognitive import of love is brought home by the fact that loving, conceived whether as a symmetrical or an asymmetrical relation, is in either case a non-solipstic experience and deepens our self-consciousness by imparting to it a larger meaning and giving it a content. As regards the paradigmatic nature of self-knowledge, Rabindranath sounds a Vedantic ring when he says that "in all knowledge we know our own self in its own condition of knowledge" (*Religion of Man*, p.116).

A further perusal of Rabindranath's concept of reality will throw more light on the problem of our knowledge of other selves. Alienation is conceived by him in terms of the "obscuration of Man himself in the human world" (*Ibid.*,p.73). We may note two of his statements : (a) Man "misses himself when isolated; he finds his own larger and truer self in his wide human relationship"; and (b) "the reality of existence which is in harmony with the real within us. Where this harmony is not deeply felt, there we are aliens and perpetually homesick" (*Ibid.*, pp. 15,133). We are presented with a picture of an "incomplete" man aspiring for fullness, and this aspiration is a pointer to his spiritual identity. Man, to start with, is an embodied being, and there are thinkers like Sartre who would have alienation beginning with this fact of man's being embodied. For Rabindranath having a body is not insignificant, though to say that alienation is due only to our having a body, he would hold, is to misconstrue the problem. As a paradoxical being, man does have a body, yet his self-identity is not in terms of it, though it occupies a privileged status. Non-

distributively the self means the "I" in alienation, and yet, distributively, it means freedom; the self in the universal aspect is I-Thou. The distributive sense of the self is inevitable, since it is impossible to exclude other persons so long as one stands embodied. The self is not a pure *I* transcending the body. It is a self-with-body. The self incorporates the body. The body is incorporated because it is closely allied to the self that it could be called *myself*. "It is that deeper unity, that ultimately mystery in him (man), which from the centre of his world, radiates towards its circumference; which is in his body, yet transcends his body" (*Personality*, p.38).

we find, then, that in the consciousness of *I* there is a consciousness of transcendence. *I* claims to transcend the body. From the point of view of logical understanding, then, transcendence is problematic, since bodily changes do not affect *I* – consciousness. The problematic aspect is referred to by Rabindranath as a "paradox" in man's Personality, or the "mystery of existence". Man is an embodied being, and yet he is something more than a dimension involved in a body, because, he says, "with the consciousness of separation there must be consciousness of unity, for it cannot exist solely by itself" (*Ibid.*, p.97). Alienation is never absolute, nor is its complete transcendence, except for its regulative image. Herein lies Rabindranath's basic difference from such philosophers of *Freedom* as Krishnachandra Bhattacharya. For Rabindranath, what matters most is the question of the one or the other type of

consciousness, according to which he distinguishes two views of life, "the life of the self" and "the life of the soul". This life in which the consciousness of separation takes the first place and of unity the second place, and therefore the personality is narrow and dim in the light of truth – this is the life of self. But the life in which the consciousness of unity is the primary and separateness the secondary factor, and therefore the personality is large and bright in truth – this is the life of the soul" (*Ibid.*, p.97).

Now as regard the self I address as *you*, does not his body stand in between? If so, how do I *know* that he is a self? The human body is a concomitant sign of another self, whether you or *he*. Of these two common nouns, *he* is amorphous, whereas *you* is endowed with the reality of the personal man. This endowment takes place in address, linguistic communication, verbal or non-verbal. Communication bids fair to undermine the strict barrier between inner and outer, and the importance of speech was given due recognition by Rabindranath. Berkeley writes, "I have found that nothing so much convinces me of the existence of another person as his speaking to me" (*Alciphron*, IV, p.360). Descartes in his *Discourse on Method* regarded the human body as differing in important respects from other bodies, and indicated the test of using words or other signs in order to declare thoughts to others by which the human body could be distinguished from robots. The "Reasonable Soul" as Descartes calls man has as his essential property the

communication of thoughts *via* speech (Though Descartes' preoccupation was with the nature of thought, and for him "mind" was perhaps a more fundamental concept than "self"). And, Aristotle in his *Nichomachean Ethics* speaks of "a friend being in fact another self". His notion of "mutuality" is thus explained, "one ought to be thoroughly conscious of one's friends's existence, which will result from living with him, that is, sharing in his words and thoughts : for this is the meaning of the term as applied to the human species" (my italics).

In virtue of having a body, the other self has an over-againstness, and it is not denied. But when I address the over-against self as *you*, I do not address the body. I address a self, and so far you claim to transcend that body. In a sense, address implies alienation, though in actual speaking to you there is something more than the address, *viz.*, friendly communication. Alienation and union alternate in the concept of *you*, the body being responsible for the alienation and the transcendent (not in the sense of super-sensible, as in Kant) self for the union. The language of the third person lacks the intimacy and mutuality of the second person *you*. *You* is involved in the notion of *I*, otherwise how could there be the concept of *we*? "I see you, where you are what I am" (*Ibid.*, p.22) says Rabindranath. As for *he*, I still have personal relation, either remembered or anticipated, and thus the personal relation here is at the lowest ebb. *He* is alienated from both *I* and *you*. Your alienation from me is constituted by your body, his alienation is a *fortiori* double. *He* is a *possible you*, and *you* is already on the way to become an

actual I duplicated, "I know you as I know myself, you are real" (*On Art and Aesthetics*, p.50). The "yourself" in its purity can be realised in love. The "himself" is hardly more than co-ordinate with the dimension of his body.

Rabindranath would fully agree with Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative, but with a difference. Kant argued that inter-self relations constitute a purely ethical and not a cognitive sphere. Our dealings with our fellows cannot but be an empirical matter unless we recognise the breakthrough to an order of a different kind-unless, that is, we recognise the authority of the moral law. The concept of the "soul" is not a description of an existent, but a regulative idea, guiding us in our relations with others. The "other self", for Kant, is not another kind of "object" – for the whole concept of "objectness" is foreign to the meaning of the word "self". The other self, therefore, is not something to be "known", but a "person" towards whom we must act responsibly. In short, just because the subject cannot by definition be turned into an object, inter-self relations are an ethical and not a cognitive matter. In his *Ethics* he writes, "one does not get to *know* a friend from conversation but from having dealing with him" (my italics). Rabindranath is no less against turning the other person into an object, but, while agreeing with Kant, he would say that a person is *real*, and only on account of its reality can it arouse the feeling of respect. Again, the other self or the person can be *known*, *albeit* not under the categories of the Understanding which make the world of science possible. The incapacity of *ratio* for encompassing the spiritual

reality of the person does not entail its unknowability, for scientific knowledge is only a species of knowledge. It is admitted by Rabindranath that in scientific knowledge the subject is in a sense nullified in the face of the object, but with the proviso that it is so because of the scientific attitude of the person who freely decides to make a scientific enquiry. But in knowing a person the self-effacement in the presence of the other self is not required in the way that impersonal cognition demands it.

Another point of relevance may be made here.

Rabindranath's emphasis on the *reality* of the personal man distinguished his position from that of Marx. Marx's goal is to liberate the "real human nature". Out of the concussion of the two social classes, the *bourgeoisie*, owners of the means of production and the resurgent working class, or the proletariat, translated in the world of ideas by a conflict of ideologies, will issue the synthesis of the classless, the true humanity. If this statement of Marx's thesis is acceptable, then we must say that a theory of humanity is not the same as a theory of man though the former would hardly be possible without the latter. Indeed, two great social philosophers of the late nineteenth century, Comte and Marx, are so preoccupied with the concept of humanity as to have little to say about man himself. To an extent this may be true of Rabindranath as well, at least in some of his philosophical writings. But Marx believes that human liberty consists in the systematic mastery of whatever resists human needs, whether in external nature or in his wild and self-destructive passions. And alienation is a phenomenon which occurs when something created to minister to human needs

acquires an institutional life of its own, an independent existence, and presents itself to men not as an artificial weapon forged by them in pursuit of some need which may, indeed, have vanished long ago, but as an objective entity with power and authority.

We have pointed to similarities between Rabindranath's and Marx's views of alienation as explicated in the *Manuscripts of 1884*. Here we shall only highlight the differences. Rabindranath upholds a theory of *man*, and is eager to preserve the value of the *person*, the individual. The person's creative unity with other selves does not constitute any undifferentiated mass or a totalitarian group., sanctimoniously called 'humanity'. *Humanity* for him, is an ideal, a regulative image, and does not go to constitute any economic class. He writes, "Man's social world is like some nebulous system of stars, consisting largely of a mist of abstractions, with such names as society, state, nation, commerce, politics and war. In their sense of amorphousness man is hidden and truth is biassed..... The idea of society has created forms of slavery without number, which we tolerate simply because it has deadened our consciousness of the *reality of the personal man*" (*italics mine Personality*, pp.36-7). In deplored the "extensive plaster of anaesthetic over feeling humanity", the personal man, he comes nearer to the philosophic import of Marx's concept of alienation. Rabindranath does not deny that man is a tool-maker, but he is much else besides. *Man* as an ideal is a value term, and hence its meaning cannot be exhausted by any descriptive or factual statement. That man is a tool- maker is a statement of fact, and

hence cannot be taken as a *definiens* of the concept of man. That is, the proposition or a set of such propositions about man does *not* entail the concept. There will always be other dimensions to be taken into account. In his own words, "the narrow emphasis of utility diverts our attention from the complete man to the merely useful man. The thick level of market-price obliterates the ultimate value of reality" (*On Art etc.* p. 47). Man is non-identical with any fact about himself. He is an "Angel of surplus". He has an open nature, he both *is* and *becomes*. And lastly, *alienation* in the sense of slavery of one's wild and self-destructive passions cannot significantly be asserted without entertaining the notion of the personal man. The personal man, for Rabindranath, "is the highest in man" (*On Art etc.*, p.11).

The argument so far has run on the following line. The self or the personality of man is no mere cognitive subject but a living and changing centre of experience in all its richness of affective and cognitive aspects as well. If the self were a mere cognitive subject then to speak to one self knowing another self would indeed be contradictory, for on such a view the "subject" is that which, by reason of being the condition of knowing, cannot be regarded as an object. The self is a living self, or in other words, "*Reality is human*, it is what we are conscious of, by which we are affected, that which we express. When we are intensely aware of it, we are aware of ourselves and it gives us delight. We live in it, and we always widen its limits..... this *creative activity* is fundamental in man" (my

italics, *Religion of Man*, pp.134-5).

We may now pass to the consideration of Rabindranath's concept of the imagination which is the faculty for *knowing* "human reality". The word imagination has its equivalent expressions in "emotion" and "sympathy" (*Ibid.*,pp. 130-131), love and feeling. Rabindranath does not distinguish between *feeling* and *emotion*. The word emotion comes from the latin *emoverse*, which means to stir up, agitate or move. Sometimes emotion not only stirs up but also causes us to bestir ourselves. When emotion is intense there are widespread changes which embrace every aspect of our body and its activity. Thoughts and actions are affected. Thus as an equivalent of imagination, it has both affective and conative implications. And Rabindranath distinguishes between "active" and "inactive" imaginations (*Ibid.*,p.131). Again, emotion has integrating as well as disintegrating aspects, though Rabindranath uses it in its integrating aspect only. Apart from the psychological implication of imagination as an equivalent to emotion, there is the epistemological side of the use of the word. From the epistemological side three main uses of imagination can be made : (I) Sartre regards imagination and sensation as poles apart. In his *Sketch for Theory of the Emotions* he argues that emotion is a specific manner of apprehending the world. This is a new apprehension, which produces new behaviour, though ineffectual, and hence we aim to change the world, but if we cannot do this we change ourselves. Men always have some sort of cognitive relation to the world, and men are what they choose to become. Their essence

consists in what they choose to do as well as what they choose to know, under what aspect they choose to see the world. According to Sartre emotion arises when men choose to see the world in the "magical" way, an inferior and more primitive way than the way of seeing which is normal to us in our practical life. So emotion is a kind of sinking into an inferior mode of consciousness. It is a behaviour of "escape". Sartre is closer to Ryle's example of the child's playing bears *in imagination*. (ii) The child may also suppose, when his mother, telling him his evening story, says, "imagine you are a prince". This is imagination as supposal. A stone travels through the air, and we suppose, Hume asserts, that the window will break. So also, we construct, i.e., suppose, Kant tells us, a continuous time and space. This is the gap-filling or transcendental function of imagination. (iii) The child might play bears *with imagination*, that is, his play shows originality, creativeness etc. To act with imagination is to act with freedom, with spontaneity. It is to break away from the trammels of the orthodox, of the accepted; it is to be original, constructive. Keeping in mind Rabindranath's notion of reality, we may point out that *imagination* in the sense of *in imagination* does not apply to his case. But Heideggers' account, that in emotion we can rediscover the whole of the human reality (*Dasein*), for emotion is the human reality assuming itself "emotionally" towards the world has significant affinities with Rabindranath's use of emotion in a similar context. Though the ideas of human reality, for Heidegger and to Rabindranath, are by no means identical. It remains then that Rabindranath's

imagination approximates to such uses as *imagination as supposal* and *with imagination*.

In Rabindranath's writings we come across two uses of imagination : as *supposal* and *with imagination*. The element of freedom is less in *supposing* than in the case *with imagination*. Since, unless supposal is false, it functions like a *postulate*, and is different from *fancy*. Imagination as supposal is not fictitious. Rabindranath, elsewhere has differentiated between *kalpanā* (imagination) *kalpanikata* (fancifulness). Imagination as supposal, being postulational in character, is not wild , nor idle, but coherent with rational apprehension. For example, he writes, "wild fancy does not make a poet..... Imagination needs to be appropriately employed, and it requires intellect and taste..... Imagination needs training.... There is not as much poetry in falsity as there is in truth" (Translated from his Bengali essay "Silent poet and Untrained poet"). Again "Unrestrained imagination cannot hope to create beauty in the same way as one does not set the house on fire to light the lamp. The light must be kept in check so that it may illumine" (*On Art etc.* P.2). And lastly, "There is a great difference between imagination and fancifulness. Imagination proper is determined by reason, propriety and truth. In fancifulness there is only the pretence of truth, it is improperly and disproportionately exaggerated" (Translated from his Bengali essay, "Bankimachandra"). These remarks remind us of what Hume said about imagination, that is associates ideas on certain principles, which are sometimes permanent, irresistible and universal. The imagination is subject

to the will also. For instance, the imaginative thinking of a historian is tied to reality, but this requirement leaves considerable freedom in the selection and discussion of hypotheses.

The second kind of imagination mentioned by Rabindranath is *with imagination*. It is imagination as the power of invention, the source of originality. The artistic activities are executed with imagination and the term "creation" is generally used as a synonym here. The element of freedom is remarkably an important constituent. "Imagination doth devote the mind active", said Berkeley of its essence. Imagination shows that minds or spirits are causal agents. This compares with Kant's notion of freedom "as the property of the will of rational beings", *cause noumenon*. Imagination, for Hume, has a moral role to play, it is allied to sympathy, it is an important agent in the process in which sympathy is produced. As distinct from reason, by "imagination" Hume means the faculty through which realities are apprehended. Rabindranath is close to Hume in assigning to imagination an important role in moral matters, the Schiller in another crucial respect. To facilitate a better grasp of the issue let us see how Rabindranath conceives imagination, and what roes he assigns to it.

We may consider the following statements. "Our feeling of joy, our imagination, realizes a profound organic unity with the universe comprehended by the mind. without minimizing the differences that are in detailed manifestations, there is nothing

wrong in trusting the mind, which is occasionally made intensely conscious of an all-pervading personality answering to the personality of man" (*Religion of Man*, p.102). This passage has an unmistakably Kantian ring. Kant's distinction between *determinant* and *reflective judgements* and the *a priori* transcendental concept of the finality of nature comes immediately to our mind. We have already noticed that the concept of the finality of nature is a source of delight, and it "represents a unique mode in which we must proceed in our reflection upon the objects of nature with a view to getting a thoroughly interconnected whole of experience" (*Critique of Judgement*, v, 184). Such a harmony of nature and our cognitive faculty is apperceived, according to Rabindranath, by imagination. It is non-discursive, but not non-rational, because it does not frustrate our mind.

Again, "Reality, in all its manifestations, reveals itself in the emotional and imaginative background of our mind. We know it, not because we can think of it, but because we directly feel it" (*Ibid.*, p.130). Apropos of his concept of reality, Rabindranath makes imagination a cognitive faculty. Sometimes he seems to contrast "knowledge" in the discursive sense, and knowledge is vision, *seeing* in the sense of immediate awareness producing a stronger impact than impersonal knowledge. For instance, he remarks, "We *know* a thing because it belongs to a class; we *see* it because it belongs to itself" (*Ibid.*, p.138). Here we are concerned with our knowledge of particulars, of individuals, or, as he says, of persons. We have previously

mentioned the incapacity of our epistemic equipments for comprehending particulars. The knowledge of which Rabindranath speaks is not a knowing about, or a "knowing by description". It is rather a "knowing by acquaintance", a form of communion or self-realization. Rabindranath does not explicitly distinguish, as Berkeley does, between the immediacy of self-knowledge and that of the other selves. But he is not oblivious of the fact that there is a tension in our knowledge of other selves. He seems to rely more on the assuring common character of personality in both knower and known and their transcendence of their bodies, which guarantees spiritual unity. Moreover, for him, there is no self-knowledge without the knowledge of others and vice-versa. Hence, it seems that the Berkeleyan distinction was not necessary for his purposes. Unless we are rigid adherents of the pure-ego theory of the self there is no reason why certain tracts of experience should not be common to the series of experience which constitutes oneself and the series which constitutes another. For, how can an isolated self which has no *ab initio* awareness of a world of many selves ever frame the concept of "another" or "other" self? Rabindranath's theory presupposes a world in which people are already communicating with each other.

Now, since he is not a behaviourist, he can meaningfully adopt the language which suggests that man is a being who is both physical and spiritual. Rabindranath has the philosophic consensus for his insight in working out the role of imagination in the process of understanding. The entailment

relation between self-knowledge and knowledge of other selves was hinted at by Bradley when he said that we cannot know the feelings of others unless we reflect them ourselves. In his theory of value Mainong maintained that emotions have what he called a "presentative" function and that they, therefore, had a part in cognition. Among recent philosophical writings one of the challenging claims in favour of the cognitive role of feeling was made by W.E.Hocking. He writes, "All positive feeling,..... reaches its terminus in knowledge. All feeling means to instate some experience which is essentially cognitive" (*The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, pp. 67-8). Max Scheler, who introduced the term "philosophical anthropology" into philosophical discourse, assigned a specifically cognitive function to sympathy as a vehicle for our knowledge of others. Scheler held that man is a being of enormous *plasticity*, and said that the greatest danger for any philosophical opinion was to formulate the idea of Man too narrowly. Scheler criticises the classical notion of man as a rational animal, the dionysian man of Nietzsche, the power motivated man of Machiavelli, the libido-motivated man of Freud and the economic man of Marx as too narrow to comprehend the *whole* man. We have seen that Rabindranath's cardinal principle is the principle that man is what he can be, that human existence is full of possibilities, that man in his nature has an unavoidable tendency towards self-exceeding. "Man has a feeling that the apparent facts of existence are not final", or, "by some miracle of creation man infinitely transcends the component parts of his own character" (*Religion of Man*, pp.146, 123). Sri Aurobindo maintains that "it is in his human

nature, in all human nature, to exceed itself..... to climb beyond what he is" (*The Life Divine*, p.638, also p. 750). Rabindranath would however find it hard to reconcile himself to Sri Aurobindo's transcendence carried beyond the limits of humanity to that stage of evolution at which the gnostic being emerges. But they, agree in their premises about man.

There is, of course, a difference between Scheler and Rabindranath, Scheler holds that intersubjective experience is an immediate flow of experiences, undifferentiated as between mine and thine, which actually contains both our own and others' experiences and without distinction from one another. Rabindranath, while admitting sympathy as cognitively efficacious, would not accept the undifferentiatedness of "mine" and "thine". For the individual self persists throughout every experience, and unless it does so, union cannot have any meaning.

Harmony i.e., the transcendence of alienation is qualitatively different from both barren isolation or the negation of the self. Both Rabindranath and Scheler, of course, agree that the method by which we know others is not in principle different from that by which we know ourselves. At the same time to understand others is to understand ourselves. But the person who has no understanding of himself whatsoever is not in a position to understand others. Raindranath's criterian of self-knowledge is "becoming aware of a profound meaning of our own self", having "an inner sense of completeness, a heightened sense of our own reality" (*Religion of Man*, p.147). They agree also in the general thesis

that it is not possible to know others in the same way that we know objects, and Rabindranath writes, "Objects of knowledge maintain an infinite distance from us, who are the knowers. For knowledge (of objects) is not union" (*Ibid.*, p.173). Knowledge of persons, worth the name, certainly is union. Sympathy dissipates the illusion of egocentricity. In our apprehension of the external world this egocentricity takes the form of solipsism, in ethics it takes the form of egoism and in the case of love it takes the form of auto-eroticism. All these are various instances of alienation in different domains. Sympathy instructs us that others are equal to us in worth and are, therefore, equally real. Rabindranath rightly suggests that our task in examining how we know others is in a sense that of uncovering the cognitive foundations of ethics. His model of good life is the Buddha's *brahmavihāra*, to be effected by an "expansion of consciousness", "the whole world of man over-spread with a divine homeliness", because to "live the life of goodness is to live the life all" (*Sādhanā*, pp. 42 and 56).

The way in which feelings are bound up with our knowledge of others is something which all the personalist philosophers have emphasized. Berdyaev speaks of an "affective kind of knowledge". Love also has similarly cognitive import for Rabindranath. For example, he writes, "whatever name our logic may give to the truth of human unity, the fact can never be ignored that we have our greatest delight when we realize ourselves, in others, and this is the definition of love. This love gives us the testimony of the great whole which is the complete and final truth of man..... dwelling in the boundless realm of surplus, emancipates our consciousness

from the illusory bond of the separate world" (*Religion of Man*, pp. 49-50). *Love* is a cognate word of sympathy, though it is a feeling, yet it is to be distinguished from mere feeling. It is a movement towards positive value, and it is spontaneous, whereas sympathy is reactive. *Sympathy* is employed by Rabindranath in a restrictive sense. An antipathic emotion may sometimes become instrumental in arousing sympathy, as in the case of common dislike to a third factor. In such cases, a great part of our "experiences" of sympathy falls short of what Rabindranath would call genuine. In his usage "sympathy" means love.

The reality of a person cannot be described or expressed in conceptual terms. It is only revealed in its full reality by love or in virtue of the insight it provides. As regards its objectivity, Rabindranath says that since it is a "living truth", it cannot be seen in "its entireness from outside". Love, as "affective knowledge" is also conation, because our faith in its truth is creative. "The joy of unity within ourselves, seeking expression, becomes creative" (*Creative Unity*, p. 5). He distinguishes between *creation* and *construction* – the two types of activities answering to the bipolarity of man. Man's isolation to his self, his utilitarian motives seek success in its projects – "our desire for the fulfilment of our needs is constructive" (*Ibid.*, p.5). Or better still, "construction is for a purpose, it expresses our wants; but creation is for itself, it expresses our very being" (*Lectures and Addresses*, p. 59). Love, then, is the establishment of higher possibilities of value, is an ascent towards a paradigm, which is at once a presupposition and the goal.

It is the movement towards self-perfection which we are called upon to recognise and to promote in the other person. Does it not contradict Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative where we are called upon to try to perfect ourselves and not embark on any such attempt in the case of the other person? No, for, it is not the utilitarian advocation of the removal of obstacles to the happiness of others. In love, as Rabindranath puts it, if I am called upon to recognise, *without any hint of self-centredness*, this movement towards perfection in the other, it follows that he is also recognising something analogous to this in me. That this is barriers to the mutuality of love, and the demand of love to negate itself for the sake of other persons when other things are not equal. whether or not Rabindranath is guilty of judging the normal by reference to the paradigmatic, what is important for our purpose here is his contention that love brings about an affirmation of the whole self which is loving as well as of the self which is loved, and this is true not only of reciprocated but also of unreciprocated love (as in the case of our love of God, but it is difficult to say whether Rabindranath would allow this example to be entertained). In recognising the other self, I, at the same time, recognise something which is connatural with me, although never at the same time ceasing to be "other man" me, so that, while impersonal knowledge in a sense "disperses" the self, knowledge of another self affirms the self which is knowing no less than the self which is known. This is because the self which is knowing is at the same time affirmed by the other. The love which is knowledge, then, discovers both alienation and freedom.

Rabindranath is in full agreement with Jaspers in holding that absence of love denotes a deficiency in knowledge of persons, for in any inter-self relation which is less than love this condition of dual affirmation cannot be fulfilled.

Rabindranath always stresses the "intellectual" element as well as the conative and affective, and collects such concepts as emotion, sympathy, love etc. Under the concept of imagination. Schiller also was concerned with showing that the sensible impulse was coordinate with the rational impulse, and he held that it was needed for a complete estimate of man. By entertaining the thesis that imagination is the faculty of appercieving reality, Rabindranath brings home the idea that our knowledge of persons is *aesthetic*. This follows from his premise that "man is by nature an artist" (*Religion of Man*, p. 133), and also from his concept of mind as a "principle of creation", already referred to by us. The aesthetic implication was evident in connection with non-utilitarian import of conation in sympathy and love. Here we may remark that the domain of imagination is coextensive with the domain of freedom.

Freedom, for Rabindranath, is a positive, concept. It connotes transcendence of the facts of the isolated state of the self, the life of alienation. It is over-factual. "Freedom in the sense of independence has no content, and therefore no meaning. Perfect freedom lies in a perfect harmony of relationship" (*Ibid*, p. 172). wherein lies this freedom? Obviously in man's will, and he speaks of the "consciousness of will which is aware of its

freedom and ever struggle for it" (*Ibid.*, p.20). The ontological mode of assertion is intended to bring in view the whole realm of possibilities, otherwise no sense could be made of moral striving. Man has a body which is part of the casual nature of space and time, and yet he can intervene by a free decision of his and make a new beginning. Man has freedom through causality and hence a good action is creative as it expresses that aspect of the acting subject, of the moral agent, which transcends its alienation. "We gain our freedom when we attain our truest nature" which transcends "the separateness of our self", its alienation. The good life is marked by "freedom in action", and is expressive of dealienation which is creative. "We have a dual set of desires in our being", says Rabindranath, "which it should be our endeavour to bring into harmony" (*Sadhana*, p. 63). How can this harmony be brought about? The passage of our self is through its selfhood", the alienated self is not *māyā*, it is real to an extent, it has "negative freedom, the freedom of self-will". The "career of discord" is to be brought into harmony with "the life of all", since man's deepest joy is in growing greater and greater by more and more union with the all" (*Ibid.*, p. 50). Between the failure and the paradigm of our moral life lies a continuous, conscious striving for realising the positive significance of self. Our will has a history that runs "through independence and rebellion to the ultimate completion" (*Ibid*, p.69). Our "freedom of self-will" must come through the will's "freedom of harmony, with other selves" – the republic of persons. This is the moral imperative. The negative freedom of alienation contradicts itself by violating man's nature. "Our freedom cannot go against its own principle of freedom and yet be free; it cannot commit suicide and yet live. We cannot say that we should have infinite freedom to fetter ourselves, for the fettering ends the freedom" (*Ibid.*,p.79).

How is freedom related to imagination? Rabindranath says, "Our imagination makes us intensely conscious of a life we must live which transcends the individual's life. Every true freedom that we may attain in any direction broadens our path of self-realisation, which is in superseding the self. The unimaginative repetition of life within a safe restriction imposed by nature may be good for the animal, but never for Man, who has the responsibility to outline his life in order to live in truth..... And freedom in its process of creation gives rise to perpetual suggestions of something further than its obvious purpose" (*Religion of Man*, p.55). The vision of the ideal life has its source in the imagination which works at the surplus in man. There is also the suggestion that freedom and imagination are identical in their import. The alienated self, by implication, can merely show the world of harmony to be possible. Imagination alone can realise the "consciousness of our existence" (the phrase is Kant's) in that world. It goes beyond the problem of ontology to an immediate consciousness of our reality. What appears problematic from an ordinary point of view can be resolved in our immediate consciousness. My surplus self in creative unity with other selves is given to me, in imagination, in such a way, as it were, before me, and there is a direct connection between this seeing and my consciousness of my existence.

A brief note may be taken of Rabindranath's views on morals. His moral theory is a reaction against empiricism in ethics, particularly against all forms of utilitarianism.

Utilitarianism is basically to be characterised as an ethical theory which teaches that the fundamental right-making characteristic of morality (see answer to the question "what makes a right act right?") is the promotion of some *contingent* human value – that is, some value which human beings just happen, as a matter of fact, to desire. This value is discovered by an empirical examination of human nature and is typically taken to be happiness. Rabindranath would say that such a conception of morality is incompatible with the basic dignity of human beings, being set apart from all other natural creatures by their freedom. To ground morality in some empirical value, in some merely contingent fact about human beings (e.g., their desire for happiness), is to obscure the essential character of man as an angel of surplus. Thus only some ends set by man's higher transcending self can provide the basic value in a moral code that will respect man's dignity. Rabindranath replaces *happiness* by magnificence. The former indicates that man's egoistic needs are satisfied, but the latter reveals the supra-natural freedom of man. These two values answer to what he calls the "basic duality in man's being". It is worth mentioning that Rabindranath's term for the human person – *vyākti* – used in the etymological sense, means one who is revealing, manifesting (making *vyākta*) himself. "In the aspect of man which belongs to animal life, the satisfaction of his necessities is adequate to his happiness", because the "nature of an animal conforms to its condition. Its claim never exceed itself. But with man it is different. He puts forward claims for beyond what was due to him by nature"

(*Man*, p.21). The non-utilitarian stand is brought out more explicitly in the following assertions : "Complete understanding of goodness is not possible in the realm of nature Goodness lies in realizing in oneself the humanity which is universal..... this would have no meaning unless man, had a spiritual self over and above his natural self. Man's endeavour strives from one nature towards another..... one nature of man obscures him, the other gives freedom" (*Man*, pp. 29-30).

Rabindranath is in agreement with Kant in his opposition to empiricism in ethics and utilitarianism. Good willing is for both of them, as Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya takes Kant to mean, the practical apprehension of harmony with other individuals. Again, they agree, in Bhattacharyya's terms, in holding that inclination is the principle of exclusiveness, which is not, however, the principle of real individuality. A moral self knows itself as an individual in harmony with other individuals. Bhattacharyya understands Kant in such terms as would have been readily endorsed by Rabindranath. For example, he interprets the term humanity as meaning "many individual selves in harmony, a society of spirits ('Kingdom of ends') which is in inner attitude asserted by every individual spirit. The self that is free, is indeed universal, which is each individual self as in harmony with other selves" (*Studies in Kant*, p.83).

But in Kant's notion of "what the fully rational being would do" in any way comparable to Rabindranath's *surplus self*? Rabindranath's surplus self is spiritual in as much as it is supra-natural in its *attitude* to the natural exclusive self.

Rationality is not excluded from the domain of the spiritual, but which is more than rational, it is the "sublimation" of the alienated self, not its negation, it is the complete man. We may say that Kant employs the concept of the fully rational being to explain exactly what is the nature of his divergence upon empiricism in ethics. It is, for him, a model of explanatory value in characterising the ideals of supra-natural decision for human beings just in the same way as Rabindranath's terms like "surplus" and "spiritual" and "love" are.

Now, having seen that imagination has a decisive role to play even in Rabindranath's ethical theory, an objection may be anticipated. His paradigm of "love" and his criterion of joy too find employment in moral contexts, and thus he is reducing the concept of "moral" to that of aesthetic, bridged over by the imagination. This objection does not hold for two reasons : (a) that Rabindranath does not believe in such abstractions as "the moral man" or the "aesthetic man" just as he does not believe in "the economic man" or "the rational man"; and the terms "good" and "beauty" are interdefinable for him. Kierkegaard criticised the aesthetic mode of existence – the romantic hedonist, in particular, for being a sensualist and remaining indifferent to commitment. The romantic lacks ethical pathos, lives only in the moment, the erotic present, and consequently, his whole life becomes a discontinuous succession of passing from one moment to the next. His personality thus lacks unity and continuity. He suffers a loss of selfhood. In art Rabindranath's prime concern is with the self-transcending subject, and his notion of

aesthetic delight is non-hedonistic and uninterested in the ethical sense of the terms. Hence Kierkegaard's criticism does not touch him. On the contrary, he would direct the same criticisms against any cult of hedonism in art. Secondly, according to Rabindranath, the *good* and the *beautiful* are not contraries, one implies the other. For example, he says that it is inconcievable that what is good is not beautiful, "The Good is beautiful not merely because of the good it does to us. There is something more to it. What is good is in consonance with creation as a whole and therefore also with the world of man. whenever we see the good and the true in perfect accord, the *Beautiful* stands revealed.... Beauty is good in its fullness as fullness of Beauty is Good incarnate. Because transcends necessity, wherefore we regard it as opulence or as a power which liberates us into love out of the penury of self-seeking" (*Art etc.*, p.5). Art is nothing, for Rabindranath, if it does not enhance our self-realisation, our transcendence of alienation. "Love" is at once a moral and an aesthetic fulfilment. Called by different names both goodness and beauty are modes of freedom, in action and in feeling. Rabindranath's views on art finds corroboration from a rigorously ethical system such as early Buddhism. The Buddhas's experience is as significant as his reasoning. This experience is usually described in terms of compassion and love. But an important aspect of this experience is reflected in the constant emphasis on beauty, perfection and joy which we see in early Buddhist texts. There are many remarks attributed to the Master which

shows unmistakably that the contemplation of the Beautiful was regarded by him as inseparable from the highest wisdom.

Rabindranath, we find, considers all human actions, moral or aesthetic, as a form of self-realization, which implies a passage from selfishness to authentic self-affirmation. Instead of a rigoristic independence of will and affection, self-affirmation is a fulfilment thereof. Kant's statement that "love is a matter of feeling not of will" would not then be commensurate with the human situation. Love transcends self-seeking, and it cannot be a matter of feeling alone. It is the principle of individuation. For Rabindranath, individuality, in the only sense in which it is of moral or aesthetic significance, consists, not in the narrowing down of life to an exclusive point, but in the expansion of it :

"The ultimate end of freedom is ... to know that I am" and "freedom of personality has its fulfilment, not in itself, but in another personality, and this is love", again, "the whole object of man is..... to turn his inward forces..... from the contraction of self in desire into his expansion of soul in love" (*Personality*, pp. 95,96 and 97,98). Love is "active perfection". Wherefrom shall we derive the vision of the multiform life of perfection? From imagination, which Rabindranath looks upon as creative intelligence.

Such a notion is not altogether untenable in the history of philosophy. It has evidences in its favour. In Kant's *Critiques* we come across the recognition, in addition

to the reproductive function of imagination, of another to which he attributes not only a productive activity of its own, but something of the fruitful and inexhaustible character of noumenal reality itself. Schiller, Shelly and Coleridge thought of the work of imagination, not only as continuous with understanding, mapping the world of nature, but also with man's supra-natural domain. In the meantime we may turn to Shelly's account of it. He held that the "great instrument of moral good is the imagination" because, a man to be morally good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own". "The high office of the imagination is to help us or our will to transcend all personal interests and the criteria of customary habit", as Rabindranath puts in. In Shelley's words, imagination "awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of thousand unapprehended combinations of thought. "In imagination "the task of reproducing the common universe (*a la* Kant's '*understanding*') and it purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being" (Rabindranath speaks of the removal of the "invisible screen of the commonplace"). *Religion of man*, p. 94). It is not what Kant's four determinations of the Beautiful bring out ? The dialectical implications of the disinterested delight felt in the aesthetic experience, as *per* Kant's showing, suggest that imaginative experience is impersonal and detached from partial and fragmentary emotions, from clouded moral certainties.

It is necessary to correct the picture of Kantian

ethics which has been made to appear forbidding in its intellectualism, rationalistic at the expense of emotion. We often seem to forget that in addition to a pure moral philosophy, Kant also has an applied or *materiāl* moral philosophy, which attempts to supplement the *formal* philosophy with what he calls anthropological knowledge of men's nature, in order to formulate a moral criterian applicable to human beings. Earlier we have ventured in interpretation of Kant's notion of "the fully rational being", as employed to indicate the nature of his divergence from empiricism in ethics, having an explanatory value as a model. We shall suggest something more in that connexion. For Rabindranath, personality represents the highest form of transcendence of which man is capable. This has been the contention of the greatest minds in philosophy. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant says that "what raises Man above himself..... is nothing else than *Personality*, and by this I mean freedom and independence of the mechanism of nature". Freedom, we are told, "is a transcendent predicate of a being which otherwise belongs to the world of the senses". Rabindranath has always emphasized "the transcendental meaning" of the idea of the Man as an ideal of human perfection. "We become aware of a profound meaning of our own self at the consciousness of some ideal of perfection, some truth beautiful or majestic which gives us an inner sense of completeness, a heightened sense of our own reality" (*Religion of Man*, pp. 51 & 157). In the same vein we find in Kant's second *Critique* the assertion : "*The Moral Law belongs my invisible Self, my*

Personality". Goethe, recognizing Kant's wisdom in comprehending the supra-natural significance of personality, said, in the course of a conversation, on the 29th April, 1818, with the Chancellor Von Muller, "Man feels it deeply and clearly within himself that he is a citizen of that spiritual realm in which we can never cease to believe. *Morality* is a constant attempt to establish peace between our personal demands and the laws of that individual realm". When Rabindranath says that "we perish when we miss our humanity" he brings to mind Kant's assertions : "We must be worthy of our manhood", or "man is a person", even that man's "freedom should be employed to enable him to live as a man" (*Lectures on Ethics*, pp. 119,120). We find, then that both Kant and Rabindranath hold that the significance of man is measured in terms of the values for which he stands. The existence of selves or centres of value-apperception, to which at the organic level we cannot give a name, is one of the central mysteries of life. Rabindranath calls it a "surplus", and Kant designates it as "heaven". In the conclusion of his second *Critique*, Kant said, "*Heaven starts from the place which I occupy in the external sensuous world*" (Italics in the text). Man, in Aristotle's phrase, is obliged to "join his end to his beginning". Thus to join is to have a transition to auto-regulation according to a norm which is extra-organic, a form of self-realization. The importance of such creative efforts towards spiritual autonomy cannot easily be waived. Man, in this way, creates himself according to his ideal image, of a self-transcending subject, and herein lies the so-called objectivity of the moral phenomenon of willing. When

confronted with a complex human situation such as alienation – with all its hedonistic aura and *appearance* of freedom – it would be of precious little help to tell me to act like a self-transcending self, in keeping with human dignity. A “fully rational being” or even a *mukta-purusa* would not get himself into characteristically human muddles. Thus I shall want what, given the finite character of my own situations, I can achieve, with all realise, in so far as is humanly possible, my ideal (surplus-self) manhood, or as Kant would say, rationally, in my situation. The good life is more than mechanical obedience to the categorical imperative, right action requires more than right thinking. And here the other components of good life, like sympathy, love etc., come in. “The moral law..... lacks the executive authority of moral feeling, which is a motive to action which arises when sensibility is in harmony with understanding”. “Self-mastery depends on the strength of our moral feeling” (*Kant's Lectures on Ethics*, p.139). Again, “Love as the free acceptance of another person's will be indispensable as the subjective motive from which a man can be expected to do what he ought to do”. “Virtue”, says Kant, “is moral strength, but that does not exhaust the concept”, and hence “There is a moral aesthetic” which represents feeling by pictures in order to augment the driving force of the moral law” (*Kant*, ed. G. Rabel, Oxford, pages 265 and 305). Feeling has a bearing on conduct not only in the sense of interest (in the non-Kantian sense of the term, of course) in the consciousness of an end, but also in that of pleasure as constituting the end. It is both

an efficient cause of conduct and its final cause. When delight is spoken of as the goal of all purposeful activity, we have to understand that such activity aims at the realisation of some state of self. The goal is not mere hedonistic pleasure as can already be had in alienation, but a form or type of concrete experience of which delight is an invariable feature. Kant himself ultimately finds an important place for happiness in his own theory. In criticising the *Prabhākara* view commanding disinterested activity, Śamkara remarks that it is indulging in a pure abstraction, for action entirely divorced from purpose is a psychological impossibility. To act upon such activity in the name of *dharma* (obedience to Vedic imperatives) is, Śamkara observes, to reduce life to a form of meaningless drudgery. (See his commentary on the *Gītā*, III, I). Since freedom is the basic value for Kant, and morality is to be defined in terms of freedom and the supreme moral criterion is to be formulated around freedom, his theory, like *moksavāda* of the *vedānta* school, is more teleological and less deontological than is often supposed to be.

When Kant speaks of disinterested delight of the Beautiful and its universality, or when Rabindranath tells us that "beauty carries an eternal assurance of our spiritual relationship to reality", or when Croce holds art as a grade of spirit, and when Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya says that "something is *only known* in the sense that we feel it as unfelt" – we cannot but be struck by a family resemblance. All of them refer, implicitly or otherwise, to some faculty of apperceiving values, i.e. imagination, which, Rabindranath considers to be "luminous" and which, he says,

"in its higher stage is special to man". Its function, according to him, is to offer us "that vision of wholeness which for the biological necessity of physical survival is superfluous..... to arouse in us the sense of perfection which is our true sense of immortality" (*Religion of Man*, p.16). Croce's *intuition* is a "theoretical" activity of knowledge, it is knowledge obtained through the imagination. According to Bhattacharyya, imagination is a grade of non-perceptual knowledge. He says, imagination is "non-perceptual apprehension of the object as forming or becoming formed to be a perceptible object" (*The subject of Freedom*, Chap.II, p.38). Perceptual knowledge is the standard of knowledge, as it lends the cognitive character to the other modes of apprehension. But it has a limitation, that is, it "prevents them from reaching their ideal completion". Thus conceived, imagination involves "a belief in something not yet known but which may be known in some ideal mode of realisation." (*Ibid.*). When Rabindranath speaks of imagination in connexion with our knowledge of human reality, he intends to convey that "Reality", being an image of our surplus self, can only be non-perceptually apprehended, so that it might have its "ideal completion". Bhattacharyya suggests the cognitive import of imagination by various phrases such as "imagination of knowing", and "imaginative knowledge" etc. Among other features of imagination, he notes that non-perceptually apprehended objects are necessarily symbolised as substantive by objective metaphors, not merely thought but sought to be believed as though they were substantive objects. In this way, imagination

gives an expression of “the metaphysical *aspiration* to extend and deepen the conception of our value experiences. The result of symbolising makes an actual object, a particular manifestation of more essential object”. For example, our human reality is a general idea of which we have only “imaginative knowledge”. Rabindranath writes, “when I say that I am a man, it is implied by that word that there is such a thing as a general idea of man which persistently manifests itself in every particular human being” (*Religion of Man.*, p.103).

Such general ideas, according to Bhattacharyya, can “exist only in being achieved or realised subjectively..... not accomplished as fact but only to be accomplished..... its facthood being what has begun to be achieved and is yet to be completed” (*Ibid.*p.40). It is in this sense that Rabindranath says that “one aspect of Man’s self is seen directly here, but the other is the vast unseen”, and remarks that of the “unseen” self, of which we have imaginative knowledge we cannot use such demonstrative pronouns as “This” and “it” (*Man*, pp.24-5). Such ideas are, in Bhattacharyya’s phrase, psychic fact, and “the appearance of its objectivity is incomplete but not illusory”; they have “metaphysical reality”. Bhattacharyya points out that “metaphysical realities are taken to be unknown in the sense of being unrealised. It implies the possibilities of knowing, not indeed by any logical procedure, but by a specific self-realising activity of the imagination itself” (*Op cit*, 44). Thus imagination is not illusion, and he argues that since metaphysical reality can be actualised by the “concreting activity of imagination itself” without turning

it into actual knowing by sense-intuition, it can be realised by man morally or emotionally, by willing or filling. Bhattacharyya's argument turns upon the Kantian Ideas subjectively *constitutive* and objectively regulative of our value experiences. He concludes that "cognitive realisation of the metaphysical reality as subjective has to be admitted, at least, as a spiritual possibility" (*Ibid.*, p.51).

Another Indian thinker, Sri Aurobindo, shows the necessity of imagination for a being such as man. He writes in his *Life Divine*, "Imagination is a necessity for a partial being with ignorant consciousness; for it has to supplement its ignorance by imagination" (p.398). Rabindranath does not admit intellectual intuition, and consequently, since man is an embodied being according to him as for Kant also, and so cannot know by thought alone, he takes into account *a posterioro* elements. Again, in terms of *a priori* synthesis man constructs the rational world of cognition, to which he does not wholly belong; he has his membership elsewhere also – in the domain of personality, the news of which realm he gets from his self-transcending consciousness. Sri Aurobindo further states : "We summon things which are not within the actual field of our limited superficial mind-experience by the action of the thought – mind which we call imagination, that greater power in us and high summoner of all possibilities" (*Ibid.*, p.462). It is worth noticing that Sri Aurobindo takes imagination as an action of the mind – or else a faculty of possibilities. According to Kant the "sense of the possible" is precisely the capacity whereby man is distinguished from all other

creatures (*Critique of Judgement*, Secs. 76,77). We can now better understand Rabindranath's assertion that imagination is "the most distinctly human of all our faculties".

The structure of the mind was at no point Kant's central concern, and he never defines imagination thoroughly, and we find him wavering considerably in his assessment of the power and independence of imaginations. The *Critique of Pure Reason* makes no provision for another power on a semi-equal footing with Understanding and Reason. It is only gradually as the *Critique of Judgement* progresses that Kant establishes this view, though in the mean time he admits, speaking of faith, that in the "moral state" reason gives consent to things inaccessible to the understanding. Reason in the "moral state" may be taken to signify the total powers of the human spirit.

In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant generally seems to mean by "imagination" an independent faculty or power, conceptual apprehension of form. It is a power whose insight comes directly, without recourse to inference or reasoning. It is productive and spontaneous, but it is evident that "productive imagination" as Kant defines it in the *Critique of Pure Reason* cannot be the agent of aesthetic judgement. The argument is tied to the laws of understanding, and the product is predetermined. Whatever comes to the "productive imagination" is presented to the understanding to be turned into conceptual knowledge. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant holds that all products of the imagination are subject to the re-working of the

rest of the cognitive process. Imagination there occupies, as it does in Collingwood's theories (*The Principle of Art*, p.215), the middle region between sensibility and Thought. But this is an unsatisfactory view, for anything imagination produces should be suitable for development by Understanding and Reason. Kant does not hold this view in the *Critique of Judgement*.

In aesthetic judgement "imagination" is used to refer to a representation of object to subject. what does this mean ? To be valid, an aesthetic judgement must be based on more than the personal taste. It should derive from the harmony of our cognitive grasp of the object with an intuitive projection of what it should ideally be. This projection is the product of the "cognitive powers" operating in "free-play", unlimited by any rule of cognition or definite concept. The result of this free play is said to be communicable (i.e., not merely subjective) because of its relation to the ruled cognitive process. Imagination in this sense attempts to grasp form without regard to the concept of a purpose. But in judgement the products of imagination remain compatible with cognitive law, though they are not determined by it. The freedom of the imagination consists in its being able to schematize without any concept. And it can comprehend its object in a single intuitive grasp, which Kant says, is what Reason strives to do without success. It is important to note that imaginative representations are non-conceptual; the imaginative "idea" is a "transcendent" one. We can make some generalizations about *imagination* as Kant usually seems to conceive it in the *Critique of Judgement*. First, it works by apprehending individual

wholes. (By contrast, the understanding works by abstracting and clarifying). Second, Kant generally seems to mean by "imagination" an independent faculty or power of the mind which permits non-conceptual apprehension of forms. I hesitate to say that imagination is intuition, or an intuitive power, because of Kant's varied used of "intuition". Nevertheless, the imagination as viewed in the *Critique of Judgement* is what we normally think of as intuition. It is a power whose insight comes directly, without recourse to inference or reasoning. It may be called creative imagination.

Coleridge's distinction between primary and secondary imagination might properly be made in Kant's system between cognitive or "productive" imagination and creative imagination. Coleridge's secondary imagination is a creative, unifying, truth-seeking power, but its relationship to the cognitive process is unhappily conceived. Coleridge's secondary imagination operates on the material of our rational world of cognitive concepts. It is freed from their inherent limitations by its mode of operation. According to Coleridge, it "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates" the concepts in order to use their material in creating a new and presumably superior reality. Deliberately, it must "break down the world or 'every day' perceptions" in order that a new reality may be recrystallized from its pieces. Coleridge has thus affirmed the independent existence of a non-conceptual creative imaginative power, and in this way he makes explicit what is clearly implicit in Kant. But does it follow that the secondary imagination must destroy before it could create ? He grants imagination absolute

power over the rational world without explaining the source of its truth or defining the relation of its constructs to the material from which they are constituted. To attempt to justify the existence of this destructive process seems futile.

Rabindranath's stand on this issue is instructive. For him imagination is a free faculty of the mind and its results are such that they may be considered side by side with those of Understanding and Reason. If Coleridge could be taken to imply that imagination imbues its materials with a unity and meaning which they did not possess before, then Rabindranath's affinity with him becomes closer. Rabindranath does not deny the importance of the conceptual world, for it adds a dimension to man's being. Imagination does not supersede Reason, but provides an alternative to it. Conceptual and imaginative constructs are not mutually exclusive, neither destroys the other. Above all, we have already noticed that, for Rabindranath, imagination has a unique domain – *the world of personality*. He appeals to imagination in order to explain the possibility of such experiences as our knowledge of other selves, consciousness of values, our self-transcending nature as persons, our spiritual relationship with nature – in short our encounter with what he calls *Reality* – or the domain of all that is "humanly significant" to us as persons. Neither Kant nor Coleridge made any explicit employment of the imagination for a similar purpose. According to Rabindranath, the *creative unity* which is revealed by the imagination is the harmony of *beauty* and *love*, having its centre or *locus* in the self-transcending consciousness of the human person. Imagination thrives on *bona*

fide feelings, which are for Rabindranath intentional in character, and hence our feelings are not totally devoid of rational significance, or they would be wholly unintelligible. The man who feels, is a knowing subject as well. The emotiveness of knowledge by imagination is pointed in a particular direction – self-transcendence of the human person in its inter-subjective relationship. To say “I feel” is to commit oneself to an axiological statement or judgement of value. Knowledge of persons is not a theory, it is an experience. As a self-transcending creature, man is concerned not merely to know, but to be to become what he ideally is – his possibilities. Herein lies the scope of the imagination.

Rabindranath shares with Kant the view that the product of imagination- the aesthetic judgment, is universal, disinterested and is a pointer to higher reality. To take up the last, reality, for Kant, is the moral world, and for Rabindranath, it is the world of persons. To comprehend nature aesthetically is to see it as a symbol of the moral order, as a pointer to man as an end. But Rabindranath would put the master a little differently. It is not to a definite conception of man that aesthetic judgment refers – but it is itself a revelation of man himself. Since, for him, the moral or the aesthetic consciousness are both modes of creative and self-affirming freedom, the judgements, moral and aesthetic, differ only in having different predicates which are interdefinable with the help of the definiens of unity or harmony and the felt quality of delight. A generalised account of value judgments would be available for any evaluation,

moral or aesthetic. We speak of the beauty of goodness in much the same sense when we say, beauty is good, for both these predicates are related to the reality of man – the human truth. Both goodness and beauty are realised in consequence of the self's fraternising activity – transcendence of alienation, harmony and surplus of man's personality. As expressions of the spiritual nature of man, beauty and goodness are one. On a secondary level, of course, Rabindranath differentiates *beauty* and goodness. For example, "Beauty is the harmony realised in things which are bound by law. Love (which in his word for goodness or the God) is the harmony realised in wills which are free" (*Personality*, p.101). The division is Kantian and we find him saying that in nature we have the "revelation of unity in its passive perfection" whereas "the revelation of unity in its active perfection, which we find in the spiritual world, is love" (*Ibid*, my italics). But *beauty* has its application in "*the spiritual world*" as well – and it is important to bear this fact in mind in order to appreciate Rabindranath's unique way of thinking. Even what he speaks of as "passive perfection", the delight in the beauty of nature, is the human reality no less than love.

we may elaborate Rabindranath's notion of beauty in connection with *nature*. Beauty is not an exclusive predicate of Art, and the domain of beauty overlaps that of the good. In the course of our discussion on Rabindranath's concept of "Man's Universe" we referred to the Kantian distinction between the concepts of nature and the world, and tried to make it clear

that nature in Galileo's sense or Kant's *nature* falls outside the range of human emotion. Certainly, *beauty* cannot be predicated of this nature. "Whether Nature is beautiful or adorable at all", says Bradley, "depends upon the sense in which it is taken. If the genuine reality is bare primary quality, Nature will be dead. It would possess at the most a kind of symmetry" (*Appearance and Reality*, p.435). It becomes beautiful only when it is transformed into human imagery, and it is with this humanised nature that we can feel spiritual kinship. Rabindranath does not deny existence to the physicists' nature, but it is not the real world, in his specialised sense of term. In order that the world may have a spiritual significance for us, so that it may enhance our realisation as "the mystery of existence", it must enter "the range of human emotions". Again, Rabindranath's notion of good life is not altogether indifferent to the humanised world. It extends even beyond the domain of persons, since goodness means "elimination of all limits to love". Rabindranath's ethical ideal Buddha's *brahmavihāra* enjoins: "Like a mother maintaining her only son with her own life, keep thy immeasurable loving thought for all creatures" (*Religion of Man*, p. 69). We have already dwelt on the Indian belief in the unity of life and the consequent practice of *ahimsa* as an ethical essential. It is true that goodness has its primary relevance in the domain of persons, yet self-realisation implies transcendence of alienation not only with regard to persons but also in respect of the endless world of sensible life which appeals to our sympathy and evokes our wonder. Alienation from nature no less obscures the image of man

than does alienation from man. "The earth and the sky are woven with the fibres of man's mind", says Rabindranath, and in saying this he steers a course between naturalism and panpsychism. The import of the *Gayatri* verse of the *Rg-Veda* is significant once again. The starry heaven and the moral law must meet in one ground harmony – and the realisation of the unity in a creative consciousness is not merely an aesthetic achievement, but supremely ethical. Kant felt it in an implicit manner when he said, about the realms of *nature* and *freedom*, the starry heaven and the moral law – "I associate them directly with the consciousness of my own existence". But within the fold of Protestant moral tradition the wonder evoked by the two realms could not be ethical, but aesthetic. Rabindranath says, "our consciousness of the world..... is perfect when our consciousness realises all things as spiritually one with it, and therefore capable of giving us joy. For us the highest purpose of the world is not merely living in it, knowing it and making use of it, but realising our own selves in it – through expansion of sympathy; not alienating ourselves from it and dominating it, but comprehending and uniting it with ourselves in perfect union" (*Creative Unity*, p. 49). This is at once ethical and aesthetic, and both have their ideal in self-realisation. Thus, we may say that, for Rabindranath, the domains of the good and the beautiful map onto each other.

The point will become more evident as we take up other characteristics of aesthetic judgement mentioned by Kant, viz. Universality, necessity and disinterestedness. Kant marks off

aesthetic consciousness from the region of abstract intelligence on the one hand, and from that of sensuous gratification and moral satisfaction on the other. Rabindranath would agree with the first demarcation, and of the second, i.e., from sensuous gratification, but not with that of moral. On his terms beauty brings "our instinctive urges under control" and liberates us from the "slavery" of inclinations. He says, "It is absurd to suggest that beauty may be created out of weakness or instability of character, out of lack of restraint" (*Art etc.* p.3). Is not this what Kant's freedom from inclinations or will's self-legislation imply ? Again, we have already found that Rabindranath explicates his concept of man in such statements as "man by nature is an artist", or man's "true life is a creation", or "The highest reality (Man's supra-natural self) has to be actively achieved" etc. Now the real man is "the personal man", and he is "found in the region where we are free from all necessity – above the needs, both of body and mind – above the expedient and useful. It is the highest in man....." (*Personality*, p. 4). Moral agency belongs to this "personal man" – "the highest in man". Does not the identification of "the personal man" correspond to Kant's good will, beyond necessity, the realm of autonomy or freedom – wherein lies "the supreme principle of morality" ? Rabindranath would say, not only of morality, of art as well.

The aesthetic and the moral "ought" are differentiated by Kant on the ground of objectivity. The former is not objective, while the latter is. The objectivity of the moral ought is with reference to the Holy will, for which "ought is out of place",

says Kant. "A perfectly good will would be subject to objective laws (of the good), but it could not be conceived as constrained by them to act in accord with them because, according to its own subjective constitution, it can be determined to act only through the conception of the good" (*Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. L.W.Beck, pp. 30-31). Rabindranath is perfectly in agreement with this view. He says, "in man the conflict is between what *is* desired and what *should* be desired. what is desired dwells in the heart of the natural life, which we share with animals; but what should be desired belongs to a life which is far beyond it". Man's "true life is in the region of what ought to be. In this, though there is a continuation, yet there is also a conflict" (Op. Cit, p.80). The same conditions prevail, he holds, in the aesthetic plane, for the aesthetic consciousness is identified by the same set of criteria which mark the moral one – the supra-natural attitude, self-affirmation of the person, freedom from necessity, feeling of disinterested delight and creative transcendence of alienation. "Every intentional action is founded on freedom, it is true of goodness, it is never false of beauty. In the world of art, our consciousness being freed from the tangle of self interest, we gain unobstructed vision of unity, the incarnation of the real, which is a joy for ever" (*Religion of Man*, p. 184). Nothing short of this world, for Rabindranath, quality as the ethical ideal and morality of spiritual emotions like love and sympathy. He says, "the realization of our soul has its moral and its spiritual side. The moral side represents training of unselfishness, control of desire; the spiritual side

represents sympathy and love. They should be taken together and never separated" (*Personality*, p.68). This passage reminds us of Kant's proposal for translating sympathy and compassion into an active capacity and will. Rabindranath's criticism of intemperate imagination is worth re-calling here. In connexion with our sense of beauty he often says that "in proper appreciation of beauty an initial cultivation of discipline" is "a must" – though the stage of "stern discipline" is enjoyed only as a "preparatory" stage and never as an end. "Not self-immolation but self-expression must be our aim. But it is wrong to suppose that to cultivate discipline is to cultivate aridity. The peasant does not tend his fields to make of it a desert. When he ploughs the land, harrows the clods, and rakes the ground free of weeds, it may look as if he is doing violence to the field. But that is how he makes his land yield the fruits of his labour..... unfortunately for man, he often lets the end be overshadowed by the means" (*Art etc.*, p.1).

In India ethics was never separated from the culture of emotions. The Indian view of life takes a proper account of the struggling aspect of the moral mode of being, yet it does not neglect to emphasize transcendence thereof, and attainment of serenity resulting from an apprehension of the ideal self. In other words, moral perfection is not achieved until the metaphysical nature of the self is apprehended. For this one has to recover from the lapse implied by alienation and realise the essential unity of all. The specific teaching of the *Upanisads* is that the highest good is not reached until one gets beyond all moral strife. The Upanisadic seers almost revel in describing the

peace and tranquility of this super-moral condition.

We have already referred to Śamkara's criticism of the Prabhākara deontology; and shall now only point to a few ethical instances which have accorded a high place to the cultivation of emotions. Let us first take the paradigmatically ethical philosophy of the Buddhists. The Eightfold Path furnished a continuous discipline for resolving the conflict of emotions, and thereby reforming the egoistic alienated personality of man. Repeated contemplation of what is true and good, training of the will and emotion accordingly, through steadfast determination and passionless behaviour, gradually achieve the harmonious personality in which thought and will and emotion are thoroughly purified in the light of truth. The import of the virtues, *sīlas*, is positive, not directed towards the curbing of emotions, which would make *karunā* impossible, but towards their purging. A passage from *Majjhima Nikāya* reads as follows : "our mind shall not waver, no vile speech will we utter, we will be tender and compassionate; loving in heart, void of secret malice we will be suffusing the whole world with the thought of love, far-reaching, grown great and beyond measure".

If feeling is used to mean the sense or feeling of value or interest which the conscious pursuit of an end implies, it too has a place in conduct. For example, in the *Gītā*, even the deeds performed in the spirit of disinterestedness have an end, viz. Sattva-suddhi, the cleansing of the heart or the purifying of the affections. It is said, *āptakāmasya ka sprhā*. But still it cannot

be regarded as divorced from feeling, for it is inspired by his equal love for all, or his interest in the whole. The activity of an *āptakāma*, is, in fact, the concrete expression of that love. *Vairāgya* does not accordingly mean the abolition of interests but only the extinction of narrow egoism. Again, to attain the ethical ideal it is not enough to dismiss self-interest, for the unselfishness which is conscious of itself is not the perfect form of it. The sense of duty must merge in love. Disinterested activity may be quite commendable but it cannot be regarded as the ultimate ideal – the internal constraint or strife within the self must be got over. The need for striving which may be felt in such activity is rather an indication that the goal has not been reached. To reach that goal which, according to an Indian thinker, is a state characterised by peace of spirit, the need for effort must wholly disappear. The moral agent must pass in it from a state of striving morality to that of the spontaneous expression of unique attitude of love.

A clarification is needed. Rabindranath allies himself to the moral tradition in which the attainment of the ethical ideal is dependent upon a cultivation of emotions. The ethical ideal is the apprehension of the ideal self beyond all moral and aesthetic categories. But on his avowed premise of *human reality*, he cannot agree that the ideal self is super-human and impersonal. He is under an obligation to vindicate the human self. The surplus self transcends the alienated ego, but nonetheless, it is a *person*. It is not an abnegation of all that is human. Impersonality cannot be the ideal for persons. "The

soul is great, but the self has to be crossed over in order to reach it. we do not attain our goal by destroying our path" (*Religion of Man*, p. 196). An "ideal of the utter extinction of the individual separateness" takes us to "the further shore of existence across humanity", "but there is a fulfilment in love within the range of our limitation which accepts all suffering and yet rises above them" (*Ibid*, p. 202-3). Rabindranath does not, then, place the ideal self "beyond all limits of personality, divested of all moral or aesthetic distinctions" (*Ibid*, p. 192). This does not mean that he denies the possibility of realising such "an impersonal infinity", he only says that it cannot be a human ideal, which must intensify our joy in human existence and our feeling of the worthwhileness of human life.

The very starting point of Rabindranath's ethics is the idea of the universality of the moral law and its inseparability from human nature. For him, we have already mentioned, the ethical imperative legislates for the whole of man, and adhering to the principles of harmony, he seeks to satisfy the rational as well as the emotional demands of human nature. Hence, he likes to treat ethical ideals in the context of the total requirements of man. He is at one with Kant in holding that morality is not something superadded to the other aspects of life. Moral discrimination is an integral part of man's natural equipment : hence the impossibility of amoralism. Our entry into the moral world "makes us conscious of our personalities as man" (*Personality*, p. 81). But morality, he holds, is not cold self-legislation, it necessitates a

cultivation of emotions. The idea is best understood in terms of a metaphor. Rabindranath likens the moral agent to a musician, who adjusts the strings of his lute. His freedom does not consist in loosening those strings, but rather in tightening them in accordance with the highest requirements of his art. Moral perfection lies neither in bondage of law nor in anarchy of emotions, but in self-control. "He who knows that joy and freedom express themselves in law has already transcended law" (Translated from the Bengali *Santiniketan*, XIV). And ethical fulfilment expresses itself in love, in which duty finds a new significance. "Compulsion is not indeed the final appeal to man, but joy is" (*Sādhanā*, p.96), says he, for "love is the perfection of consciousness" (*Ibid*, p. 88). As regards the nature and function of love as the ethical end he makes two statements : "love is most free at the same time most bound" and "It is the high function of love to welcome all limitations and to transcend them" (*Ibid*, p. 95). *Duty* and *Love* cannot be at variance with each other, because both are founded on freedom, the supra-natural, surplus realm of man's being. "Without (the) ego what is love ? And again, with only this ego how can love be possible ?" (*Ibid*, p. 95). Ethics is a creative middle path.

We may now consider the second point regarding the relation of ethics to aesthetics or art. For Kant, the aesthetic consciousness is characterised by *universality*, *necessity* and *disinterestedness* of feeling. According to him the aesthetic consciousness is differentiated from the moral one by its subjectivity. Two things strike us most in Kant's account. The

positive essence of the aesthetic consciousness is that it mediates between sense and reason. It is neither a clarified form of sense-gratification, nor a confused idea of perfection. It is a feeling of pleasure, which has no relation to practical interest, which depends on the purposiveness (a harmonious relation between our faculties of imagination and understanding) of a perceived concept, and lays claim to universality and necessity. But it remains all the time a pure feeling. The "judgement of taste" contributes in no way to cognition. It simply expresses a felt harmony in the play of our own powers on the occasion of a certain perception. How can a feeling that has universal validity remain subjective ? In a sense beauty *is* subjective, i.e., it exists in and for a percipient and not otherwise. But its subjectivity may not be a bar to its being objective in the sense of being, universality sharable. It seems that Kant says this in effect. For Kant, of course objectivity of a judgement depends on definite concepts. Rabindranath touches upon this problem at this point. He holds that the ideal of beauty has a universal perfection that cannot be questioned, because its appreciation "is to be fully met with in the mind of Man and is impeded only in some particular men". So "if there is no natural deficiency of the mind, everyone must appreciate it when with proper training the opposition of ignorance and unaccustomedness have been dispelled" (*Man*, p. 47). Hence, Rabindranath's *beauty*, like Kant's *good*, is always represented as object of a universal satisfaction. It may not be true that "The *beautiful* is that which pleases universally without a

concept" as Kant says. Kant is constrained to admit the possibility, nay, the necessity, of speaking of beauty as if it were a quality of the thing contemplated, as if it had an objective references, though he is emphatic on the point of the emancipation of the judgment of taste from scientific or moral concepts. Rabindranath says that "Beauty is no phantasy, it has the everlasting meaning of reality" (*Creative Unity*, p.15). Just as in moral action we assert our freedom, similarly in creative apprehension we assert our real surplus nature. It is a rationalistic fallacy to exclude the element of meaning, which is always conceptual, from the domain of beauty. Kant does not realize that meaning is *implicit* in the beautiful object and *immanent* in the work of art. Pure feeling is a theoretical fiction. Collingwood says that our feelings are "intellectual feelings", for we are intellectual beings as well. We have emotions which can only be felt by an intellectual being, and are in fact felt because we use our intellect in certain ways. "The poet", says Collingwood, "converts human experience not by first expurgating it, cutting out the intellectual elements and preserving the emotional, and then expressing this residue; but by fusing thought itself into emotion "thinking in a certain way and then expressing how it feels to think in that way" (*The Principles of Art*, p. 295).

Kant's notion of aesthetic delight is arid and inane. It is a satisfaction, he says, that springs from the perception of the harmony of the cognitive faculties in the aesthetic apprehension of the form of an object. It is formal and hollow,

and has no relation to the object, to the actual content of the beautiful in art. But Rabindranath discerns that the aesthetic experience is an apprehension of the qualitative in art and in nature and is replete with appropriate emotion, as Moore noticed (*Principia Ethica*, p.190). This emotion cannot be separated from the quality of the object apprehended. It pervades the entire aesthetic experience. For Rabindranath, we have seen, the reality manifests itself in the emotional background of man's life. Art is "an experience through emotions", "we feel ourselves in a special field of realization" (*Religion of Man*, p. 130).

The aesthetic ideal is *sāhitya* or realising ourselves in the other. Aesthetic vision enables us to transcend our alienation from others, because it makes us creative, and as creators we enter a nonsolipsistic universe. In Kant the universality of aesthetic consciousness is based on the universality of the subjective conditions for judging objects. Rabindranath's principle of harmony puts him in a better position. Subjectivity is a truth of art --or of all genuine value-experiences. Only for a person does the idea of creative unity - Rabindranath's aesthetic ideal - possesses significance. It is to be verified in the experience of a real individual. But since the real individual is a *personality*, a self-transcending object, the universality of the aesthetic experience must needs be construed in terms of sense, emotion and thought. The principle of harmony, having one of its centres in the creative person, makes it imperative that aesthetic

universality is to be achieved by spiritual effort. Aesthetic universality, for Rabindranath, is universality of depth, of value and insight. And this transition from contemplation to active or creative process for achieving the contemplated ideal makes for a meeting of ethics and aesthetics. On the other hand, Kant's universality of the aesthetic judgment is formal and *a priori*, and like the theoretical cognition of objects, is mechanical and automatically completed behind the curtains. It is not postulated but merely imputed to every one. Kant is actually fighting against two enemies – the rationalists and the empiricists. The rationalists like Leibnitz, Wolff and others considered the beautiful as a confused perfection, i.e., perfection apprehended through the senses and art as beauty superimposed upon a concept. Kant directs his view that "the beautiful is that which apart from concepts is represented as the object of a universal satisfaction" – against the rationalists. Again, his thesis that the judgment of Taste is disinterested is directed against the empiricists like Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Hume – all of whom emphasized the primacy of sense – quality in the aesthetic experience. In opposition to the sensationalists Kant drew a sharp line of demarcation between *sensation* and *feeling*. He defines *sensation* as an objective representation of sense, and *feeling* as that which remains subjective and does not represent an object. *Feeling* is disinterested, because *interest* is pleasure obtained from the ideas of the existence of an object. Aesthetic feeling *pleases*, it does not *gratify*. Rabindranath is in basic agreement

with Kant on this point. "A real artist must be a seeker, an ascetic", or "beauty makes for restraint" (*Art etc.*, p.3). Again, "it is this very austerity..... which fills the heart of cognoscenti with a profound joy..... mere eyesight is not enough, it must be reinforced by the insight of the mind in order that beauty may lie revealed in its nobility" (*Ibid.*, p.6). Rabindranath differs from Kant in not divorcing sensation altogether, and instead of a passive satisfaction, evokes the moral endeavour to transcend the gross hedonic factors in aesthetic experience from all content and meaning and transforms it into a no-man's land of detached and abstract feeling. St. Thomas said, "even sense is a sort of reason", which is indispensable to the apprehension of beauty. The beautiful evokes the harmony, not only of imagination and the understanding (as Kant says) but also of the sense, the emotions, and the mind. Aesthetic experience relates to the "complete" man. It is neither a formal abstraction nor is it a delicately sensitized awareness.

Kant's emphasis on the subjectivity of experience results from his view that free beauty "presupposes no concept of what the object ought to be". By concept he means any purpose, except the general concept of the finality of nature. Lotze has made many significant comments on Kant's four moments of the beautiful. He remarks that Kant's second moment concerning the non-conceptual nature of the beautiful provides no objective rule for aesthetic and for art. The subjectivity of the aesthetic judgment, again, Lotze senses, would seem to endanger

the ontological status of the beautiful, and would lead to the doctrine that the truly beautiful is the "I", the subject. It is a process of self-idolisation. Rabindranath would say much in consonance with Lotze. The ground of beauty lies neither merely and wholly in us nor in the object. It consists in the harmony thereof. There is no beauty except in the spiritual feeling of joy which is non-reflexive and transitive in nature. "What is art ? It is the response of man's creative soul to the call of the Real" (*Religion of Man*, p.139). And "the Real is joy" (*Ibid.*, p.183). Beauty, like virtue and love, attains value only when man feels or exercises it. Virtue and love are acts of the spirit. The mere harmony of the mental powers is not, as for Kant, the beautiful thing. To say that it is to misconstrue the true nature of the its subjectivity. The feeling of the beautiful is a longing for and an admiration of what we ourselves are not yet. What we enjoy in the feeling of the beautiful is the union of the world and man, is the sense of the harmony of the world. "Our feeling of joy, our imagination, realizes a profound organic unity with the universe comprehended by the human mind" (*Ibid.*, p.102). Rabindranath's view of art is not exhausted in its passive contemplative quality. Men are by nature, he says, "designers of paradise", who create beauty "for the objective realization of our vision of the spiritually perfect" (*Ibid.*, p. 126-7). Such aesthetic experience involves, as Kant failed to realize, the totality of personality sense, emotion, imagination, intellect – and is consummated in clarity, comprehension and imaginative sympathetic vision. For much the

same reason Rabindranath accords to the consciousness of the beautiful the "primacy" that Kant did to the *practical reason*. To break the continuity in man from the natural to the ideal, and between him and his environment is to shatter the unity of the self with its emotions, cognitive, and volitional phases and to demolish the possibility of interaction between man and his world.

Kant says "the judgment of taste, by which an object is declared to be beautiful under the condition of a definite concept, is not pure". This follows from his notion of "the form of the purposiveness of an object". Hence aesthetic experience offers no visions, does not reveal reality. It does not even clarify consciousness. It merely indicates the purposive attitude of the cognitive faculties to presentations. But artistic beauty and truth are achieved when content and form, experience and expression, idea and image, are harmoniously blended in the total aesthetic structure. Music, which is, for Rabindranath, the purest of arts, reveals man. What beauty can be free than the most serious beauty that reveals reality and clarifies experience ? Human reality is a perfection that *ought* to be realized. It is implied by the concept of man. But such a notion implying an *ought* will be denied entry into Kant's temple of *free* beauty, where, as it is sometimes suggested, wall-paper will be considered more pure aesthetically. This irony may not be underserved for the enunciation of the most consistent, the most extreme, and the most dialectically impeccable formalism by Kant in the history of aesthetics. Is it not an appalling price

for the liberation of beauty from its bondage to the concept ? According to Rabindranath art is a concrete projection of experience, an interpretation of reality; as such, it extends and intensifies the field of human consciousness : "building of man's true world, - the living world of truth and beauty, - is the function of Art" (*Personality*, p. 31).

Kant is averse to any philosophy of art which acknowledges an expression of genuine emotion and a communication of authentic experience. But art, Rabindranath would affirm, in contradiction to Kant's view..... is the communication of unimpeachable experience. Art has an ontological convincingness, fullness of being.

But Kant's greatest achievement is in pointing out the disinterestedness of the judgment of taste. It is the *sine qua non* of aesthetic consciousness, and as indicating the liberation from interest, it asserts the freedom of the aesthetic self. The freedom of the beautiful from conceptual determination, it may be suggested, refers to Ideas of Reason, the source of metaphysical regulative images. These two points, taken together, explain how beauty can become a symbol of the good. It is precisely because the aesthetic consciousness is free that it attains moral value and discloses the profound import of beauty. The second great contribution of Kant is to have made the principle of harmony the root-thought of his philosophy of art and beauty. In both these ideas Rabindranath is closest to Kant.

In India the kinship between ethics and aesthetics had
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been acknowledged by various schools of thoughts, and both ethics and aesthetics are related to the ideal of life, i.e., the realization of freedom – the achievement of a life of harmony not through the extinguishing of interests but by an expansion of them – not through repressing natural impulses but by purifying them. It is a mode of living characterised by the transcendence of egoism and an equal love of all. For the realization of this ideal the training of feelings is a necessary step. The self of man, the ideal self is looked upon as bliss and it represents the inner harmony of man's personality. Art comes, then, to be viewed as possessing a double function, both giving aesthetic delight testifying to the realisation of the ideal self, and contributing towards the refinement of character leading to such a realisation. Aesthetic delight connotes the realisation of harmony between the world-nature and other selves. This harmony is a matter of immediate realisation, because it is bliss, and as such it cannot be mediated. Harmony or bliss of the ideal self constitutes beauty. Hence beauty, in its perfection, is identical with reality revealed to the knower. Delight means a transcendence of self-interest, and because it is harmony, egoism is alienation. Then freedom is the highest value. Art provides us with a foretaste of it.

The nature of the aesthetic attitude is one of the samvit, i.e., contemplation dissociated from all practical interest. Art produces a condition of pure pleasure, by inducing a mood of detachment, and transcending the alienated self immersed in practical stresses. This view of art holds that art

is an essential human concern - only in a narrow sense is it a specialist's business. If man is in his quest of the real - his ideal self - then art serves as a pathway to reality. The aim of art is not to discover the nature of reality but to secure for us the highest experience of life - the realisation of harmony, which is bliss. It is self-realisation, for the ideal self is the principle of freedom - unity of all existence, and also value-realisation, for the self is the ultimate value. Art experience then has two characteristics : (a) it is unselfish, spontaneous and completely disinterested, and (b) it yields pure joy, and thereby stands higher than the pleasures of everyday life. On account of these excellences, art experience is regarded as identifiable with the ultimate good of life.

The foregoing account is a generalised sketch of the commonly accepted tenets of the Indian view in the form it is acceptable to Rabindranath. In keeping with his own philosophical premises he can not accept the *Sāmkhya* aesthetic in all its detail. For example, he would not say that aesthetic delight is "impersonal" in character, because the *Sāmkhya* thinker differentiates between the aesthetic attitude and the spiritual attitude. The latter is neither pleasurable nor painful, while the former produces a condition of pure pleasure. He is closer to the *Vedānta* aesthetics in endorsing the blissful nature of the ideal self, the view that everything is beautiful, and its implication that the saint is the greatest artist, for everything delights him. He avows also the *Vedāntic* doctrine that the beauty of nature symbolizes the inner harmony of the universe and

we could have an access to it if only we would transcend the practical (not in the Kantian sense, but signifying utilitarian, individualistic and hedonistic) attitude of everyday life. Rabindranath agrees further with the *vedāntin* philosopher in holding that aesthetic contemplation stands for the totality of experience and the feeling of pleasure is there only as an aspect of that experience. Again, he accepts the *vedāntic* thesis that art-valuation is an active process marked by disinterestedness and sympathetic insight. The uniqueness of attitude is comparable to the *regulative* ideal state of the *jivanmukta* or one who has realised the goal of life. But he cannot incorporate the *impersonal* character of the *vedāntic* aesthetic experience, for art can have relevance only to a *person* experiencing it. For Rabindranath art-experience has its locus in the personality of man, it is disinterested but not impersonal. The only sense in which Rabindranath would understand the impersonality of aesthetic delight is that it transcends itself and is directed towards an other, but never in the sense that is abnegates personality. Another difference between him and the *vedāntic* thinker is that he does not restrict the domain of aesthetic consciousness to that of consciously produced works of artists. It is a truth of his philosophical anthropology that man is by nature an artist, and the aesthetic vision is not confined to a situation of encountering a certain set of objects, like poems, dramas etc. It is essential to the proper perspective for viewing life as a whole. It is the supra-natural or spiritual *attitude* that we

ought consciously to adopt for the value of the experience itself. For the *Vedāntic*, art-experience is comparable to the ideal state, a *foretaste* of it, for Rabindranath it is the ideal state, the assertion of freedom, a disinterested and blissful experience, creatively transcending alienation. It is *svarupasthiti* in the world of personality. Some writers hold that art-experience, worth the name, can never be attained in actual life, and according to others it can be attained only when self-perfection is achieved. Rabindranath steers a course between the two views. For him, art-experience is a regulative ideal – which can be actively approximated by our consciously adopting the supra-natural attitude towards our experiences of life. It is possible experience because man is a self-transcending subject. The ideal state of man is *a priori*-ly entertained, and *a posteriori*-ly enjoyed. Man is “not imperfect, but incomplete” (*Religion of Man*, p.59). As regards the continuous revelation of man, he writes, “The truth of man is in the heart of eternity, the fact of it being evolved through endless ages”, or, it is “realizing itself in history through the obstructions of limits” (*Ibid*, p. 21 & 30).

For Rabindranath beauty is not mere symbol of morality, it is the very soul of it. This view follows from the wide significance he attaches to aesthetic consciousness as a spiritual attitude, together with his concept of man. He seems to draw upon the *Upanisads*, though not according to any particular school of interpretation : he approaches it in the

light of his own philosophical position. In an essay entitled "Realisation in Action" in *Sādhanā*, he repudiates the doctrine which separates joy from law, the beautiful from the good. An action in itself is morally unmeritorious unless it issues from man's assertions of freedom. Rigorism often seems to shift the emphasis to imperatives away from freedom, which alone can be the supreme principle of morality. An undue emphasis on imperatives may result in an ethic of conservatism. We have already ventured a teleological view of Kant's ethical position, which may here be recalled. Rabindranath is a critic of conservatism in ethics.

Only if an action is regarded as the mode of man's assertion of his supra-natural self, do his freedom, and the decisional character of his actions become intelligible. The answer to the question, "why should I be moral?", is that man ought to realise his true self. As a moral agent man asserts his real being, not his active being alone, for he also expresses his creative delight in the mode of the assertion. "It is only those who have known that joy expresses itself through law who have learnt to transcend the law. Not that the bonds of law have ceased to exist for them - but", Rabindranath says "that the bonds have become to them as the form of freedom incarnate" (*Sādhanā*, p. 101). The "soul finds its freedom in action", that is, actions actualise its possibilities creatively. "The more man acts and makes actual what was latent in him, the nearer does he bring the distant Yet-to-be (man's ideal surplus self). In that actualisation man is ever making himself more and yet

more distinct, and seeing himself clearly under newer and newer aspects in the midst of his varied activities..... . This vision makes for freedom" (*Ibid*, p. 102). The truth of man as a self-transcending subject comprises the good and the beautiful, "both together at the same time as is the song and the act of singing" (*Ibid*, p. 107). There is a "naturalness" in the co-implication of man's feeling of disinterested delight and the self-legislation of his free self. Rabindranath says, "It is because this naturalness has not yet been born in us that we tend to divide joy from work" (*Ibid*, p. 110). A Kantian notion of passive contemplative aesthetic delight fails itself. Joy as "a thing apart from action", he says, is a "feeble fancy", it is, thin, formless and unsustained.

The traditional Indian view concerning the difference between art and morality is different from Kant's. According to it, ethics is essentially active, and activity is, from the nature of the case, wholly excluded from art experience. The ethical attitude is oriented towards some purpose, it is a conscious pursuit of values, *purusarthas* or *dharma*. As distinguished from *dharma*, *moksa* is a value, or a value-embodying experience sought for its own sake. Ethics as *dharma* is instrumental to the attainment of *moksa*. Now, art-experience is said to give us a foretaste of *moksa*, and as such, its sole purpose is the transcendence of all purpose. Art experience is *moksa*-experience. This distinction of course would not be accepted by Rabindranath, as it has by now been evident. For him, art-experience is a species of aesthetic experience, and

the former derives its value from the latter, which is more basic as it signifies our encounter with reality in the world of persons. Again, he does not visualise aesthetic experience as a passive contemplation of the beautiful ; it is "actively expressive", creative, and as the assertion of man's freedom, it cannot be anything but an action of moral merit. In a sense, aesthetic and ethics are *dharma*s, i.e., instrumental to his sense of *moksa*, realisation of harmony. Since, for him, the process and the realisation are not two distinct states, we notice a dynamic immanence, *moksa* in *dharma*. But, as he holds that joy and law are not separate truths of existence, the ethical and the aesthetic attitudes cannot be ideally separated, they form a harmony.

Disinterestedness is the key. It is the very root of all ethical and aesthetic attitudes. It is the other name of freedom, which asserts itself spontaneously from the core of man's being – his surplus self. Art experience has value only as objectifying this freedom, which is disinterestedly enjoyed. Art is man's self-objectification, imaging his freedom by its freedom. Art reveals man only because man reveals himself in art as much as he does it elsewhere. The difference is in the products, not in the attitude which brings them forth.

Disinterestedness means the conquest of the lower self by the higher, by a cultivation of the emotions. It is itself an aesthetic achievement. Goodness is the beauty of action. This fact can be illustrated by an example from Indian philosophy. In

the *Mahayāna sūtras* the names given to the different stages in the Bodhisattva's career are aesthetic in their suggestion, though the stages themselves are described in terms of ethical realisation. For instance, the first stage, or *bhūmi* is called *parāmuditābhūmi* or the stages of joyfulness; the second is called *vimalā* or pure compassion; the third is *prabhākari* or the shining state and so on. Whoever has seen the Bodhisattva as depicted in the Ajanta frescos will realize that he stands at once as an ethico-aesthetic paradigm - an embodiment of human value-aspirations.

Transcendence of alienation is, then, the ethico-aesthetic ideal for Rabindranath. The self does not stand alone. It must realize itself in others - which is love, and since the real self is freedom, love is freedom realised. Ethics and aesthetics as separately understood are only partial and provisional manifestations of the ultimate spiritual ideal, which can only progressively be realised in life. The two attitudes, the ethical and the aesthetic, are essentially the same. When Rabindranath speaks of the primacy of the aesthetic attitude, or the aesthetic man as the complete man, what he opposes it to is activistic morality, not the idea of the good as delineated in the above paragraphs.

Freedom is the supra-natural attitude, consisting in the capacity to rise above selfish motives, the pleasures of the alienated existence. Art and moral action involve a criticism of life as it is commonly lived in the natural or the infra-surplus

mode of being. It is a deviation from reality. In the life of his surplus self, man by asserting his freedom in the ethico-aesthetic attitude, combines joy with law and transcends alienation. Life is a spiritual adventure, summoning all of man's resources for designing his own paradise, where he encounters his own reality, which comprehends the world of personality.

We may now sum up the foregoing discussion. Rabindranath invokes imagination or knowledge by feeling in connection with our knowledge of persons, who constitute the domain of morality. We compared Rabindranath's position with Kant's. The relevance of the comparison is two-fold.

In the first place, Rabindranath shares Kant's opinion that our knowledge by feeling of ourselves as persons must fall outside theoretical knowledge. The "moral law within" must be saved from the encroachment of the vastness of space known in categorical cognition. Kant's problem was to make room for ethics by a theory of scientific knowledge. His *practical reason* is a subjective method for grasping the human reality. Rabindranath does much the same job. For him, the imagination is the faculty of knowing *persons*. It resembles Buber's I - thou attitude, as distinguished from the I - It attitude of science, which is always mediate and indirect, dealing with objects in terms of the categories and relations.

Science is de-humanized knowledge. Science

investigates man not as a whole, but in selective aspects and as part of the natural world : the scientific method is the I-it, or the subject-object way of knowing. It reduces the I into the abstract knowing subject, the logical self (Wittgenstein said that the "philosophical self" does not exist) and the It into the passive and abstract object of thought. Just for these reasons the scientific method is not qualified to discover the wholeness of man – the personal man. In Kant the subjective method of the practical reason for grasping human reality and the objective methods of the pure reason can exist side by side in complete independence. Rabindranath's concept of mind as "the principle of creation" does not always allow the independence to stand unimpaired. In spite of this ambivalent attitude, it remains certain that he recognizes two domains, that of science and that of personality. The same world of personality may well extend to that of science as well in response to man's spiritual demands. Human responsibility has a suzerainty over science.

With regard to Kant's account of our moral life, Rabindranath seems to elaborate and develop the final version of the categorical imperative. Kant admits only one feeling as truly moral, that is, respect for the moral law. But the feeling of respect for the moral law need not exclude love. The Buddha's emphasis on *dhamma* (the moral law) does not expel *Karuna*. Respect must arouse our inner participation, and it cannot be anything other than respect for the humanity in each of us. It must appeal to a potentiality of our nature – our ideal self, the Man, in us, to transcend the gravitational pull of our lower,

alienated indulgent selves. It is only in this way that the apparently stern categorical imperative can come to life, that it can be experienced. The final version of the categorical imperative is the starting point of Rabindranath's views, to fill the gaps left by Kant and to prevent misleading implications of rigorism. He does not mention Kant by his name, though he uses Kant's vocabulary and in his own tradition there was for consideration the Kantian-looking Prabhākara view.

Kant's respect for the moral law is really what Rabindranath would call "man's reverential loyalty" to his own ideal universal self. A commandment, if it is moral, must make us capable of love. If the feeling of respect is meant to arouse our inner participation, it alone does not go far enough. There are many feelings which have to be overcome (such as hatred) or disciplined (such as joy) or awakened (the right kind of love). This is what is meant by a cultivation of the emotions, which has received significant attention in India. Respect is more closely connected with an intellectual approach than are other feelings. But it cannot produce on its own the full involvement which devotion to a moral cause requires. Kant's distrust of feeling had the historical need to fight the rise of sentimentality. But he distrusts feelings too much, he fears that they are - with the exception of respect - unreliable and misleading and should therefore be excluded altogether.

Rabindranath agrees that the categorical imperative provides us with an excellent criterion for distinguishing

between justifiable and false convictions as to what we ought to do, but says that it does not awaken that immediate response of our potential ethical self which could by itself lead to a moral action, as can the commandment to love. Kant shows the reasonable aspects of morality, but only makes a beginning as regards bringing it to life.

The rejection of any reference to man's nature, as Kant proposed, excludes the ethical self, and this makes any response to the moral law difficult to understand. "All moral philosophy rests wholly on its pure part. When applied to man, it does not borrow the least from the knowledge of man himself (anthropology), but gives laws *a priori* to him as a rational being". Kant takes a double stand, namely, he holds that the moral law precedes existence, and together with it there is a radical rejection of inclinations, which is a consequence of the exclusion of man's nature. Rabindranath endorses the precedence of the moral ought to existence, but the moral imperative, he holds, must legislate for the "whole" of man. Further, he would agree with Kant that inclinations tend to fluctuate, and may thus be unreliable, and this is the reason why ethics has to be developed. If our inclinations contradict the demands of the moral law, they should be suppressed, and even if the demands of duty and those of inclination coincide, the latter being changeable, are insufficient to ensure that we behave morally. But does it apply to love ? Love has to transcend the especial inclination we feel towards people we like, and yet must involve our whole being and cannot be separated from inclination. *Love*,

as Rabindranath employs the word, includes our inclinations and transforms them.

Kant narrows the reality of the human person to morality only, and morality to its reasonable aspect. His account of *man* lacks the fullness of the human person. He seems to supplement this gap in an external way. He tries to prove that, in order to make sense, morality makes certain metaphysical assumptions necessary. The metaphysical assumptions are stated as *postulates*, they cannot themselves be known. Rabindranath is in agreement with Kant that the conditions of freedom cannot be understood in terms of the world of sense-perceptions. But Rabindranath argues that freedom affects our whole personality, including all our senses, feelings, urges and thoughts, and all our relationships to other persons and to objects. It cannot be merely "intelligible" as Kant suggests, and must be understandable in terms of human reality in its entirety. Kant's almost explicit claim that freedom belongs to another world – cannot be reconciled with Rabindranath's concept of "Man's universe" or the world of personality. Any suggestion of a double-decker universe would be unacceptable to him. It is true that Rabindranath speaks of our "second birth" in the "extra-natural world" (*Personality*, p.81 also *Man*, p.13), but his intention is never like that of one who denies the reality of the world in which we ordinarily live. Rabindranath makes it amply clear. The "extra-natural world" is "the moral world" or "the region of what ought to be". The "moral world" is the world of humanity where we live and move and have our being in the universal man. In the moral world, man is engaged in a "flight

with himself" says Rabindranath, and here man "has to turn his own passions and desires from tyranny into obedience" (*Personality*, p.81). According to him we become aware of this realm in our will, by the exercise of imagination, the subjective method for grasping our human reality as persons: "the dualism of the animal life and the moral makes us conscious of our personality as man" (*Ibid*). "what the intellect is in the world of Nature our will is in the moral world" (*Ibid*, p.82). The moral world is the domain of "inner freedom" which is the transcendence of alienation, "from the narrowness of self-desire". It is greater than the field of man's ego, "and yet intimately related to him" (*Man*, p.12). The moral world points to the "basic duality in man's being". Similarly, with imagination the world known by science is not merely *identified* with a categorical scheme, but *recognised* "as a habitation of man's spirit" (*Creative Unity*, p. 27).

Now once freedom becomes directly real to us, it is one of our richest and most significant experiences, so that we cannot help becoming involved in its demands. There are, of course, different degrees of freedom; we may take it for granted, without making it fully conscious; or we may deny it and believe in determinism, though even the consciousness of freedom does not entirely disappear, for we constantly assure that we are able to cause actions. Every endeavour presupposes freedom, whether it aims at material goods or scientific achievements or ideals; but none of these endeavours need necessarily be accompanied by a conscious realization of freedom. Rabindranath, like Kant, holds

that it is the moral law which forces us to become fully aware of freedom. When we realize that the moral law means that we are able to do what we ought to do, we can no longer escape the knowledge that we can and should use that freedom which the moral law discloses. Thus our whole being and not only reason has become involved. We are no longer content to aim for, affluence and a comfortable life, nor to concentrate on intellectual endeavours alone nor to pursue other ideas or ideals which do not directly appeal to our freedom; we also want both to exercise our moral freedom and to live according to the good. We feel the urge to transform and fulfil ourselves by making our spiritual potentialities actual within and in the face of the world.

Kant's distrust of feelings has other consequences. He does not base ethics on values as Rabindranath does. Our knowledge of value is ultimately based on feeling, especially of the good and the beautiful. No definition of the good can really convey what it is or what it means unless we have actually experienced and felt it. Just as the rules of prosody do not entail the beauty of a poem, similarly the rules of conduct do not amount to goodness. The kind of feeling on which the good is based is obviously something very different and needs to be distinguished from the kinds of feelings which are awakened by particular occasions, such as the pleasure which arises when our inclinations are satisfied or the disappointment we feel when they are not satisfied. All these feelings are not conducive to knowledge, they merely accompany action and thought and can be misleading. Kant's example of the success of a wicked lie is very telling in

this context. But there is also the other kind of feeling which gives us knowledge of the good and the beautiful or the truth of human reality and which could be called, as Rabindranath calls it, feeling as an organ of knowledge – the imagination. Feeling as an organ of knowledge is different from sentimentality, which leads to our capacity for feeling becoming weak and sterile; weak because we must not permit any experience to become strong enough to control the feeling, and sterile because, if we want to enjoy the feeling we know, we cannot permit our experience to develop it further; it is this imposition of limits which gives the wrong impression that we are confronted with something ultimate. This state describes the pleasures of alienation, the states of mind in which we confine our experience to purely subjective values and this prevents feeling from becoming an organ of knowledge.

But if the multiplicity and diversity of such feelings is not suppressed, we can learn to feel in terms of the object and to increase the richness of feelings. If we do not allow other feelings to be suppressed by a dominant feeling, we can learn to discriminate and discover a different kind of feeling which is conducive to knowledge. Any false absolutism can be transcended because the feeling which is an organ of knowledge can be heeded as well. To develop feelings instead of falling under the spell of any one of them can be helpful because the wealth of different single emotions is very great indeed. It is the wealth which matters, because it leads to the interaction between thinking and feeling. Since there is hardly any impression

or experience – hardly any thought – which is not connected with feelings, every feeling, so long as sentimentality (1) is avoided, tries to force its way into consciousness. If we feel, feeling directs our attention, and we usually want to know what makes us feel as we do. Thinking makes us aware that feeling reacts to evaluation, and different kinds of values. And thus we also become aware of the highest of human values and of that feeling which enables us to know them. Love is one such feeling – the only one for Rabindranath, which can help us to acquire a knowledge of harmony, the highest human value. It can be understood with the help of feeling as an organ of knowledge, and though it can be elaborated by thinking, its knowledge is finally based on feeling. Goodness is the active (creative) achievement of harmony – transcendence of the alienated ego by love. If rational thought alone is employed, knowledge of the good can be quite unreliable, it is reduced to a mere collection of rules and these can harden into rigid laws which may even produce cruelty. The feeling of love is not simply inward-looking, it is awakened by the impact of the world of persons. Feeling as an organ of knowledge never trespasses against the demand of the final version of Kant's categorical imperative – that the individual should be respected and treated as an end in himself. Rabindranath writes, "man's deepest joy is in growing greater and greater by more and more with the all.....only by discovering the law and following it, do we become great, do we realize the universal". But "this law is

(1) By 'sentimentality' I mean that which inclines a person to adopt conventional attitudes, without fully relating his attitude to the particular, individual experience or situation.

not something apart from us; it is our own. It will thwart us where we are small – but it will help us where we are in union with all (*Sādhanā*, p. 61).

The surplus self is the valuational self, Rabindranath speaks of our having the sense of goodness – the moral faculty, coming out of a “truer view of our life”. He recognises the nature of man as having a sense of values, ‘Man’ is an axiological notion. Values denote a higher dimension of man. A value expresses the significance, great or small which man ascribes to matters related to a particular activity or experience or to his life in general and thus provides himself with guidance for the behaviour. Values require our personal participation to come into being. Any action directed towards bringing a value into being is based on freedom, and thus, is creative. For this reason, values are not expressed by factual statements, but by emotive judgments. Values are canons of judgment. Rabindranath employs values to bridge the gulf between statements about what exists and those about what we ought to do or the logical separation of existence from obligation. Kant touches upon the problem of values, but does not deal with it directly, except in his *Critique of Judgement*. There he only takes it up with regard to teleology (which belongs to the realm of pure reason), and to aesthetics. For Rabindranath, ethics, as he conceives it includes values, and this inclusion, he seems to show, can close the gap.

For Rabindranath, values refer to something which is objective. The fact that our judgments can be mistaken makes this

clear. For Rabindranath's values are values of Reality, i.e., they define the concept of man, or they belong to the world of *personality*, and as *persons* we are enjoyed to realize them. Values are the promptings felt by our surplus universal self, and hence they are non-private. Value-language can have significance only if it is welded in a non-solipsistic manner. Privacy of value-language would make any reference to embodiments of value impossible, and values have to be embodied to be experienced. We cannot know goodness or beauty in the abstract. In short, values are not just matters of taste, potentially different for each individual. Objectivity of values is implied by the significance of the evaluative discourse.

Sometimes, the objectivity of values is misunderstood. We tend to identify an embodiment of a value with the value itself. The misunderstanding is due to the fact that values do not exist independently in the same way as things. Since they have to be embodied, we often aim at the embodiment and not at the value. We only become aware of the value when we judge what we have done. But the embodiment itself is not the value nor does it form part of it. An embodiment of a value must be judged if the value is to be recognised. Values are canons of judgment : through this application we become aware of certain qualities in the embodying action or object, and these, in their turn, produce in us an appreciation of the values which are embodied. The values have to be distinguished from their embodiments.

Now values can reconcile statements referring to what exists with those referring to that we ought to do. How ? Values,

when accepted, make potentialities actual and give rise to actions, so that what they entail becomes real by being lived. Their human reality is confirmed by the resistance which we encounter when making wrong judgments. The reality of the value of harmony is attested by our loss of the meaning of life in alienation, unless of course, the feeling of loneliness becomes over-ruling and displaces the feeling of love or union. When a value is experienced as positive this makes it desirable and thus raises the demand that it should be made real. These demands become obligations when we experience the reality a value acquires once it has led to an action. Rabindranath thinks that the notion of value, excellence or goodness carries within it the notion of worthwhileness, passing into obligation. In recognizing anything as excellent we recognize it as worth being, worth having, worth doing, as imposing an imperative of action. Values are the "creative ideals" and Rabindranath characterizes a value as a "creative unity". Man's supra-natural self is a value, which demands actualization of its potential regulative image. In the process of actualization, it becomes real. Freedom or harmony is the value which obliges us to transcend alienation. The process of dealienation is a process of carrying out the obligations that follow from our recognition of values as creative unities, the highest of which is love or freedom of harmony. The three are one and represent the human reality. Rabindranath says, "reality is a creation, and human reality has to be called forth from its obscure depth by man's faith which is creative" (*Creative Unity*, p. 25).

The values of human reality are the values of freedom,
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they ensure the possibility of transcending alienation. The objective universality of the higher values of goodness etc. are effective in teasing us out of our alienated security of the life of the ego. The values of alienation are private and refer to qualities which make things agreeable or disagreeable, to likes dislikes – matters of individual taste. To a certain extent happiness also belongs to the values, but not entirely. Since any value-judgment requires personal participation, the private values accompany all value-judgments, any experience of a value is either agreeable or disagreeable. It is necessary to know these values because they tend to blur the boundaries between the different values. The private values can be dismissed only when we come to distinguish and discriminate between the objectively universal and private values.

Private values give rise to an undifferentiated kind of pleasure and pain, which makes one concentrate on one's own feeling. But in the case of higher values – those of human reality, we are drawn away from our own egos and become concerned with the values themselves. If we direct attention toward our private feelings, that is non-transitive ones, clear evaluation will become difficult, for neither pleasure nor pain (that is, neither liking nor disliking) is a criterion. The higher value, for instance, the good, may demand the foregoing of certain pleasure, such as those of a comfortable life etc. Thus, the private values of alienation, since they focus our attention on pleasure and pain, have to be transcended, though they must be known in order to avoid falsification of the higher values, "in

sin man takes part with the finite against the infinite that is in him. It is the defeat of his soul by his self..... In sin we lust after pleasures, not because they are truly desirable, but because the red light of our passion makes them appear desirable; we long for things not because they are great in themselves, but because our greed exaggerates them and makes them appear great. These exaggerations, these falsifications of the perspective of things, break the harmony of our life..... we lose the true standard of values" (*Sādhanā*, p. 32).

Rabindranath's values of Reality are values which reveal man's image of perfection, while the private values obscure this image. "Man's cry is to reach his fullest expression" (*Ibid*, p.33). But man is free as a self-transcending subject, and Rabindranath, in speaking about man's freedom, says that in the "region of will anarchy is permitted". He puts it as follows : "it is the self of man which the great King of the universe has not shadowed with the throne - he has left it free in his self he (man) is free to disown him (King of the universe)..... It is the man's self from which God has withdrawn his commands..... His armed force, the law of nature, stand outside its gate"..... (*Ibid*, pp. 34-35). Here we come upon the problem of values and freedom. If we are free, we must obviously be free to choose, but we can either make a choice which sets us free or a wrong choice which enslaves us. Freedom means acting in full accordance with our true nature. But what is our true nature ? This question can only be answered through the experience of the values we choose. If we choose, for instance, money or power this

kind of choice enslave us again, because it forces us into actions which do not allow us fully to realize what we, as human persons, potentially are. The stronger the desires for private values become, the more impossible it is for us to give expression, except in a rudimentary manner, to our true nature. Freedom as licence enslaves us to the addictions which we allow ourselves to indulge. Again, if we do not exercise our freedom to choose, we shall then be entirely subject to our instinctive urges. We can become free only by acting in such a way that the positive potentialities of our human reality are made actual, for thus we are set free. We must not only choose, but also choose correctly. In other words, there is both a "freedom from" and a "freedom to". Freedom is not only negative, but also positive - not only that the bounds of necessity, however powerful they are, cannot bind us completely, but also that we should make proper use of our freedom.

values enforce choice, and thereby remove all doubts about freedom of will. Freedom is more than mere denial of determinism, it opens the way to great richness of experience. The two forms of freedom, *from* and *to* - may be renamed as *choice of freedom* and *freedom of choice*. The choice of freedom makes sure that freedom can really be exercised. In the sphere of ethics, choice of freedom is based on the acceptance of the moral law, the ethical self etc. we have to face our immoral potentialities, because we must struggle against them, and therefore no part of our being is disregarded. Rabindranath writes, "Man's freedom is never in being saved troubles..... (*Ibid*,

p.53). To make freedom real, we must therefore not only choose those values which give the right content to freedom, by enabling us to give the fullest expression which we can possibly achieve to our surplus self. This choice of freedom constitutes a man's *mumukṣatva*.

Rabindranath holds that the goodness of a good action is in the action as a whole, it is not in its motive alone nor in its pleasant consequences alone. It lies in its creativeness. There is always something unique and irreplaceable about a good action, because it is an aesthetic whole. An intense interest in persons keeps morality from becoming conventional. This position is comparable to Bergson's "open morality", and is even more similar to Berdyaev's *creative morality*. Whether we accept the standard as law or the standard as an end to which good conduct leads. Prabhākara's or Kumārila's view of dharma, man is still a slave of rule. The rule in the first case is fixed by some outside authority if Kant's categorical imperative is interpreted as an *ethical* rule, and not as a meta-ethical criterion for judging actions. In this sense his *freedom* is what may be called "the supreme principle". His ground work could not have been written by Prabhākara, but his *Critique of Practical Reason*, in some of its implications could have been, the rule in the second case is fixed by the end at which man aims (*mokṣa* with a great ascetic emphasis). It is enslavement to rule that leads to what Rabindranath called "the intolerant arrogance of goodness" and Berdyaev named "the intolerable dullness of virtue". But creativeness co-implies freedom, and the unique personality of

man is the highest value in good life. Moral action is not merely a means for the triumph of a universal law. Real life is the meeting of persons in a creative unity, each confirming the other. And the final end of good conduct, as distinct from the conduct itself, is judged in terms of beauty, because beauty is the image of freedom. Freedom is harmony, while its opposite is alienation, the non-unique, obscure, isolated self, seeking security in conventions and "dead habits". Morality, for Rabindranath, has neither a fixed station, nor any predetermined code of ethics. The moral life, since it is grounded on freedom and is creative, is a perpetual unrest. To be moral is to be dissatisfied, to be in unceasing conflict with the actual, the non-spiritual natural, to be always stretching forward to an ideal that never is, but always to be. To find morality in one's fixed station and its duties is to mistake both one's moral station and the duties it entails.

Between alienation and the overcoming of alienation lies the eternal dialectic of man, at all levels and in all dimensions. Alienation, then, defines the condition of man, at least as we know him. The crucial form of alienation which Rabindranath takes as paradigmatic is self alienation – an inability to identify with the present self together with the desire to reach a higher self. Man is not perfect, and hence, is in a state of alienation. But man is creative and he can work out his freedom only gradually, because as Rabindranath says, "creation is gradual". The problem of alienation is the problem of the identification of man – which must be sought in the concept of harmony. Lack of freedom, says

Rabindranath, is based upon the spirit of alienation, upon our imperfect realisation of unity. This is inner freedom. It is our self-desire which is alienated. Thus freedom is freedom from self-desire. In this sense, freedom is harmony. To have achieved this freedom is to have made steps towards the greater harmony which is love. Man's freedom is enriched from the side of aesthetic experience. Man, Rabindranath insists, is free not only because he is a moral being but also because he is an artist. It is *creative humanism*. Rabindranath is not surprised that man is far from the goal of life, the world of personality is still unrealized, "yet we have not attained the internal harmony, and the wholeness of our being, our life remains a life of habits" (*sādhanā*, p. 36). The question whether such a state is attainable is not of much consequence. As Rabindranath himself suggests it is not finally attainable and man's reach will always exceed his grasp. What really matters, for man as an "angel of surplus", is the deliberate choosing of it as the ideal to be pursued, and thereafter making a persistent and continual advance towards it.

"..... in a strange glow
Man sees his own far-off ineffable image.
On the world's stage
act after act the gradual unfolding
of consciousness --
among its *dramatis personae*
I too have been called to lift the veil
-- that is my great wonder."