THE MAJOR CONCEPT OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE:
MAN'S REALIZATION OF UNITY.

by

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PREFACE

In justification of the boundaries of this study, several prefatory remarks are necessitated.

That Rabindranath Tagore holds an eminent and singular position in the literary history of Bengal and India is undisputed. Critics from his own country have praised, with unbounded enthusiasm, Tagore's enrichment of his native vocabulary, his adaptations of foreign verse-forms, and particularly his revival of the Indian epic-lore and Vaishnava traditions. He has been called, moreover, "the poet of Indian nationalism".

Any evaluation of Tagore's literary contribution to his native country has been omitted in this investigation, for such an appraisal demands a most thorough knowledge of Bengali and Sanskrit languages as well as an appreciative familiarity with that integral part of Indian life—her traditions.
It was my first intention, therefore, to consider those works of Tagore which he has written in English and those which had been translated. I planned to select those elements of literary style and content which made Tagore’s prose and poetry a distinctive contribution to English literature. I soon discovered that such a treatment of his works gave an unfair representation of the author’s spirit. Behind Tagore’s symbolism there lies a philosophy more meaningful than mere literary style. To impose English standards of literary criticism upon Gitanjali with the aim of becoming acquainted with Tagore approaches absurdity.

There are innumerable lovers of poetry and readers of Fruit-Gathering or The Gardener whose appreciation of Tagore’s writings, in all probability, will never extend beyond a search for pretty phrases. Bits of epigrammatic wisdom, clothed in symbols and made attractive by oriental remoteness, can be found in abundance. Without further study, a reader might dismiss him as unimportant. Some persons have been content with the surface glamour;
others have questioned the author's sincerity.

The granting of the Nobel award to Tagore in 1913 stimulated interest in this foreign author. Readers searched in his poetry for the unusual: for rich descriptions and pretty similes which they formerly associated with oriental life. Having sought no further, some were dissatisfied; others called Tagore another mere "tapestry weaver".

I believe that Tagore offers to literature something far more genuine than pretty phrases. A Westerner's interpretation of Tagore must come through the channels of thought, not style--through a study of his particular vision of reality. Tagore's personality is completely revealed in his poems which are the expression of his soul, the songs of a devotional heart, and the revelation of a poetic consciousness. True, his works present no systematic exposition of his philosophy; but it is possible to derive from them his philosophic views.

The prevailing themes of Tagore, those of love,
joy, and beauty, are phases of his main philosophical tenet: the realization of unity. It is the purpose of this study to present the major features of Tagore's "doctrine of unity" as set forth in *Sadhana*; further, to illustrate how Tagore has repeatedly woven this theme into his dramas, novels, essays, short stories, lectures, and poems; and, finally, to arrive at some estimate of Tagore's literary importance by comparison of his works with those of some English authors who have used closely allied themes.

Such an analysis has value beyond the fact that it may help to add another name to that ever-lengthening list of contemporary foreign authors. In the specific field of Tagore's work, is it not possible that an understanding of the personality and philosophy behind an idea may be a most valuable aid to the disclosure of whatever aesthetic beauty may mark his work? Is it unreasonable to assume, furthermore, that an interpretation of the major philosophical conception of India's great literary figure of today would be conducive to a better comprehension of India's
The difficulties encountered in this study were numerous. The English translations of Tagore's works used in making it are mostly translations of his later productions—in the opinions of some critics, less representative than the work of an earlier period of his life. We must remember also that the true status of Tagore may be altered radically within a short period of time; that even though this indeterminate factor does not materially affect the content of his works, yet it might bring about better translations and a more sympathetic reception in the future.

The greatest danger in this study has been the likelihood of the misinterpretation of Tagore's ideas, because it is no small task for a Westerner to adapt himself to an Easterner's philosophy. Sympathy with some of Tagore's ideas demands complete abandonment of actuality—almost an absorption in the idealistic. I may truly say that in so far as I have attained sympathetic understanding, I have gained full-measured joy in return.
For their kindly interest and encouragement in the preparation of this paper, my sincere thanks are due to Professors S. L. Whitcomb, W. S. Johnson, and R. D. O'Leary from the University of Kansas, to Dr. Lambertus Hehuis of the University of Wichita, as well as to the library staffs in both institutions.

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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

The time that my journey takes is long and the way of it is long.
I came out on a chariot of the first gleam of light, and pursued my voyage through the wilderness of worlds leaving my track on many a star and planet.
It is the most distant course that comes nearest to thyself, and that training is the most intricate which leads to the utter simplicity of a tune.
The traveller has to knock at every alien door to come to his own, and one has to wander through all the outer worlds to reach the innermost shrine at the end.
My eyes strayed far and wide before I shut them and said, "Here art thou".
The question and the cry "Oh, where?" melt into tears of a thousand streams and deluge the world with the flood of the assurance "I am!"

--Gitanjali 12.

The Career of Rabindranath Tagore is extraordinarily composite in nature. With just deference to his genius, which surmounted and defied precedent, one nevertheless cannot refrain from an analysis of contributory factors.
By no means the least of these is his three-fold literary heritage which comprehended classics from Sanskrit, Bengali, and English literatures.

Bengali literature has a double line of descent. The older line is lineal from Sanskrit--especially from the Sanskrit lyric and drama. Kalidasa, whose Cloud Messenger and The Birth of the War-God were particular sources of delight and study in Tagore's youth¹, inspired a succession of poets in the Ganges valley. Among them, Jayadeva, the author of Cita Govinda, is notable, because his lyrical drama, dating from the twelfth century, "is the earliest specimen of a primitive type of play that still survives in Bengal, and must have preceded the regular drama."² Although the play is patterned after Shakuntala as to form, the subject is Krishna's loves, and thus the song of Govinda is a departure in subject matter from the classic themes of court intrigue. Tagore indicates his early esteem for the classic when he writes:

"... the sound of the words and the lilt of
the meter filled my mind with pictures of wonderful beauty, which impelled me to copy out the whole of the book for my own use."

It would seem that the epics, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, have not served as models for Bengali poets with as great frequency as the native lyrics. Tagore, however, makes repeated references to these works, especially to the teaching of "disinterested work" in the *Bhagavadgita*. Tagore tells of his mother's joy when he recited from Krittivasa's Bengali rendering of the *Ramayana* and of his ambitious attempts to memorize the Sanskrit original of Maharshi Valmiki.

The vernacular literature of Bengal cannot be adequately appreciated if its constant background of religious thought remain unrealized. So intimate in it has been the bond between poetry and religion that even erotic literature has come to be interpreted as an allegorical exposition of religious precepts. Particularly is this true in the second line of descent: the indigenous one of folk lyric, which received its impetus in the songs of Chandi Das and Vidyapati in the four-
teenth century. These poets sang of Krishna's love adventures, and, as in the Gita Govinda, Krishna came to be regarded as the incarnation of the "love" attribute of Vishnu. The Vaishnava lyrics are among the most popular poems of Bengal. In the opinion of Tagore, their poetical value has been over-assessed, and yet, when commenting in later years upon his early reading, Tagore admitted two debts he owed to them.

"I found in the Vaishnava poets lyrical movement; and images startling and new.... I am so grateful that I got to know them when I did. They gave me form. They made experiments in metre. And then there was the boldness of their imagery. Take this from Anantadas: 'Eyes starting like birds about to fly'.'

There is a close resemblance between the softer beauty of Kālidāsa's poetry and the earlier Vaishnava traditions. Chandi Das did for Bengali something of the service which Chaucer did for English—that is, he vindicated the claims of his native tongue and native folklore against the supposedly more polished tongue, Sanskrit. The high national repute of both Kālidāsa and the Vaishnava love songs that followed after Chandi
Das is indicative of the Bengali nature. "The race is emotional beyond any other in India, and Vaishnava revivalists have again and again set flowing a wave of excitement which has covered this province."9

This emotional temperament partly accounts for the religious revival instituted by Chaitanya in the sixteenth century, which occasioned numerous theological works in both Bengali and Sanskrit.

"In the poetry of Chaitanya inspired, we gain a sense of a country and a people who love poetry and in a way live by it, making it a part of their daily existence. And when we try to understand something of the fervour and naturalness and spontaneous melody that mark The Gardener and Gitanjali, we see what they gained by the love of song and the belief in the inspiration fostered among the people of Bengal. Without Chaitanya... the Bengal poets today would not be what they are. The living usage of art,... the use of songs actually sung and declaimed... has remained a tradition among them, and poetry not only a welcome, but an unalienable thing."10

Tagore's translations from the songs of Kabir, the fifteenth century poet and mystic, contain ideas strikingly similar to those disclosed in Tagore's own writings. Kabir, like his successor, wrote hymns of praise to the
God who unites the universe; he, too, praised love, joy, and self-sacrifice.

Mohammedan rule has influenced Bengal at spasmodic intervals. Socially it has meant a hardening of caste rules and a stricter circumscription of women's freedom. Culturally, it has encouraged Bengali translations of Sanskrit epics; it is indirectly responsible for the epic, Chandi, written by Mukundaram towards the end of the sixteenth century.

The eighteenth century marks the high tide of Bengali literary achievement. Two renowned court poets, Bharatchandra Roy and Ramprosad Sen, dominate the early part of the century, the former perfecting an elaborate, ingenious style, the latter being called "the greatest of all Bengali folk-poets, whose sakta songs are often of ineffable charm and pathos."\(^\text{11}\) The gap between the eighteenth century genius and the nineteenth century period of Western influence is filled by the kaviwallas\(^\text{12}\)--travelling lyric poets.

Probably the greatest single gift to Bengali lit-
erature was in the work of Rammohun Ray (1774-1833), religious leader, scholar, and author, who in many ways was a direct antecedent of the Tagores. Previous to Ray, Bengali literature meant poetry, for prose hardly existed. Tagore has characterized Ray's prose as "... very lucid, especially when we consider what abstruse subjects he handled." Ray's opposition to idolatry and social abuses, his determined attacks upon sati, form the content of his writings. The Brahma Samaj, founded by Ray in 1831, is the result of a blending of Christian and Brahmanic doctrines. For a time after Ray's death the organization was dormant. Dwarkanath Tagore, the poet's grandfather and a prince of great wealth and prodigal expenditure, succeeded in keeping the organization together till his son, Debendranath, effected one of the greatest religious revivals and nationalistic movements that Bengal has ever experienced, through his opposition to a movement toward Christian conversion.

"Debendranath Tagore firmly established the Brahma Samaj and worked untiringly in its behalf."
Atheist of the most uncompromising sort, he withstood idolatry even in his own family, with ever-increasing opposition. In later years he grew more in general sympathy with orthodox Hinduism, withdrew from society, and lived much in solitary meditation, receiving from his countrymen the title Maharshi, 'Great Rishi'. But despite his natural conservatism, he acknowledged the logic of truth whenever it found him. For example, though frequent assertions to the contrary have been made, he never strayed from the Brahmo position as regards such a typically Hindu belief as transmigration. 'My father never believed in that fairy-tale,' his son has said. He was staunch also as regards the necessity for social reform.'

The Maharshi's religious conservatism influenced strongly all his sons; it was a new, unequivocal interpretation of Hinduism which formed the basis of Rabindranath's theism; its guiding principles display a unique combination of conservatism and tolerance. Since the period of its great ascendency (1846-1866), the character of the Brāhma Samaj's impact on Bengali life and thought has altered. The Brāhma organization has divided into three groups whose total membership is small but eclectic.

The fact that among the later nineteenth century Bengali writers, the leading figures have been likened
to Englishmen of literary genius is a relevant observation. The period of Bengali Renaissance (1860-80) was, indeed, the reaction from contact with the West. Witness, for example, the epic Meghnadbadhakavva, which gave its author, Michael Dutt, the title of "Bengali Milton"; note also the phrase "Bengali Byron", applied to Nabinchandra Sen, who did so much to renovate Hindu mythology and legend. In accordance with the vogue, Tagore's pseudonym was for a time "Bengal's Shelley".

Among Tagore's contemporaries we mention Hemchandra Banerji and Bankimchandra Chatterji, the Scott of Bengal, both of whom Tagore has extolled as men of character but neither of whom he considers as valuable to literature as the Vaishnava poets. To summarize the later developments in Bengali literature: "The modern period is marked by the struggle of two opposing schools, the one drawing its inspiration from the Sanskrit classics, and the other working in sympathy with European ideals." All competent European scholars are agreed that no work of first class originality has much chance of arising in Bengal till some great genius
purges the language of its pseudo-classical elements."23

Tagore has thus described the indebtedness of Bengali literature to English models:

"... it strikes me that we have gained more of stimulation than of nourishment out of English literature. Our literary gods were Shakespeare, Milton, and Byron; and the quality of their work which stirred us most was the strength of passion. In the social life of Englishmen passionate outbursts are kept severely in check, for which very reason, perhaps, they so dominate their literature, making its characteristics to be the working out of extravagantly vehement feelings to an inevitable conflagration. At least this uncontrolled excitement was what we learnt to look on as the quintessence of English literature."24

Tagore's reading and study of English literature was done largely in his youth. We shall see in later chapters that Tagore was the recipient of many ideas from English poets whose works he had never investigated with any degree of diligence. Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Arnold, Ruskin, he has commented upon; one might even say that they have served as models in some of his works and he admits no small liking for all of them; but on the whole, Tagore's imitation has been unconscious. Rather, his spirit has been so closely allied with
European romanticism that to the superficial student similarity appears to be imitation.

Such have been Tagore's purely literary progenitors. Of far greater importance than any of these are the Vedas and Upanishads. If we might view for a moment a true historical panorama of India—if we might see devoted worshippers from centuries past, making their sacrifices and repeating in ceremony the sacred texts; if we might realize the intensity of emotion manifested by the Indian rishis who have spent their very lives in contemplating words of sacred books—only then could we know the full meaning of these words of Tagore:

"To me the verses of the Upanishads... have ever been things of the spirit, and therefore endowed with boundless vital growth, and I have used them, both in my own life and in my preachings, as being instinct with individual meaning for me, as for others, and awaiting for their confirmation my own personal testimony, which might have its value because of its individuality." 25

In the poetic and cryptic imaginings of the Upanishads, the intuitive thought of man strives to express its conception of the spiritual which throbs in the heart of
man and through all creation.

"The highest aim of all thought and study with the Brahman of the Upanishads was to recognise his own self, to know his self in the Highest Self, and through that knowledge to return to it, and regain identity with it. Here to know was to be, to know that Atman was to be the Atman, and the reward of that highest knowledge was freedom from new births, or immortality."26

Going back as far as possible, one finds this naive personal attitude in the Vedic hymns. The ancient rishis, like the followers of the Christian religion, felt their selves to be separated from the deity or deities by the fact of sin. It was those who came after them, the more philosophic rishis of the Upanishads, the Buddhists who came after them, and the expert metaphysicians of the Vedanta, who reversed this view and found sin in the illusion of separation.

"All this later mystic poetry of India, from Kabir onward, springs from the conflict and reconciliation between that immemorial feeling of separation and that profound and supersensual certainty of oneness. This indeed is the source of all the mysticism that ever was; only in India the feeling of separation is the baffling thing, the supersensual thing taken for granted, while in Christianity it is all the other way. In India it is a question whether you are going to agree that the individual soul preserves its identity in
union or with Sankaracharya that it has never had any identity to lose."  

Thus we approach the very heart of Tagore's teachings. Succeeding chapters will better disclose this close affinity of ideas between the Upanishads and their lyrical counterpart in Tagore's poetry. But the mere fact that Tagore has utilized ancestral texts of worship would not be a particularly notable fact. Thousands of others have written with a similar purpose. Tagore's contribution is his modern interpretation and application of the Vedas to everyday living; he has supplemented sentiment with action, and thereby rejuvenated the spirit of India.

Paul Elmer More, one of the most severe critics of Tagore, has emphatically stated that "whatever Tagore may be, and whencesoever he draws his inspiration, he is in essence everything that ancient India philosophically and religiously was not." To prove his assertion, Mr. More has quoted from Fruit-Gathering and Gitanjali in which he finds only a "dreamy dissolution into Nature," a surrendering to the lulling charm of illusion,
a "humanitarian religion of sympathy", and a "paci-

fistic waiting by the roadside"—"a puddling in

sentiment", quite in contrast to the Gitas's vigorous
call to the everlasting battle of life. To a limited
degree this is true. Tagore embodies modernism as well
as antiquity. But Mr. More has failed to recognize the
energy of Tagore as contrasted with the "brooding pas-
sivity, pessimism, that bent of inactivity, that love of
otherworldliness, that passion for annihilation, which
characterizes the life and teaching of Eastern rishis.
Action,—thoughtful action and wholesome optimism,
spirituality of humanity in contradiction to the de-
lusion of this world and everything therein of Eastern
mysticism are Mr. Tagore's mainspring of life and
poetry."32 It would appear that Sadhana, with its
vigorous elucidation of Vedantic faiths, was overlooked
by Mr. More. Neither is it fair to make comparisons
between pieces of devotional poetry and epic poetry
like that found in the Bhagavadgita.

Tagore's modifications of the Vedantic truths are
due, in large measure, to his contact with Western life.
The English government, English poets, English education, and finally Western religions have had their part in the moulding of Tagore's opinions. But it has been part of his greatness that he has gathered up into his work all these influences and has cut a channel into which all these streams have flowed. To the classical and folk-poetry traditions, he has joined the eager curiosity of the most modern mind Bengal has known, with a very wide if not deep acquaintance with physical science. In literature he has been the representative man of his times, in touch with the fullness of his intellectual heritage, and ever-conscious of the search for truth as represented by the modern continental poets and thinkers.

As a legitimate final addition to these introductory remarks, mention must be made of the family life which was so important a factor in the encouragement of Rabindranath's literary aspirations.

In social and religious reform, in the revival of art and music, and in political and industrial nation-
alism, the Thakur family has rendered conspicuous service, and thereby gained the high esteem of the people of India, especially of Bengal. Tagore is an exception to the Bengali proverb that the Goddesses of Learning and Good Fortune will not live together. He enjoyed the privileges of both. No more appreciative tribute can be found among Rabindranath's writings than the one in My Reminiscences where he makes particular mention of his home environment.

"One great advantage which I enjoyed in my young days was the literary and artistic atmosphere which pervaded our house. I remember how, when I was quite a child, I would be leaning against the verandah railings which overlooked the detached building comprising the reception rooms. These rooms would be lighted up every evening. Splendid carriages would be constantly coming and going. What was happening I could not very well make out, but would keep staring at the rows of lighted casements from my place in the darkness. The intervening space was not great but the gulf between my infant world and these lights was immense."

As Tagore grew older, he was permitted to take an active part in these informal meetings. Tagore was the youngest of seven brothers, each of whom has been a leader in his particular field of endeavor. Jorasanko house, the huge home of the Tagores a few miles outside
Calcutta, was a rendezvous for Bengali artists and Bengali nationalism. From his father Rabindranath derived the ascetic tendencies. The great conflict in Tagore's life, that of the choice between a life of public service and that of a quiet, secluded, and meditative life, was a direct consequence of early opposing forces.

As to the relationship between orthodox Hindu society and the Tagores, the family are Pārlī Brahmins; that is, outcasts, as having supposedly eaten with Mohammedans in a former day. Though outcasts from orthodox Hinduism, yet the family is more orthodox in ceremonial matters than the advanced Brāhma groups.

All these introductory matters being us to a better understanding of the writer's general heritage and his consequent message. But what have been the influences which have moulded Tagore's views of life and brought him to the conclusion upon which this thesis is based, namely, that man is great because "his soul comprehends all", and that the "sublime achievement is realisation of the infinite"? The question is readily answered. The Upanishads and the views of the Maharshi laid the foundation; but so personal an attitude comes only
through an evolution of personal experiences. Tagore, too, was a traveler who knocked "at alien doors", and found within himself the "innermost shrine".

The omnipresence of God, the necessity of man's realization of the highest spirit within himself—these have not always been the themes of Tagore's writings. It so happens that those of his works which have been translated into English were written, for the most part, after 1900, and thus a Westerner might be unaware that the man who speaks from the pages of \textit{Gitanjali}, had himself undergone a long process of self-realization before he could sing with so sure a voice. As we review the progress of Tagore's literary genius, no radical changes of faith can be pointed out, for the confirmation of faith, voiced so resolutely in later life, was not contradictory to any opinions previously expressed. His final conclusions were essentially founded upon the teachings of the Upanishads which he accepted in his earliest writings, but his consciousness of his own relationship with the eternal came in later life. So, as we examine his works, we can see a growth in his rational
view of religion; we feel that his worship of beauty acquires a greater significance with his realization that he is a part of the source of all beauty; and the praise of love loses all superficialities and becomes a praise of that intuitive love which, according to Tagore, lies within the soul; love becomes the guiding power of life which makes possible man's realization of his unity with the Infinite. Love, joy, sorrow, and beauty—all these subjects assume added significance in Tagore's later years.

Commentators have applied various names to the successive periods of Tagore's life. For our purposes, three divisions may be made: the first, extending to his twenty-third year, during which he wrote his earliest poetry; the second extending to his fortieth year, and embracing the years spent at Shileika, his contributions to the Sadhana, and the emergence of the jibandobata doctrine; finally, the period from his fortieth year to the present time, consideration of which includes a survey of various phases of his matured thought.

The preliminary step to self-realization and con-
sequent realization of the infinite is introspection. Tagore's life, in his earliest years, was secluded; for want of companionship and active participation in external affairs, he took refuge in self-probing, in distant observation of a life teeming with industry. His only companions were nature and his studies. Tagore's mother died when he was seven; his father was usually absent, travelling abroad. True, the Maharshi always kept a watchful eye upon household affairs and probably did more than any other one individual to stimulate and encourage Rabindranath's self-expressiveness. Yet there was between the youth and his father none of that companionable relationship which might have led the boy's interests to the objective rather than the purely subjective. With his father away, Rabindranath was cared for by the household nurses, and his schooling came almost entirely from private tutors. For short periods he was sent to the Normal school, to Bengal Academy, and to St. Xavier's, but his resolute refusal to be educated and his sensitive nature which rebelled against authoritative measures brought about his private education.
My Reminiscences is a faithful autobiographical account of events during his first twenty-six years. The main incidents chronicled therein represent, summarily, a growth in freedom of spirit. Take, for example, the tribute paid to Jyotirinda. 39

"My fourth brother Jyotirinda was one of the chief helpers in my literary and emotional training. He was an enthusiast himself, and loved to evoke enthusiasm in others. He did not allow the differences in our ages to be any bar to my free intellectual and sentimental intercourse with him. This great boon of freedom which he allowed me, none else would have dared to do; many even blamed him for it. His companionship made it possible for me to shake off my shrinking sensitiveness. It was as necessary for my soul after its rigorous repression during my infancy as are the monsoon clouds after a fiery summer.

But for such snapping of my shackles I might have become crippled for life."

Rabindranath was conscious in his youth of an evasive something which he wished to grasp.

"Looking back on childhood's days, the thing that recurs most often is the mystery which used to fill both life and the world. Something undreamt of was lurking everywhere and the uppermost question every day was: when, Oh! when would we come across it? It was as if nature held something with closed hands and was smilingly asking us: 'What d'you think I have?' What was impossible for her to have was the thing we had no idea of." 40
What could be a better expression of a youthful reaching out for finite truth,—a sense of something unfathomable?

It is not unusual to associate this questioning spirit with youth. "Why" is the all-important word on the lips of an alert child. But Rabindranath did more than ask "why" there were flowers, or "why" the River Ganges was sacred. His senses were keenly attuned to Nature. He felt that there was something in the dense clouds with their thousand thunderbolts, in the lone mountain peaks, in the wide sky that shepherded the countless worlds beneath the shadow of its wing, that was meant for him alone. Having failed in his attempt to define Nature's particular message to him, he gave up at last to a revelling in outward beauty.

Before Rabindranath had reached eighteen, he had published nearly seven thousand lines of verse and a great quantity of prose. *Bharati*, a magazine published by his brother, Dwijendranath, afforded a ready means of publication. The character of these earlier works was chiefly lyrical and controversial. For example, A
Poet's Story, a fragment of 1,185 lines, appeared in 1887. Its first part is a highly idealized picture of Rabindranath's childhood as a playmate of Nature. An estimate of his precocity may be gained when we remember that as a young man of seventeen, Tagore was the author of such articles in the Bharati as: The Saxons and The Anglo-Saxon Literature, Petrarch and Laura, Dante and His Poetry, and Goethe. However slight and second-hand his knowledge may have been, such topics reveal a comprehensive sweep of interest that suggests no little intellectual hunger.

This spirit continued until Tagore was about twenty. The trip to England in 1877, where he spent fourteen months studying law, added little to his writings though it gave him a further grasp of knowledge. There was a new note, however, in the next two volumes, Evening Songs (1884) and its sequel, Morning Songs (1884). Partly against the Maharshi's wishes, Tagore had started on his second trip to England, with plans to become a "pleader". Forced to return because of the illness of his companion, Tagore gave up all aspirations and "launched upon those
stormy seas which begin a poet's career, the period of his introspective sorrows, of his journeyings, not home to his habitual self, but to a false self, full of mournings, sensitive and solitary."43

Merely to list the titles of some individual poems in Evening Songs gives us a sense of the bewilderment that overcame him for a time. The Wail of Happiness, The Heart's Monody, The Despair of Hope, Loss of the Ego—these would suggest almost a forced gloominess. His bewilderment took the form of a lament at his inability to understand the voices of Nature. The Invocation44 to Evening Songs is addressed to the

"Spirit of Evening!
Sitting alone beneath the limitless sky! Taking the world in your lap, shaking out your disheveled locks, bending above it your face full of love, full of loveliness. Very softly, very softly, ah! what words are you whispering, what songs are you crooning to yourself, as you look into the world's face?

"Day after day I have heard these words, yet I do not understand them. Day after day I have heard these songs, yet I have not learnt them. Only heavy sleep weighs down my lids, a load of thought presses my soul. Yet... deep within my heart... deeper, still, in its very core,... there sounds a voice which answers to your voice. Some world—forsaking exile from I know not what land is singing
in unison with you."

Tagore characterizes that period of his life, from
the age of sixteen to twenty-three, as "one of utter
disorderliness". 45 He likens his passions and aimless-
ness to the early ages of the Earth when "land and water
had not distinctly separated". 46

"The current in which I drifted ran rapid and
strong when I was young.
The spring breeze was spendthrift of itself,
the trees were on fire with flowers; and
the birds never slept from singing.
I sailed with giddy speed, carried away by
the flood of passion;
I had no time to see and feel and take the
world into my being.
Now that youth has ebbed and I am stranded
on the bank, I can hear the deep music
of all things, and the sky opens to me
its "heart of stars". 47

This feeling of insoucience enveloped his attitude
toward religion. He saw about him several classes--those
who, by argumentation, sought to deny all belief in God;
another group consisted of "religious epicureans" who
"luxuriated in the paraphernalia of worship". 48 For a
time Rabindranath even turned against the religious ser-
vices in his own family.
"I would have nothing to do with them, I had not accepted them for my own. I was busy blowing up a raging flame with the bellows of my own emotions... As with religion so with my emotions. I felt no need for any underlying truth, my excitement being an end in itself."49

When he wrote *Evening Songs*, Tagore's mind resembled Shelley's in many respects: in his emotional misery, in his mythopoeia, and his personified abstractions.

The *Morning Songs* were born out of a new experience of sheer joy in the world and of union with it. This "rebirth", as it were, is an answer to the question which will be treated more definitely later—whether or not Tagore is a mystic, and if he is, what he claims as his mystical experiences. Even here, however, we may have a description of one such experience in his own words.50

"One morning I happened to be standing on the verandah... The sun was just rising through the leafy tops of those trees. As I continued to gaze, all of a sudden a covering seemed to fall away from my eyes, and I found the world bathed in wonderful radiance, with waves of beauty on every side. This radiance pierced in a moment the folds of sadness and despondency which had accumulated over my heart, and flooded it with this universal light."
The significance in Tagore's subsequent writings of his new consciousness of the universal aspect of joy can be felt in his changed interpretation of Nature and in his realization of a link between the finite and the Infinite, which we shall explain more fully as a part of the jibandabata theory.

Tagore commented in later years upon his revelation and its expression in Morning Songs:

"'There is none in the World, all are in my heart'—is the state of mind belonging to a particular age. When the heart is first awakened it puts forth its arms and would grasp the whole world, like the teething infant which thinks everything meant for its mouth. Gradually it comes to understand what it really wants and what it does not. Then do its nebulous emanations shrink upon themselves, get heated, and heat in their turn.

To begin by wanting the whole world is to get nothing. With the whole strength of one's being upon one object, whatsoever it might be, then does the gateway to the Infinite become visible. The morning songs were the first throwing forth of my inner self outwards, and consequently they lack any signs of such concentration."51

This marks the first great step in the personal and spiritual experiences of Tagore which brought him to "realisation of self". Says the Upanishad: "This deity
who is manifesting himself in the activities of the universe, also dwells in the heart of man as the supreme soul. Those who realise him through the immediate perception of the heart attain immortality."52 These teachings form the subject matter of Sadhana (1914).

After the ardor of the new awakening cooled a little, Tagore graphically recorded the history of this period of his life in his poem, The Reunion. He recounts to Mother Nature his childhood happiness when he had been content to play in Nature's lap. Then something had happened--he had gone astray and had lost his way in the boundless wilderness of his youthful heart. Then had come a change.

"But now, a single bird has shown me the way out of the wilderness to the shore of the endless ocean of bliss.

The flowers blossom, the birds fly again, the sky is resonant with the music of the spheres. The waves of life rise and fall upon them.

The gentle breeze blows and light smiles on all sides, and the boundless sky watches over them all. I look again around me to see the marvelous manifestations of nature.

Some come near me, some call me 'friend', and others want to play with me. Some smile, others sing; some come, others go, oh, what a panorama of unexpressible joy!

I understand quite well, mother nature, that
after such a long time you have again discovered me, your lost child. That is why you have taken me in your affectionate embrace, and have begun to sing your imposing music, rich in harmony and melody. That is why the gentle zephyr rushes towards me and embraces me repeatedly; that is why the sky in its exuberance of joy showers the very morning horizon on my face so intently; that, again, is why the entire universe is beckoning me again and again to hide my head in her bosom, hers alone."53

One other poem must be singled out as prophetic of Rabindranath's future and carrying us in promise far beyond his attainments thus far in his life. The Echo was for a long time a puzzle to Rabindranath's friends. Whom could he mean by that "Shadowy One" who looked at him with yearning eyes?—

"As if upon that empty canvas all the memories of the morning
   Even now he sees,—
So this Shadowy One seems gazing somewhere,
   Somewhere whence a song is coming.
Stars of dusk are tangled in her hair's dishevelled net,
   As she shuts her eyes and listens."54

Tagore admits that, at the time it was written, he scarcely knew himself what it meant. In profound words he was trying to voice a new longing that had been born in his heart. To analyse it more closely, Tagore's
emotional as well as spiritual experience seemed to tell him of a stream of melody which issued from the very heart of the universe and spread all over space and time, "re-echoing thence as waves of joy which flow right back to the source." This stream came from the Infinite and flowed toward the finite—this is the True, the Good; "its echo which returns towards the Infinite is Beauty and Joy, which are difficult to touch or grasp, and so makes us beside ourselves." There is some resemblance between Rabindranath's love for the Echo, who comes to him each evening as the song of a bird, as the sigh of the forest, or the sweet voice of children, or the plashing of waterfalls, and Shelley's longing for Intellectual Beauty. The echo represents a spirit of loveliness which linked him with the world, and after this first revelation, Tagore resolved to devote himself to the quest of this loveliness.

Pictures and Songs (1884), Nature's Revenge or Sanyasi (1885), and Sharps and Flats or Kadi o Kamol (1886), the remaining volumes written in this juvenile period, show new adventures in verse forms; they con-
tain some of his greatest songs, love sonnets, and descriptive passages, but the moods and longings remain the same.

The next circumstance which was to bring spiritual growth, and, incidentally, to introduce us to the second period of his life, was the death of his sister-in-law, for whom Rabindranath had felt the most deep admiration from childhood. Tagore, though twenty-four years old, had never before been brought face to face with the possibility of such a gap in the procession of life's joys and sorrows. Death took away one of his dearest friends and left a gaping rent in the smooth-seeming fabric. From now on the thought of death and the constant realization that all we feel and are and see is of a passing nature, adds a haunting melancholy to many a passage in his poetry.

In the midst of this grief, a comforting thought came to him: "we are not prisoners forever within a solid stone wall,... The all-pervading pressure of world existence compensates itself by balancing life
against death, and thus does not crush us." When viewed from the standpoint of new freedom gained, death lost its horror and became a part of life.

When we consider the outward circumstances of the second main division of Tagore's life, we are impressed with the sudden enlargement of his interests and his multifarious activities. Thus far "self" had been the more absorbing interest. Now Tagore seemed to reach out, and, in moods varying from the intensely satirical to the amorous, he commented, preached, and criticized his countrymen. But this is not the complete story. Even thus early, the double aim of his art manifested itself—to get in touch with the vast world and to escape from it. Tagore loves solitude passionately; but every spell of seclusion has been followed by a period of public activity. Toward the end of the 'eighties he made the experiment of absolute retirement to Ghazipur, in the United Provinces, where he composed some of his greatest poems—those found in *Manasi* (The Mind's Embodiment, 1891). Viewing the great social evils from afar, Tagore also wrote his best dramas
during these years. So intent was he upon his themes that his dramas often became mere vehicles of thought at the expense of dramatic action.

His next shift in residence, to Shileida, brought him into closer contact with the affairs of common living and closer to the true pulse of the Bengali people than he had ever been before. He had to deal each day with the practical affairs of men and to understand and appreciate the elemental hopes and fears of mankind, stripped of all conventions.

"It was a great event of my life when I first dwelt among my own people, here, for thus I came in contact with the reality of life. For in them you feel the barest touch of humanity. Your attention is not diverted, and then you truly know that Man is very much man. One is apt to forget them, just as one does not think of the earth on which one walks." 58

This was also a period of his greatest happiness and his greatest productivity. The editing of *Sādhana* (1891-95), which according to Mahalanbis is "incomparably the best periodical Bengal has known", 59 occupied much of his time at Shileida, and gave Tagore an
opportunity to study from a distance the major problems of the world: politics, social questions, literature.

Despite his sharp and derisive attacks upon Bengali nationalism, despite his revolutionary opinions on the position of women and Hindu marriage customs which aroused the antipathy of his associates and friends, Tagore developed in this period a keener sympathy with people, a deeper understanding of their emotions and desires, that eventually gave birth to a genuine patriotism.

The national movement had not yet come into actual outward shape and form, but the forces which were to break forth later were already acting powerfully in the hearts of the leading Bengali thinkers, and Rabindranath's soul caught the flame of patriotism, not in Calcutta itself, but among the villagers. His unshaken faith in the destiny of his country received its strongest confirmation from what he saw in the village life of his own people. He was not unaware of the dangers which threatened that life through its contact with the new social forces from the West. Indeed, this formed the theme of many of his short stories. But he believed, from what
he witnessed, that the stock from which the new national life was to spring forth, was sound at the core.

To his own good fortune as a mystic and also as a poet, his joy in communing with nature during his stay at Shileida found its fullest and freest expression. During pauses in his active business life he would live all alone on the sand-flats of the Pudma, moving up and down from village to village in his boat. Western readers may best obtain a picture of his roving life and his changing moods during these years from Glimpses of Bengal, a selection of letters from Tagore's correspondence between 1885 and 1895.

The contrast "between the beautiful, broad, unalloyed peace of Nature--calm, passive, silent, unfathomable" and our own everyday worries--"paltry, sorrow-laden, strife-tormented", 60 is the favorite Arnoldian aspect depicted. Life alone on the river taught Tagore another lesson.

"The more one lives alone on the river or in the open country, the clearer it becomes that nothing is more beautiful or great than to perform
the ordinary duties of one's own daily life simply and naturally."61

Sonar Tarī (The Golden Boat), containing lyrics written between 1891 and 1893, is the typical book of the Sadhāna period. It is of importance because it marks the clear emergence of the jibanēbata—the life-deity motive, which for a time dominated Rabindranath's work. This phase continued throughout Chitra, which was written between 1893 and the spring of 1895 and is recognized as the consummation of this first half of his life's work; "the sunset of Sonar Tarī", he calls it.62

Tagore had become increasingly conscious of his genius. As he repeatedly rededicated himself to a poet's life, he grew to feel that some Inner Light must be guiding him. "Jibanēbata", says Mr. Mahalanobis,63 "is personal—the presiding deity of the poet's life—not quite that even—it is the poet himself—the Inner Self of the poet, who is more than his earthly incarnation."64 This doctrine, so long in emerging, was thus a blend of several threads. In it are Indian teachings as to the reincarnations and previous births; the
revelation of modern science concerning the way in which all strands of being reach back to dim, hidden beginnings; and the findings of psychology; and, binding all and giving them in their union a personal quality of their own, there is the poet's own imagination and inspired guessing.

"The jibandehata is the oversoul who binds in sequence the poet's successive incarnations and phases of activity. He is not God; on this the poet insists; yet he is more than the poet himself, or at any rate, more than any one embodiment of the poet. He is the daemon of Socrates; he is the Idea of Plato."65

Convinced that there dwelt within his soul a Demiurge in watchful control of his efforts, Tagore was overwhelmed by a sense of responsibility and humility. From the first he had been conscious of "something not himself", yet meaningless apart from himself as its medium of speech; something not himself which was making for poetry. Belief in such an Inner Guide found its first definite expression in The Echo.

In a letter of August 20th, 1892,66 we find a rather definite description of Tagore's reaction to the
realization of this inner force.

"I cannot account for this exactly, or explain what kind of longing it is which is roused in me. It seems like the throb of some current flowing through the artery connecting me with the larger world. I feel as if dim, distant memories come to me of the time when I was one with the green grass, and on me fell the autumn light... I feel impelled to give expression to my blood-tie with the earth, my kinsman's love for her; but I am afraid I shall not be understood."

Another letter of March 28th, 1894, says:

"This mystery within frightens me. It makes me diffident about talking of what I shall not do. Why was this tacked on to me--this immense mystery which I neither understand nor control? I know not where it may lead me or I lead it. I cannot see what is happening, nor am I consulted about what is going to happen, and yet I have to keep up an appearance of mystery and pretend to be the doer.

I feel like a living pianoforte with a vast complication of machinery and wires inside, but no means of telling who the player is, and with only a guess as to why the player plays at all. I can only know what is being played, whether the mode is merry or mournful, when the notes are sharp or flat, the tune in or out of tune, the key high-pitched or low. But do I really know even that?"

It is in The Golden Boat that we have the clear emergence of Rabindranath's abandonment to this unseen force. The first poem, the eponymous one, is flooded with a mellow light that is not upon the earlier non-
mystical poems.

"Clouds roar in the sky, the rain pelts down. I am sitting alone on the bank all hope finished. My paddy lies cut in heaps... I am alone in the small field, the crooked waters playing on all sides. Across the river, I see a village in the dawn, painted and smudged with the shadows of trees, cloud covered. On this bank, I am alone in a small field. But who comes yonder, singing as he plies his boat? I feel as if I knew him. With full sail he goes, looking neither to left nor right. I feel as if I knew him."68

This is the super-spirit entering his work, the genius of his life and effort crossing the world-stream in his golden boat.

Throughout The Golden Boat and Chitra the jibandebata generally wore the cloak of femininity; for example, in The Gardener 82,69 the author boldly faces this "bride" who is willing to face with him the challenge of the black night, the capricious sky, the roving waves. In The Gardener 30,70 this unknown force is further personified as the "Cleaner" of his sunset songs, as the "Haunter" of the depth of his gaze, and as the "Dweller" of his deathless dreams. The Gardener, numbers 20 and 21, are examples of masculine characterizations.
Added interest comes when the idea has shed all suggestions of being simply the poet's own muse, and when it appears as the Demiurge shaping his Cosmos for, and in collaboration with him. The dedication of Chaitali (1896) shows this transformation complete, but at this interesting point in the idea's development there came a break; social and political activities absorbed the poet for some years, after which a succession of sorrows drove him into seclusion. Rabindranath was to prove his greatness both as a poet and as a man, by rising completely above the jibandebata phase, so that the thought faded out of his work—faded out gradually, till it was lost in his strong religious experience and absorbed into his general system of thought. The feeling of awe at the inner light was transformed to still greater humility and intimate communion with God.

It should be noted that there is no teaching of any karma governing the jibandebata's actions. But it would be almost as unwise to press anything in the jibandebata idea as Rabindranath's definite belief, otherwise than in a poetic sense, as it would to treat
similarly Wordsworth's teaching about pre-existence in the *Intimations* ode. The idea is not susceptible of simple exposition, but it shows an Eastern mind in contact with Western thought, sinking its plummet into that subconscious which modern psychology has brought forward, and using the thought of today as a key to ancient speculation. The idea, according to the poet, has a double strand.

"There is the Vaishnava dualism—always keeping the separateness of the self—and there is the Upanishadic monism. God is wooing each individual; and God is also the ground-reality of all, as in the Vedantist unification. When the *jibandabata* idea came to me, I felt an overwhelming joy—it seemed a discovery, new with me—in this deepest self, seeking expression. I wished to sink into it, to give myself up wholly to it. Today, I am on the same plane with my readers, and I am trying to find what the *jibandabata* was."71

Only a poet intensely preoccupied with himself would have evolved the *jibandabata* doctrine. The effect upon his poetry was both evil and good. A final word is
necessary as to where these poems may be found in English translations. The ineptness of much criticism made of Tagore's vagueness and mysticism is revealed when one realizes that no word of explanation has ever been given to the Western reader which would permit him to identify the "lover" addressed so often in The Gardener and The Fugitive with the "life-God" idea.

So much of the monotonous sensuousness drops away when we read such poems as The Gardener 31, 32, 35, or 39 and feel the self-conscious Rabindranath speaking rather than an over sensitive love-poet.

A typical form of expression of the jibandebata idea dominates the following poem: 72

"Would you put your wreath of fresh flowers on my neck, fair one? But you must know that the one wreath that I had woven is for the many, for those who are seen in glimpses, or dwell in lands unexplored, or live in poet's songs. It is too late to ask my heart in return for yours. There was a time when my life was like a bud, all its perfume was stored in its core. Now it is squandered far and wide. Who knows the enchantment that can gather and shut it up again? My heart is not mine to give to one only, but it is given to the many."
In his desire to satisfy this exacting counselor, the jibandebata, Rabindranath became for a time sheer poet. Let us be truthful: in these last poems which possess the sweep and the magnificence of naturalistic poetry, unfettered by any darker questionings of life and fate and unsobered by religious reflections, we feel that Tagore achieved his heights. There is a poetic majesty in The Farewell to Heaven, Evening, A Night of Full Moon, and Urvasi73 which would in itself make Tagore a great poet.

To summarize the second period, including the years from 1885 to 1901, it may be said that in the realm of pure art, Tagore reached the culmination of his poetic genius. Although a new philosophical and mystical concept had its origin and found its expression during them, it was not a deterrent to the easy flow of lyric verse or invective prose. Rather, the jibandebata was a stimulant. These were the years of literary comment rather than active participation in national affairs, but life a Shileida and journalistic activity were the means of knitting more closely the bond which was to
come between Tagore and humanity.

From the purely philosophical standpoint, this was a period of transition and immaturity. Before Tagore could realize that unity of Force which impels all life, he had to grasp a vision of parts. Before he could comprehend the relation of unified Power to smaller units, he had to adjust himself to the outer world.

In surveying his career for his friend, C. F. Andrews, Tagore dated the next stage in his literary life from the time when he went to Santiniketan Asram from Shileida. He had been anticipating some great change that was to come into his life. The restlessness which became so important in India's history at the end of the nineteenth century seemed to carry Tagore in the sweep of the flood. Bengal was the center of Indian unrest, and Tagore, refreshed from the unbroken years on the Padma, heard the call to give up his life wholly for his country.

It is not the purpose of this paper to trace the mutations of Tagore's political career. We pronounce it
mutable because he has met with almost alternating periods of favor and disfavor, and also because he himself lost patience many times with the public will.

Tagore has tried to defend rather well-defined principles throughout India's stormy years. These fundamental truths are based on his personal philosophies, and they expose an extreme idealism. They reveal the man's humanitarianism and pragmatism. It is significant that Tagore's matured ideas concerning such problems as nationalism emerged simultaneously with his new religious enlightenment. We have said that it is impossible to separate the religious from the secular in Bengali poetry. It is likewise impossible to separate the political and social tenets formulated by Tagore in his later years from his principles of living, and his ideas of religion.

Tagore's attitude toward nationalism has remained essentially the same from the beginning to the time when he wrote Nationalism (1917). He has never been a nationalist, as the term is generally understood. Freedom, the absolute, unfettered right to control their own
destinies, was what he sought for his people, but he had no particular desire that they should be welded into a political unity, such as that fostered among Western nations. Tagore has always endeavored to serve his country constructively—by establishing schools, by introducing Western scientific methods of farming, by emphasizing sanitation and social reform. The real problem in India, in his opinion, "is not political. It is social."75 Tagore would have the people of Bengal realize their own potentialities before they attempt complete separation from England. Noncooperative leaders, irritated by his pacifism, ridiculed him in no uncertain terms. But Tagore has maintained a calm perseverance. He believes in India, in her future possibilities, as well as her great past. India's greatness consists in her recognition of human values. Mingled with his faith in India's peoples is a belief that a revival of Indian traditions, a return to meditation and spiritual emancipation, would hasten the coming of her social freedom.

Tagore has twice made startlingly effective ap-
pearances in public life; once, when he led the agitation against the Partition of Bengal, and again when he resigned his knighthood after Amritsar and Punjab riotings in 1919. The letter to Lord Chelmsford renouncing his title was an honest declaration of indignation.

"The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer a degradation not fit for human beings. And these are the reasons which have painfully compelled me to ask Your Excellency, with due deference and regret, to relieve me of my title of knighthood."

Tagore's steps in both cases were motivated by a genuine patriotism. Tagore has opposed non-cooperation in its use of force and in its attempt to separate East and West.

"Rabindranath Tagore... blamed Gandhi and said that his attempt to divide India from the West was a spiritual suicide. "The Occident has a great mission to fulfill for man and humanity; it is wrong to try to cut ourselves off from it by artificial means. No nation can work out its salvation by detaching itself from others. It is not possible to base freedom and independence of India on the rejection of everything foreign.""

Race unity, banishment of caste-distinctions, in-
ternational unity,—these ideals have been praised and expounded with no greater fervor by any modern writer than by Tagore.

"The whole world is becoming one country through scientific facility. And the moment is arriving when you must find a basis of unity which is not political. If India can offer to the world her solution, it will be a contribution to humanity. There is only one history, the history of man."78

Tagore's criticism of the West is just as severe as his judgments upon his own people. The Western nations to him are robber nations, organizations for the exploitations of the weak. Their government of dependencies is callous; above all, they have allowed materialism and selfishness to replace spiritual growth. In his specific attitude toward the British people, he makes a distinction between the British nation and the British people.

"I have a deep love for the British race as human beings. It has produced great-hearted men, thinkers of great thoughts, doers of great deeds. It has given rise to a great literature. I know that these people love justice and freedom, and hate lies. They are clean in their minds, frank in their manners, true in their friendships, in their behavior they are honest and reliable... We (the Indian people) have felt the greatness of this people as we feel the sun; as for the nation, it is for us a thick mist of a stifling nature covering
the sun itself." 79

In domestic politics he has been consistent. Woman is different from man, and therefore the modern uterities to make her equal with man are meaningless. Tagore would have her remain woman, a center of love and inspiration without which the world is poverty stricken. But he has never ceased to attack the unjust and cruel traditionalists who regard woman as inferior, as unfitted for education or the arts. Of another Indian institution, caste, he has said in words often quoted, "The regeneration of the Indian people, to my mind, directly and perhaps solely, depends upon the removal of this condition." 80

Rabindranath has sympathy for the old caste form, but when it ceased to conform to the ebb and flow of life, when it became a barrier to personal freedom as it has become today, it is a menace.

Tagore has been a pioneer in educational reform in his country. He founded the Sainthiketan school outside Bolpur upon the site of an old retreat of his father's. The original idea was to build a "home for the Spirit of India." Patterned after old forest schools of India, his
plan of education would permit individual freedom, would provide surroundings conducive to the worship of nature, and would encourage the love of the arts as well as the crafts. The teachers on whom he has placed the most reliance have been the open spaces around the groves, the trees, dawn, evening and moonlight, the winds and great rains. Religion has been made the background of everything.

This school has since been changed to a world university, and it has been in the interest of this project that Tagore has made his last few trips to the West,—this and its correlative work of bringing Eastern ideas to the West and spreading the gospel of the brotherhood of races and men.

Tagore's great spiritual awakening came after his fortieth year—the year after his greatest griefs, when only short periods intervened between the deaths of his wife, a son, and a daughter. Death, met so bravely once before, again brought new meaning to life.

"This death was a great blessing to me. I had through it all, day after day, a sense of ful-

"
filment, of completion, as if nothing were lost, I feel that even if an atom in the universe seemed lost, it could never perish. It was not mere resignation that came to me, but the sense of a fuller life; I knew then, at last, what death was. It was Perfection."82

From the depth of suffering came the message of peace, joy, and love. It was during this period that he wrote Gitanjali, not intending it at the time for publication. The poems in this volume mark the great transition in his life when the poet's social, national, and personal longings became wholly merged in the universal.

"Love flows from his heart, mind, soul in a continuous stream assuming all different forms in its windings from the gross to the spiritual, from the known to the unknown, from the finite to the Infinite."83

Since that time his aim has been to express the fullness of human life, in its beauty, as perfection, and to comprehend the inner harmony of life, to search out its deeper meaning. His emphasis is entirely on the soul of man, on its universal sensations and passions.

The remaining chapters will be devoted to a consideration of Tagore's literary treatment of these new ideas which assume the form of a philosophy. As a matter of
introductory interest, we may summarize his religious beliefs: first, that there is one God who is more than Creator but who manifests Himself in that which he has created. Tagore accepts some features of Hinduism, but rejects the ideas of *karma* and transmigration. Like every great religious prophet the world has seen, Tagore maintains the reality of God, the universal presence of God, the life of nature and of man in God. Unity is here the great word; one life is in all and through all and over all. "The same stream of life that runs through my veins runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measure. It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers. It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean cradle of birth and death, in the ebb and flow."\(^64\) Tagore gives little explanation concerning his ideas of the nature of God; but so near, so real, so living is this God, that He becomes to us as a presence.

Secondly, Tagore, like every prophet of God, proclaims the gospel of religion applied in social action,
of God realized in the world of action. Not in meditation or lonely prayer or secret quietude or remote asceticism is religion to be rightly expressed.

"Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!"

Lastly, Tagore is the preacher of joy and love. Love is our communion with God and in joy comes our service to man. Joy is in the beauty of the world and in the goodness of life and in the peace that follows the struggle, in life and in death. Such joy is the consummation of love.

It is Tagore's sincere conviction that Hindu religion can stand against the onslaught of Western civilization, religion, culture, on condition that it rids itself of its dogmatism and superstition.

He believes that the aim of life is the realization
of the Infinite; that as a preliminary step to realization of the Supreme, every individual must first realize the Infinite who exists within himself. Such realization is made possible by God's numerous manifestations of beauty, joy, peace, in men's relations and in the realm of nature, by the intuitive love for God within each person, and by God's love for man.

"This has been the subject on which all my writings have dwelt—the joy of attaining the Infinite within the finite."66

In some ways Tagore has assimilated Buddhist and Christian teachings. What matters to him is not what he may set before his audience or readers as his doctrines, but his personal experience of God. This is the most remarkable thing in his religion,—this way in which God has become personalized for him, the Indian, in a most intimate, individual fashion, more than He does for the ordinary Christian.

"Ever in my life I have sought thee with my songs. It was they who led me from door to door, and with them I have felt about me, searching and touching my world.

It was my songs that taught me all the les-
sons I ever learnt; they showed me secret paths, they brought before my sight many a star on the horizon of my heart.

They guided me all day long to the mysteries of the country of pleasure and pain, and at last, to what palace gate have they brought me at the end of my journey?"87

Inasmuch as the remainder of this study is to be devoted to the chief philosophic concept in Tagore's work, it is only just that we discuss briefly Tagore's views on the relation of philosophy and poetry.

Though it is not the aim of poetry as a species of art to tell us of a philosophy, still Tagore has grown to feel that poetry does not fulfill its purpose unless it embodies a philosophic vision. It must offer an interpretation of life, give us a fuller view of reality. Poetry would not delight and give joy if it did not reveal the eternal through its form. "Poetry aims", in the language of Hegel, "to present in forms for the imagination features of the ultimate ideal of the harmonized universe." Poetry should give us a vision of the whole.

Above all, Tagore considers himself a poet. He has spent no little amount of care in the cultivation and
preservation of his genius, for he believes that it is only a mind that is at rest, a soul at peace with itself, that can produce good poetry. It is the rhythm of life that expresses itself in the rhythm of poetry. The period of Tagore's life from 1913 to 1921, as revealed in _Letters to a Friend_, has been interspersed with an innumerable number of trips to northern India, to the Ashram, and to Shileida. These letters are an autobiographical account of Tagore's longing and search for peace and inner freedom.

October 7th, 1914.
"My period of darkness is over once again. It has been a time of very great trial to me, and I believe it was absolutely necessary for my emancipation."

February 1, 1915.
"I have been suffering from a time of deep depression and weariness."

February 3, 1915.
"Directly I reached here I came to myself, and am now healed. The cure for all the illness of life is stored in the inner depth of life itself, the access to which becomes possible when we are alone."

June 30, 1915.
"I am in a nomadic mood, but it is becoming painful to me for want of freedom... Possibly my life is on the eve of
another bursting of its pods and scattering of its seeds; there is that continual urgency in my blood, the purpose of which is hidden. The conclusion is being forced upon me that poets should never bind themselves to any particular work, for they are the instruments of the world's moods.

July 9, 1917.
...I am waiting to regain that Lost Paradise of mind, to forget that I must be of any use to anybody, and to know that the true purpose of my life is the great purpose in me of the All-time and All-world, urging me to be fully what I am. And am I not a poet?"

So he continues, ever conscious that a disturbed soul or a worried mind cannot create great poetry.

What should be the poet's or the artist's perspective of the universe, whose unity he has perceived? He has, first, an intense love for the universe. The true poet hears harmony in the babel of sounds called nature, sees good in the querulous voices of evil, and views eternity in time. In all true poetry as in all true philosophy, the end must be reconciliation. The poet may display his art in describing the tragic contrasts of the world, but he is convinced that the end of it all is peace and atonement, not discord and despair.
While both philosophy and poetry aim at the same end, their starting points are different. They approach reality from different angles. Philosophy is an attempt to conceive of the world as a whole by means of thought. It aims at the theory of the universe, and if this theory is held with a certain intensity and depth of feeling, if it captures the whole consciousness instead of being merely intellectually assented to, then the philosophic vision becomes both creative and poetic.

Tagore's conclusion is that a poet is nothing if he is not a philosopher, and that a true philosopher is a poet.

###
Chapter II

SELF-REALIZATION
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He who has found and has awakened to the Self,
That has entered this conglomerate abode—
He is the maker of everything, for he is the
creator of all;
The world is his: indeed, he is the world itself.

**Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad 4.4.10.**

An analysis of Sadhana brings us to one conclusion—
that the basis of Tagore's philosophic speculation is
simply: God, the Brahma of the Upanishads, is every-
where. But the mere doctrine of his omnipresence does
not matter. Where one can see Him, there is His reality
in one's soul. He is the one unit of Power in all
creation and the goal of human existence is the realiza-
tion of this unity.

In the region of science we seek for laws by which
we may explain physical phenomena and about which we may
group otherwise unrelated facts. In the realms of all
knowledge our aim is to ascertain first those central
truths which give us an outlook over the widest horizon. In the same manner, it is quite logical that in Sadhana (The Realisation of Life), which deals with the realm of consciousness, Tagore should first attempt to explain the individual's relation to the world and to the Infinite, and should urge the realization of "the one principle of unity which exists in every man"¹ as a preliminary step to the realization of the All.

"There is such a thing as coming to the nearer presence of the world through the soul. It is like a real home-coming into this world. It is gaining the world more than can be measured—like gaining an instrument not merely by having it, but by producing upon it music."²

By the unity of self Tagore means that manifestation of God within the individual soul which transcends human will, desires, or egoistic impulses, and has "its deeper affinity with the All."

"The mind has its limitations, the sense organs are severally occupied with things that go before them, but there is a spirit of oneness in us which goes beyond the thoughts of its mind, the movements of its bodily organs, which carries whole eternity in its present moment, because of whose presence the life inspiration ever urges the life forces onward."
Because we are conscious of this One in us which is more than all its belongings, which outlives the death of its moments, we cannot believe that it can die. Because it is one, because it is more than its parts, because it is a continual survival, perpetual overflow, we feel it beyond all boundaries of death."

Tagore's belief in the centrality of God-consciousness within the human soul rests upon the idea stressed and reiterated by symbol and hymn in the Upanishads: to know our soul apart from the self is the first step toward the realization of the supreme deliverance. We must know with absolute certainty that essentially we are spirit. This we can do by winning mastery over self, by rising above all pride and fear and greed, by knowing that worldly losses and physical death can take nothing away from the truth and the greatness of our soul.

The teaching of the Upanishads, "In order to find Him you must embrace all", and the aspiration of ancient India "to live and move and have its joy in Brahma, the all-conscious and all pervading Spirit, by extending its field of consciousness over all the world", would appear to demand the impossible from human consciousness. An
attempt to assimilate all the heterogeneous complexities of knowledge without some system would bring us to nought.

"Coming to the theatre of life we foolishly sit with our back to the stage. We see the gilded pillars and decorations, we watch the coming and going of the crowd; and when the light is put out at the end, we ask ourselves in bewilderment, what is the meaning of it all? If we paid attention to the inner stage, we could witness the eternal love drama of the soul and be assured that it has pauses, but no end, and that the gorgeous world preparations are not a magnificent delirium of things."6

In his search for the infinite man has one guide; he has an intuitive longing to reach the inner region where he can take his stand in the perfection of his unity.

"But as our body seeks its harmony with the great world-body for its fulfilment, so the one in us seeks its union with the great One... It is easy for man to ignore it and yet live, but man never did ignore it. He doubts it, mocks it, and strikes it, he fails in his realisation of it, but even in his failures and rebellions, in his desperate attempts to escape from it, he revolves round this one great truth."7

But this innate desire may lead the traveler astray. As in the case of the would-be ascetic who was unwilling to strive for perception of God by affection for his wife and child, who failed to hear the voice of God commanding
him. "Stop, fool, leave not thy home," we may wander astray, and God, watching our aimless journey, will ask, "Why does my servant wander to seek me, forsaking me?"

Take the example of the man who steps into a factory; he sees about him only a bewildering arrangement of machines and hears a frightening din; he has no comprehension of the unity which controls the parts. The man who has applied himself to one task in this factory loses this sense of bewilderment. By making a small unit his own, the workman is attuned to the purpose of the whole. Applying this same method to the search for the Ultimate, man's easiest approach to the realization of the Infinite is by self-realization. Why should we begin this search for unity within self rather than in nature, for example? Because it is the discovery of ourselves outside us which gives us joy and understanding. We can only love that which is profoundly real to us, and the larger number of men have the most intense feeling of reality for themselves. Since love is the bridge between the limits of self and the threshold of the infinite, we begin with that part of the all-pervading unity for which we have
the greatest love.

"I will meet one day the Life within me, the joy that hides in my life, though the days perplex my path with their idle dust. I have known it in glimpses, and its fitful breath has come upon me, making my thoughts fragrant for a while.

I will meet one day the Joy without me that swells behind the screen of light—and will stand in the overflowing solitude where all things are seen as by their creator."9

Quoting further from Saūhena:

"The Upanishads say with great emphasis, Know thou the One, the Soul. It is the bridge leading to the immortal being.10 This is the ultimate end of man, to find the One which is in him; which is his truth, which is his soul; the key with which he opens the gate of the spiritual life, the heavenly kingdom. His desires are many, and madly they run after the varied objects of the world, for therein they have their life and fulfilment. But that which is one in him is ever seeking for unity—unity in knowledge, unity in love, unity in purposes of will; its highest joy is when it reaches the infinite one within its eternal unity. Hence the saying of the Upanishads, Only those of tranquil minds and none else, can attain abiding joy, by realising within their souls the Being who manifests one essence in a multiplicity of forms."11

Let us analyse the nature of self. In the first place, there is within man's higher nature a natural aspiration for perfect truth, perfect beauty, and per-
fect goodness, all of which may be found in the Infinite.

"We are like a stray line of a poem, which feels that it rhymes with another line and must find it, or miss its own fulfilment. This quest of the unattained is the great impulse in man which brings forth all his creation. Man seems deeply to be aware of his separation at the root of his being, he cries to be led across it to a union, and somehow he knows that it is love which can lead him to a love which is final."12

But man is a finite-infinite being. He combines in himself nature and spirit.

"At one pole of my being I am one with the stocks and stones. There I have to acknowledge the rule of universal law... But at the other pole of my being I am separate from all. There I have broken through the cordon of equality and stand alone as an individual. I am absolutely unique, I am I, I am incomparable."13

This combination of high and low within himself blinds one's vision unless there is harmony between the two natures. Within man's being there is a conflict between the infinite which makes the soul yearn for the ideal and the lower finite which is the heritage from past evolution. The dispute between these two phases of self, between the outward self which is subject to the law of necessity and to the inner self which, as a mem-
ber of the spiritual realm, is free—this illusory opposition is indeed the great problem of soul-realization.

"He whom I enclose with my name is weeping in this dungeon. I am ever busy building this wall all around; and as this wall goes up into the sky day by day I lose sight of my true being in the dark shadow.

I take pride in this great wall, and I plaster it with dust and sand lest a least hole should be left in this name; and for all the care I take I lose sight of my true being."

The contradictions of finite life clearly establish that the finite individual is not the ultimate in the world but only an incomplete something requiring supplementation. The need for a philosophy which would reconcile the opposing elements of life, self and not-self, Tagore felt to be urgent.

But Tagore denies the reality of any opposition between these two forces. The first aim of individual existence should be the emancipation of the self from the avidyā or from the ignorance which makes us believe that our outward self, the ego, is real and sufficient. In other words, one goal of human life should be the reconciliation between the dual elements of human nature.
"If this separation were absolute, then there would have been absolute misery and unmitigated evil in this world. Then from untruth we could never reach truth, and from sin we could never hope to attain purity of heart; then all opposites would ever remain opposites, and we could never find a medium through which we could ever tend to meet. Then we could have no language, no understanding, no blending of hearts, no co-operation in life. But on the contrary, we find that the separation of objects is in a fluid state. Their individualities are ever changing and merging into each other, till science itself is turning into metaphysics, matter losing its boundaries, and the definition of life becoming more and more indefinite."16

The limits of egoism which separate self from God are comparable to the limits of laws which separate nature from God. Man may rejoice, however, that God has given us this little world of self over which we may gain mastery. Had God assumed the role of complete omnipotence, joy, which comes from freeing our will and joining it with another free will, would have been lost.

What is the importance of one individual? Is it of any value to me that I have a freedom toward which to strive, and that this lower side of my nature is that which distinguishes me from all my neighbors?

"From the early morning all my thoughts are occupied by this little world of myself. Its im-
portance is owing to the fact that I have a world given to me which is mine. It is great because I have the power to make it worthy of its relationship with me; it is great, because by its help I can offer my own hospitality to the God of all the world."16

When forced to withdraw from the busy routines of outward relationships, we are prone to believe that things could progress without us. There is no sign that the wheels would stop or drag the least bit for lack of anyone in particular. Tagore, however, cannot give assent to such an extinction of self. Instead he makes an avowal of unlimited faith when he says, "The fact that I am indispensable is proved by the fact that I am."17 "That I exist is the perpetual surprise which is life."18

"Egoism is the price paid for the fact of existence."19 The constant suffering endured in the maintenance of self would have no value and the highest object of humanity would be annihilation of self if one's existence did not matter. But Tagore cannot accept the idea that annihilation of self is the supreme goal of life.
"It matters somewhere that I should be, and the price paid is the measure of how much it matters. The whole universe—every molecule of it—is assisting this desire that I should be. And it is the glory of this desire which is manifest in my pride of self. By virtue of this glory this infinitesimal 'I' is not lower than any other thing in this Universe, in measure or value."

Man's desire to "be" may be viewed from two different aspects. In some cases it may be an impulse of creative power; in other individuals it may be the wish for a joyous self-expression of creative love. In other words, the goal that man sets before him as the object of his life is dependent upon his views of his being as the revealment of Force or of Love.

"The value which our entity receives from Power is quite different from that which is received from Love. The direction in which we are impelled by our pride, in the field of Power, is the opposite of that given by our pride in the field of Love."

Tagore justifies man's defense of his individuality. Though it might appear that pride in our own distinctiveness would separate us from others, that it might make us break the link of unity between men, yet Tagore says,
"We are absolutely bankrupt if we are deprived of this specialty, this individuality, which is the only thing we can call our own; and which, if lost, is also a loss to the whole world... And therefore only through it can we gain the universe more truly than if we were lying within its breast unconscious of our distinctiveness. The universal is seeking consummation in the unique." 22

He would even go so far as to say that our desire to keep our uniqueness "is the desire of the universe acting in us." 23

When we come to the problem as to the best way of self-realization, we find no definite plan. Tagore has said in one of his letters, 24

"There can be no single path for all individuals, for we differ vastly in our nature and habits. But all great masters agree in their teaching on one cardinal point, saying that we must forget our personal self in order to attain our spiritual freedom. Buddha and Christ have both of them said that this self-abnegation is not something which is negative—its positive aspect is love." 25

Self-forgetfulness is essential to both the physical and the spiritual life. We know all the better what is around us by not having to remember our selves at every step. When we are more to ourselves the world is less to us. But in our ordinary life of usefulness, forgetfulness
of self is almost negative in type, for it is attained by habit. In the spiritual life self is forgotten because love is there.

"It is like the individual word, losing its meaning where it is separate, but regaining itself all the more where it is one with the whole poem. In the spiritual life we forget our exclusive individual purpose and are flooded with the spirit of perfection which through us transcends ourselves. In this we feel our immortality which is the great meaning of our life."26

This positive aspect of self-forgetfulness may take the form of idealized love of one person for another; such a situation is treated in The Devotee.27 Tagore has said elsewhere28 that women may sometimes attain their emancipation by the elevation of "their personal relationship into the realm of the ideal." In her youth the Devotee had brought the deepest tragedy upon herself because she heard and served only the voice of selfish desire. Blinded by passion, she had lost the love of those two who meant the most to her in the world—her child and husband. At their cost she discovered that love was her God and that it "could brook no falsehood." Her search for truth, the expiation of her sin, demanded
not only sacrifice on her part; atonement came only by worship of one who had more perfect vision.

"... all the while she showered devotion on me she did it not as an individual. I was simply a vehicle of her divine worship. It was not for me either to receive it or to refuse it, for it was not mine, but God's." 29

Tagore narrates two stories of sinful women who, by forgetting of self and by their glimpse of the more perfect love which forgives sin, lost all worldly desire. Kabir, the weaver, 30 bade the harlot to "open her life to God's light." The songs of the weaver, as he worked at his loom and sang, "washed the stains from the woman's heart, and by way of return found a home in her sweet voice." 31 Likewise in the story of the woman sent by the King's Councillor to decoy the young ascetic, 32 the innocent youth saw deeper than the mist of outer sin. "He saw the shining truth—the woman divine," and the question, "What God unknown are you?" awakened the real within the woman's heart.

"Ah, how the goddess wakened in me, at the awful light of that first adoration."

These stories depict two women who discovered an unknown
self within themselves by the submergence of the unconquered phase of their natures. The enlightenment came through the disclosure of an all-forgiving love in another person.

One great barrier that restrains all individuals from that form of self-liberation by complete self-forgetfulness is pride in self, cultivated from the first day's contact with the world. Pride most often urges man into competition with others for acquisition of earthly possessions. We find in Tagore's literary compositions an endless number of examples demonstrating his belief in the futility of Power. Search for Power is an obstruction to the expression of dharma or "the highest ideal of freedom which a man has."

Wealth as a form of power is particularly obnoxious to Rabináranath. If we are to accept his opinion, money-making is pursued by most men not merely because money is useful but rather because it is desired by others. The reaction of outward fulfilment of desire upon the other-self is a gradual wearing away of that conscious-
ness which intuitively yearns for the best.

The little child decked in the finery of the prince's robes and weighted down with jewelled chains finds no joy in his fear that his royal apparel may be frayed or stained with the dust of the world. He discovers that his privilege robs him of the right of entrance to the great fair of common human life and is therefore to be despised. 34

Vision, 35 the story of a wife's perfect devotion and a husband's deterioration in character, again places the blame for the impending catastrophe upon the husband's increase of wealth. His new acquisitions meant the loss of his sense of justice. Kuno sensed the parasitic growth which threatened her husband. She felt his "disappearing into the barren waste in his mad thirst for gold."

When Tagore contrasts the principle of Power with that of Love or Beauty, he sees in the former a principle which reaches its goal. Its end is inevitable destruction while the love of God and love in all forms is the
reaching of the goal and yet never coming to a stop.

"When from the principle of Power we arrive at the principle of Beauty, we at once understand that all this while we had been offering incense at the wrong shrine, that Power grows bloated on the blood of its victims only to perish by surfeit...

Man grows gigantic by the appropriation of everything for himself; he attains harmony by giving himself up. In this harmony is peace,—never the outcome of external organization or of coalition between power and power,—the peace which rests on truth and consists in curbing of greed, is the forgiveness of sympathy."26

As Tagore has surveyed the status of different nations, he has found one particular fault for which the United States should be condemned: that is her vast power which is robbing her of her true soul.

"This bartering of your higher aspirations of life for profit and power has been your own free choice, and I leave you there, at the wreckage of your soul, contemplating your protuberant prosperity. But will you never be called to answer for organizing the instincts of self-aggrandizement of whole peoples into perfection, and calling it good?"27

Greed of wealth and power can never have a limit, and compromise of self-interest can never attain the final spirit of reconciliation. They must go on breeding jealousy and suspicion to the end—the end which comes
through sudden catastrophe or a spiritual rebirth. In proof of his theory that there is always a check in the pursuit of the principle of accumulation, Tagore has pointed in various passages with warning finger at the stories of Babylon and Rome. According to him,

"The distinctive feature of materialism is the measurability of its outward expression, which is the same thing as finiteness of its boundaries. And the disputes, civil and criminal, which have raged in the history of man, have mostly been over these same boundaries. To increase one's own bounds one has necessarily to encroach upon those of others. So, because the pride of Power is the pride of quantity, the most powerful telescope, when pointed in the direction of Power, fails to reveal the shore of peace across the sea of blood."  

Earthly desires, not restricted alone to wealth, lend the "colours of the rainbow to the mere mists and vapours of life."

"Man's wants are endless till he becomes conscious of his soul." There are numerous causes for our false evaluation of desirable things, among them our lack of imagination which permits appreciation for that alone of which we have knowledge. In the darkness which envelopes our consciousness in its groping for the great truth of unity in the world, "we
stumble against objects to which we cling, believing them to be the only things we have. When light comes we slacken our hold, finding them to be mere parts of the all to which we are related. But complete subservience to the control of desires is without doubt a hindrance to self-forgetfulness.

"Our desires blind us to the truth that there is in man, and this is the greatest wrong done by ourselves to our own soul. It deadens our consciousness and is but a gradual method of spiritual suicide."

An example of how personal desire can pervert a man's vision of truth is best depicted by Tagore in *Sadhana*, page 110.

"One day I was out in a boat on the Ganges. It was a beautiful evening in autumn. The sun had just set; the silence of the sky was full to the brim with ineffable peace and beauty. The vast expanse of water was without a ripple, mirroring all the changing shades of the sunset glow. Miles and miles of a desolate sandbank lay like a huge amphibious reptile of some antediluvian age, with its scales glistening in shining colours. As our boat was silently gliding by the precipitous river bank, riddled with the nest-holes of a colony of birds, suddenly a big fish leapt up to the surface of the water and then disappeared, displaying on its vanishing figure all the colours of the evening sky. It drew aside for a moment the many-coloured screen behind which there
was a silent world full of the joy of life. It came up from the depths of its mysterious dwelling with a beautiful dancing motion and added its own music to the silent symphony of the dying day. I felt as if I had a friendly greeting from an alien world in its own language, and it touched my heart with a flash of gladness. Then suddenly the man at the helm exclaimed with a distinct note of regret, "Ah, what a big fish!" It at once brought before his vision the picture of the fish caught and made ready for his supper. He could only look at the fish through his desire, and thus missed the whole truth of its existence."44

The pathway of self-emancipation, of reconciliation between the opposed elements of man's nature, of self-discovery, is a pathway of suffering and sacrifice.

"Our sufferings seek us out through our protections; they take away artificial props and set us face to face with our naked loneliness."45

A stripping bare of our deeper selves is not only necessary for self-exploration and the discovery of our inner resources, but it is also needed for our purification. "For beneath our cover of prosperity and comfort, dirt and dead matter gather every day waiting to be cleaned by the rude rubbing of pain."46

The symbolism of The King of the Dark Chamber (Raja, 1910) has had numerous interpretations. It is most
plausible to believe that the story of Sudarshana's inability to pierce the darkness and to recognise the King is comparable to the blindness of every individual to the Infinite unity which surrounds him. In Sudarshana's case, it was a deep sense of humility and resignation which preceded the fulfilment of her wish to see the King.

Other examples of liberation by self-denial, suffering, and sorrow are found best, perhaps, in Tagore's life itself, inasmuch as this life has been a continual application of this idealistic doctrine.

"Man has gone through and is still undergoing martyrdoms in various ways... All this would be absolutely unmeaning and unbearable if all along he did not feel that deepest joy of the soul within him which tries its divine strength by suffering and proves exhaustless riches by renunciation."47

In one analysis of the steps required for self-liberation, Tagore has said,

"The first stage toward freedom is Santam, the true peace, which can be attained by subduing self; the next stage is the Sivam, the true goodness, which is the activity of the soul when self is subdued; and then the Advaitam, the love, the oneness with all and with God."48
But action is advocated as a means as well as a result from self-renunciation.

"... our soul, in order to release itself from the mists of indistinctness..., is continually creating for itself fresh fields of action... And why? because it wants freedom. It wants to see itself, to realise itself."49

Tagore is most firm in his belief that work-action of some description—is necessary for realization.

"If we say that we would realise him in introspection alone and leave him out of our external activity, that we would enjoy him by the love in our heart, but not worship him by outward ministrations, or if we say the opposite, and override ourselves on one side in the journey of our life's quest, we shall alike totter to our downfall."50

In some ways this is contradictory to the traditional attitude of India. India's partiality has always been for the internal world; she has always taught realization of Brahma in meditation only, and has "determined not to see him in the commerce of the universe in his aspect of evolution."51 Tagore himself has fought a continual battle against this inherited tendency to seek happiness and peace in seclusion. Time and again he has made avowal against such separation from the world.
"Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight... No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delight of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight."52

Again,

"No, my friends, I shall never leave my hearth and home, and retire into the forest solitude, if rings no merry laughter in its echoing shade and if the end of no saffron mantle flutters in the wind; if its silence is not deepened by soft whispers. I shall never be an ascetic."53

Although Tagore would not advocate complete retirement from the world's activity, he does plead for man's preservation of those hours of idleness and silence when he may look both within and without.

"There are tracts in my life that are bare and silent. They are the open spaces where my busy days had their light and air."54

There is much similarity between Tagore's belief in the value of silence and that of Maeterlinck's. The latter has said,

"... the real silence is not one of those gods that can desert mankind. It surrounds us on every side; it is the source of the undercurrents of life; and let one of us but knock, with trembling fingers, at the door of the abyss, it is always by the same attentive silence that the door will be opened.

It is a thing that knows no limit, and before
it all men are equal; and the silence of hind and
slave, in the presence of death, or grief, or love,
reveals the same features, hides beneath its im-
penetrable mantle the self-same treasure. For
this is the inviolable sanctuary, and its secret
can never be lost;... no sooner are the lips still
than the soul awakes, and sets forth on its labours;
for silence is an element that is full of surprise,
danger and happiness, and in these the soul possesses
itself in freedom."55

Tagore, too, has felt that this silence within the
soul would best convey his real meaning to his neighbors.
The extent to which this silence could become the con-
trolling element of action is expressed in this thought
that

"Man goes into the noisy crowd to drown his own
clamour of silence."56

Looking about him in nature for vestiges of silence cor-
responding to that in his own soul, Tagore finds in the
silent night the beauty of the mother and in the clam-
orous day the beauty of the child.57 Then there is
God's silence which needs no tongue to convey its mean-
ing. It is God's silence that "ripen men's thoughts
into speech."58

Darkness and solitude are only perfect when ac-
accompanied by silence. The lover who drank from morning's
golden goblet, who sang in joy of the daylight and drank from the ruby cup without knowing the giver of all these good deeds, sees the light of that Giver "through the silence and feels his smile filling the darkness." 59

"It is in darkness that the One appears as uniform; in the light the One appears as manifold." 60

It is in the moment of leisure and idleness that the God who is hidden in the heart of things speaks to us in buds and flowers.

"But we cannot afford to fritter our solitude where lies the throne of the infinite. We cannot truly live for one another, if we never claim the freedom to live alone, if our social duties consist in helping one another to forget that we have souls. To exhaust ourselves completely to each other, is to cheat the world of the amplitude of our inner atmosphere of leisure." 61

A moment of silence brings understanding. The heart "dipped in the silence of an hour" 62 is filled with love. Thus Tagore vindicates his claims of solitude, silence, and leisure: all satisfy that part of man's nature which embodies "the silence of the sea." 63 But man also has in him "the noise of the earth and the music of the air." True harmony within the soul then requires
participation as well as restraint.

India's unbalanced accentuation of meditation contrasts with the western partiality for extension of self outwards. Asia and America represent the polar extremes in their manner of search for spirituality. Tagore's message in this case, as in many others, is that of compromise between the two extremes, and one of ideality.

"True spirituality, as taught in our sacred lore, is calmly balanced in strength, in the correlation of the within and the without."64

That the living touch of God or his image cannot appear to the human soul while it is isolated in its contemplation is well depicted in The Gardener 72. With hard travail a worshipper erected a temple where he might contemplate in isolation the image upon the altar. The ceaseless smoke of the incense wound his heart in its heavy coils. No passage had been left through which the song of the bird, the murmur of the leaves, the hum of the busy village might enter. "The only sound that echoed in its dark dome was that of chanted incantations." The worshipper's mind became keen and still like a
pointed flame and his senses swooned in ecstasy. But the worshipper's true vision came when the "thunderstone" struck the temple and the light of the great outside replaced the imprisoned night of the temple.

Man will broaden the field of his knowledge of self in so far as he is continually engaged in setting free his power, his beauty, his goodness, his very soul in action.

"To work we must live, to live we must work;... life and activity are inseparably connected."\(^6^5\)

The soul cannot live on its own internal feelings and imaginations any more than the body could maintain its perfection of activity without food from the outside. The soul is ever in need of external objects "not only to feed its inner consciousness but to apply itself in action, not only to receive but to give."\(^6^6\)

As we continue the analysis of the nature of man we find manifold ways in which he is related to the great world. He is always in touch with the world through hunger and thirst and all his physical needs. The mind,
too, has its necessity. "It must find out reason in things," 67 and is not satisfied with facts alone, but must seek for laws and unifying principles which will simplify "mere quantity and number."

There is another element in man—-not the mental or physical—-but the personal man. Tagore gives us no exact definition of what he means by this personality in man, but treats rather the sources of this personality and its means of expression. The personal man is that portion of self which is outside the realm of necessity; it is in fact "the highest in man," who comes to the great world for something to satisfy this personality. Tagore is sympathetic with the realm of science, admitting its share in the building of a more perfect unity between finite and infinite; but in his opinion the world of science does not afford a means of expression for man's personality, because it is entirely removed from the feelings and emotions. Man cannot help revealing his personality in the world of use, but in utility self-expression is not the primary purpose. It is, however, in the realm of art that personality finds
its most perfect expression.

"The personality of man is that deeper unity, that ultimate mystery in him which, from the centre of his world, radiates towards its circumference; which is in his body, his mind, yet grows beyond his mind; which, through the things belonging to him, expresses something that is not in them; which, while occupying his present, overflows its banks of the past and the future."68

The personality of man is "conscious of its in-exhaustible abundance; it has the paradox in it that it is more than itself; it is more than as it is seen, as it is known, as it is used." The personal man is conscious of the infinite Personality within himself. He strives ever to give immortal expression of the consciousness. This may best be done in art which "uses the language of picture and music."

In this chapter we have studied the problem of self-realization as treated by Tagore. Believing that unity underlies all diversity, Tagore has felt that man must have some share of the nature of God, and man is capable of knowing God through the spiritual part of his nature. The realization of our soul has its moral and its spiritual sides, because of the dual nature of man. The
moral side has its selfish tendencies, the natural desires of the outer-self; they must be overcome by self-forgetfulness and suffering if soul-consciousness is to be attained. The spiritual side is represented by love and sympathy which must have complete freedom if man is to realize his unity. The importance of love is to be treated more fully in the succeeding chapter. Granting that one realized within his consciousness this principle of unity which links him with the greater Unity, we have seen that man gains an estimate of his importance; he asserts his individuality and takes pride in the fact that he exists; further, that the man possessed of such knowledge finds the best expression of his personality within him in the realm of art.
Chapter III

LOVE
Chapter III

LOVE

Love is a vagabond who can make the flowers bloom in the wayside dust better than in crystal jars kept in the drawing room.

--The Home and the World.

We have said that universal unity and man's realization of it are the major themes of Tagore's literary accomplishments. If we were to select another subject which he has woven into his songs repeatedly, it would be that of love. But his treatment of love is not to be separated from his conception of unity, for love is the medium by which man may realize the Infinite and the medium by which God speaks in the finite.

Love is interpreted by Tagore in all its exalted aspects: love of mother, son, husband, wife, lover, patriot, Dionysian, the nature worshipper, the God-frenzied. Every one of these he portrays with his characteristic softness of expression that recalls the lyrics of
Theophile Gautier, and with felicity resembling that of Shelley and Keats. In all situations he makes love triumphant. Finally he has assumed the guise of the lover himself in his songs of love for God.

Among his various definitions of love this is perhaps the most inclusive:

"Love is the perfection of consciousness. We do not love because we do not comprehend, or rather we do not comprehend because we do not love. For love is the ultimate meaning of everything around us. It is not a mere sentiment; it is the joy that is at the root of all creation. It is the white light of pure consciousness that emanates from Brahma. So to be one with this sarvanubhuh, this all-feeling being who is in the eternal sky, as well as in our inner soul, we must attain to that summit of consciousness which is love: Who could have breathed or moved if the sky were not filled with joy, with love? It is through the heightening of our consciousness into love, and extending it all over the world, that we attain Brahma-vihara, communion with this infinite joy."1

"Love is life in its fulness like the cup with its wine."2

That we may know how vitally the spirit of love has affected Tagore and what remarkable powers he attributes to it, let us analyse his treatment of love's phases, and finally review Tagore's own manifestations of love.
There is a Sanskrit word, **dvandva**, which means the series of opposites which constitute creation. The idea that the physical world as well as the spiritual are in a never-ending turmoil of conflict and reconciliation between opposites is carried over from the Upanishads into Tagore's treatment of "Realisation in Love." In physical nature there exist manifold instances of attraction and repulsion, of assimilation and dissemination, of the beautiful and the repulsive, of growth and decadence, at last of life and death. So in human nature there is a duality of self and not-self. But back of all these pairs of forces which on the surface would appear to make all creation a matter of contradictions, there is a reconciliation of pairs which proves that harmony and unity lie beneath confusion. The power of love which, when realized, absorbs all contradictions of self, the power of love which, when extended to the realm of human relationships, engulfs all the chaos of hate or greed and effects peace—these are truly the aspects of love to which Tagore pays homage.

Take, for example, the paradoxical statement that
liberation may be gained by bondage. Bondage and liberation represent the farthest extremes in the contradictory phases of existence, and yet,

"Bondage and liberation are not antagonistic. If God were absolutely free there would be no creation. The infinite being has assumed unto himself the mystery of finitude. And in him who is love, the finite and the infinite are made one."\(^5\)

It is the high function of love to welcome all limitations and to transcend them, for nothing is more independent than love.

"Our will attains its perfection when it is one with love, for only love is true freedom. This freedom is not in the negation of restraint. It spontaneously accepts bondage, because bondage does not bind it, but only measures its truth. Non-slavery is in the cessation of service, but freedom is in service itself.

A village poet of Bengal says:
'In love the end is neither pain nor pleasure but love only. Love gives freedom while it binds, for love is what unites.'\(^6\)

The poet sings of a love which is bought by pain; failure to give oneself in humility and suffering to the manifestations of love, makes the whole world miserly.

"Love is lit from love as fire from fire, but
whence came the first flame?  
In your being it leaps under the rod of pain."7

Love makes us courageous. Endurance is not the goal but the means of attainment of a perfect state of happiness.

"Love! when you come with the burning lamp of pain in your hand, I can see your face and know you as bliss."8

Love counts no loss too great if it may realize its truth.

"To wake up in love is not to wake up in a world of sweetness, but in a world of heroic endeavors where life wins its eternity through death, and joy its worth in suffering. As the most positive affirmation of truth is in love, it must realize itself through all that threatens us with deprivation. Poverty is afraid of the smallest loss, and wealth is daring in its expenditures. Love is the wealth of soul and therefore it reveals itself in utmost bravery and fortitude. And because it finds its resource in itself it begs not praise from men and no punishment can reach it from outside."9

Love may be likened to a lamp that is blind till it burns, to the incense which yields no perfume till it is touched by a flame; the mind, numb in its torpor, must be stricken by the pain of love to bring light to the human soul.10

Love is a possession of which we cannot be robbed.
It is greater than all earthly gains. The weary traveler pays his toll to the gatekeeper; he satisfies the ferryman with the small fee; he gives to the wayside beggar, and is robbed of his last earnings by a thief. He reaches his home and finds his loved one "waiting with anxious eyes at his door—sleepless and silent. Like an amorous bird she flies to his breast with eager love." The traveler cries in his thanksgiving, "Ay, ay, my God, much remains still. My fate has not cheated me of everything."11

That love is simple is made the theme of other songs. No mystery beyond the present, no striving for the impossible, no shadow behind the charm, no groping in the depth of the dark—"this love between you and me is simple as a song."12

At the same time, love is unfathomable. It cannot be explained to another by breaking it into parts; it cannot be conveyed by tears of pain; it is more than a moment of pleasure that flowers in an easy smile. Its pleasure and pain are boundless, and endless its wants
and wealth. The lover, powerless in his attempt to describe his feelings, asks in despair,

"Where are its shores and its bottom?"13

Without love one feels lonely; one experiences utter poverty even though he is surrounded by a multitude of beings. Similarly, "The road is lonely in its crowd for it is not loved."14

Love is greater than mere goodness. "He who wants to be good knocks at the gate; he who loves finds the gate open."15

In numerous ways Tagore has indicated the superiority of love to mere wisdom. The principle of duality may be extended to the analysis of mind. That portion of mind which is "sky-soaring"--in other words, the imagination, is comparable to the part of the earth's water which becomes rarified and ascends to the skies. The part of the mind's activity which is flooded by the light of love and cleansed by joyous occupation is like the water of the clouds which showers from the heights back to the water of the earth, making it wholesome and
fresh. The sky-soaring mind finds its completeness only when it has mingled with the earthbound mind, and both are purged by love.\textsuperscript{16}

In the story of Devayami's unrequited love for Kasha,\textsuperscript{17} Devayami closes the dialogue with a curse upon the messenger of the gods for his devotion to knowledge and his application to duty.

"Accursed be that great knowledge you have earned!—a burden that, though others share equally with you, will never be lightened. For lack of love may it ever remain as foreign to you as the cold stars are to the unespoused darkness of virgin Night!"\textsuperscript{18}

The story of Mind, which conscientiously set about building towers and gathering things in anticipation of the great Coming, is another symbolic treatment of the same theme.\textsuperscript{19} A poet, more sensitive to the message of the rains, of the rain-washed sky in which "the sunny hours hovered like butterflies over an unseen flower," discovered the news of the great Coming. He rushed to the office of Mind and boldly commanded, "Stop all work. The Great Day is come." Mind, troubled because he had
failed to complete the dome of his building, suddenly heard a voice from the sky. "Pull down your building, because to-day is the day of the Coming, and your building is in the way."20

Mind looked about where his lofty building lay in the dust. He failed to see the meaning of the morning star, of the lily washed in dew, and of the laughing child who ran to his mother's arms. Mind built walls to imprison itself, but failed to see the love which filled the whole earth and infinite space. He missed the meaning of love.

In the story of The Victory,21 Tagore describes a contest between a poet and a pandit, the former inspired by the vision of Princess Ajita, the latter schooled in the power of analysis and interpretations. Shekhar, the poet, sang of the day when the pipings of love's flute startled for the first time the hushed air of Vrinda forest. The shepherd women did not know who was the player or whence came the music. But they felt in it a message of tryst from the land of sunrise, and it floated from the verge of sunset with its sigh of sorrow.
"Tears filled their eyes and their life seemed to long for a death that would be its consummation."

Pundarik, the pandit, stood before the throne of the king, and challenged his rival to define who was this lover and who was the Beloved. In the terms of a logician and with all the bewildering science of metaphysics, Pundarik tore in bits the song of the Poet and scattered its raiments in the dust of pure intellect.

The scholar won the acclamation of the crowd. Is not this an indirect accusation against the individual who is so wont to join the throng of worshippers who enshrine intellect rather than become one of the singers of love? But the poet, rejected by the judge, is given the loveliest garland when the Princess Ajita recognises his superiority and, taking her own garland, she crowns him victor.

Love is not a mere impulse, but it must contain truth, which is law. The theme of the drama, Chitra, is briefly: man will not be satisfied with anything but the truth. Perfect love demands not the illusion of perfection but concrete reality in all its imperfections.
In the different scenes of Chitra we watch the gradual exhaustion of Arjuna's first rapture, the returning tide of his interest in that actual life, the world of duty and endeavor with which the elusive loneliness of Chitra has no relation. He finally cries for something which can last longer than pleasure; he wants the renowned princess Chitra, known for her prowess, "a man in valor, a woman in tenderness." The climax of Arjuna's emotion is reached in Scene viii, when Arjuna cries,

"I grope for that ultimate you, that bare simplicity of truth."

His love was incomplete until he saw the true Chitra.

The picture of the horror that would reign with love extinguished would be all too gruesome. Tagore has re-viewed it in a kaleidoscopic fashion.

"The world of things in which we live misses its equilibrium when its consummation with the world of love is lost. Then we have to pay with our soul for objects which are immensely cheap. And this can only happen when the prison walls of things threaten us with being final in themselves. Then it gives rise to terrible fights, jealousies and coercions, to a scramble for space and opportunities, for these are limited. We become painfully aware of the evil of this and try all measure of adjustment with the narrow bounds of a mutilated truth. This leads to
failures. Only he helps us who proves by his life that we have a soul whose dwelling is in the kingdom of love, and things lose the tyranny of fictitious price when we come to our spiritual freedom."24

In his treatment of the problem of choice between love and caste, Tagore has indicated his belief in the unifying power of love as the solution of his country’s difficulties. The message of The Renunciation25 is a rather obvious one; nevertheless, it is difficult for us to imagine the startling effect upon Indian readers of Hemanta’s calm assertion, "I don’t care for caste," and his declaration that he would not forsake his wife even though she was of lower birth than himself.

In applying the lesson of love to the problems of national and international relationships, Tagore has said,

"Civilization must be judged and prized by how much it has evolved and given expression to the love of humanity."26

We have mentioned only some phases of love treated by Tagore, some considerations affecting it. Above all, love is eternal. It is the immortality to be gained by living, just as fame in the immortality of the dead.
It is particularly interesting to analyse the kinds of love depicted by Tagore's novels. If we were to select the dominating theme and to define the tone of refinement of *The Wreck*, *Gora*, and *The Home and the World*, the author's sincere treatment of love would be the first trait mentioned.

Taking *The Wreck* first, the affection between father and daughter is highly idealized in the story of Annada Babu and Hemnalini. That Hemnalini's love for Ramesh and her subsequent misfortunes might have brought misunderstanding between father and daughter does not seem to have occurred to Tagore. The paternal affection is only heightened at the crisis, because Annada understood and sympathized with his daughter's suffering. It is significant that the character of Annada embodies many of the high ideals preached and practiced by Tagore himself. Annada is a member of the Brahmô Samaj; he is cultured and exceedingly tolerant. Tagore seems to say in *The Wreck* that the suffering endured in behalf of love cannot go unrewarded. Kamala's discovery of her first chosen lover is hardly to be interpreted as a vin-
dication on Tagore's part of India's time-honored custom of parents choosing husbands for their daughters. Rather it is to be considered as a triumph of perfect love. In Gora, Tagore says definitely that Indian women should have the privilege of choosing their mates. To demonstrate further how some tie of affection binds all the characters together in some fashion in The Wreck, consider the introduction of Umesh into the story whereby Kamala has an opportunity to show her instinctive motherly love. Nalinaksha Babu is a man of various affections. He is willing to sacrifice himself for his mother. He pours out his love in service of his religion and his country. Finally he finds in Kamala the embodiment of all which he holds to be true and best—that which will give him even greater religious strength. This was the imperfection of his admiration for Hemnalini.

Turning to Gora, we find a character who is almost identical with Annada; it is Paresh Babu who discloses a sincerity and inspirational force that guide all the main characters of the story. We see in Paresh Babu almost every type of virtue, and always above them and
through them all is love, the unity of all things.

The love of Satish for Binoy in this novel is distinctly energetic and refreshing, with its touches of amusement and pathos. There is the element of hero-worship in the youth's attachment to Binoy that permits Binoy to display many qualities of deep humanness.

The friendship of Binoy for Gora, is, in a sense, the thread which unifies and complicates the story. All the subtle changes of mood, the distress and pain of Binoy especially, in his struggle to retain his place in Gora's affections,—these add to the reader's appreciation of the strong bond between the two young men, and give a more positive flavor of reality to the tale.

Through Anadomayi, whose love for Gora and Binoy is his life's burden, Tagore expresses most charmingly the consolatory power of a virtuous woman over men. Sisterly love makes possible the keen understanding between Lolita and Sucharits. The other phases of devotion which form the plot are treated so subtly, without any pretense of passion, that they radiate charm in every respect. To depict love, expressed in the open in this
case, between a man and woman of different castes, is an exceedingly difficult task for any Indian author, and Tagore has done it nobly. The love which we watch in its growth between Gora and Sucharita signifies more than mere conquest of love for woman. The love of Gora represents an inner conflict of unmeasurable quality which battled against any recognition of woman. In Gora's opinion, woman is far below him in status; love for her is regarded as a distinct weakness. This same love which was a glory to Binoy when he discovered it, was a thing at first despicable to Gora. The turn of the tide, the illumination of his spirit when he realized love's real meaning--these mark the crisis in the novel.

The Home and the World is devoted to a love for ideals instead of love between characters.

An analysis of these situations impresses one with the fact that love, to Tagore, is the height of perfection to be attained by the human personality. Moreover, if love is genuine, it can bear no malice, it can conceal no falsehood, it is irrespective of people, it reveals only the good in man and transcends the evil.
Sanyasi, The King and the Queen, and Sacrifice, each drama in its turn gives added testimony to this belief.

In our next analysis, that of Tagore's own manifestations of love, we find seven different types which are of particular note: his love for the world, for children, for women, for poetry, for his country, for humanity, and back of them all, his love for God.

Tagore loves this world so passionately that he doubts the ability of heaven to supply the blessings of life enjoyed by her children. But what is the nature of this love? Let us study one of his songs.

"Oh, how I love this world which is lying so quietly! I feel like hugging it, with all its trees and flowers, rivers and plains, noise and quiet, mornings and evenings. I often wonder if heaven itself could give us anything like this, the treasure of such human beings in the making, so full of tenderness, weakness and love?

This earth-mother of ours has carried us in her arms, and presented us with her fields full of golden crops, her affectionate rivers and rivulets, her homesteads, where smiles of joy and tears of sorrow mingle to make them perfectly lovely...

Oh, how I love this world! I see on her forehead the furrows of pathos, and she seems to whisper in my ear, "I am the daughter of Divinity, but I have not his power; I love, but I cannot protect; I can begin but never complete; I can give birth but cannot rescue from the hands of death."
He loves the nature of the world which whispered to him of the truth of God's unity.

Few poets have an understanding of children like that revealed in Tagore's works. He loves the child because it has experienced none of the blinding disillusionments of life, but in its innocence the child perceives truths of life, displays the natural impulses of human nature, and possesses the real freedom of spirit that every older person should strive for as a part of self-realization. This is the same idea as Christ's when He said,

"Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."28

Gitanjali 60 is a particularly good example of Tagore's perception and exaltation of the simplicity of a child.

"Children have their play on the seashore of worlds. They know not how to swim, they know not how to cast their nets. Pearl fishers dive for pearls, merchants sail in their ships, while children gather pebbles and scatter them again. They seek not for hidden treasures, they know not how to cast nets."
The sea surges up with laughter and pale gleams the smile of the sea beach. Death-dealing waves sing meaningless ballads to the children, even like a mother while rocking her baby's cradle. The sea plays with children, and pale gleams the smile of the sea beach.

On the seashore of endless worlds children meet. 29

The songs dedicated to childhood in The Crescent Moon are saturated with a childlike imagination. A poet who can write such a poem as "Paper Boats" must have a love for the fancies and dreams of early youth.

"Day by day I float my paper boats one by one
down the running stream.
In big black letters I write my name on them
and the name of the village where I live.
I hope that someone in some strange land will
find them and know who I am.
I load my little boats with shiuli flowers from
our garden, and hope that these blooms of the dawn
will be carried safely to land in the night.
I launch my paper boats and look up into the
sky and see the little clouds setting their white
bulging sails.
I know not what playmate of mine in the sky
sends them down the air to race with my boats!
When night comes I bury my face in my arms and
dream that my paper boats float on and on under the
midnight stars.
The fairies of sleep are sailing in them, and
the lading is their baskets full of dreams. 30

Only poets profoundly instinct with sympathy for
children could have written The Post-Office.
Aside from Tagore's generalized expression of love and confidence in womanhood, he has given us some of his most pathetic poems in those containing his expression of grief at his wife's death; especially in those found in Lover's Gift and Crossing, pages fifty-five and fifty-six, and in The Fugitive, pages sixty-seven to seventy-three.

In the former he has said of her,

"You have painted my thought's horizon with the sunset colours of your departure, leaving a track of tears across the earth to love's heaven... I think I see you watching there in the balcony with your lamp lighted where the end and the beginning of all things meet."31

A survey of Tagore's love themes would be incomplete without some added explanation of his ideas concerning woman, her function and status in society. Tagore's opinions are naturally moulded by the Indian traditional conception of woman's place in relation to man. Without criticism, we may state his opinions.

"Woman's function is the passive function of the soil which not only helps the tree to grow but keeps its growth within limits. The tree must have life's adventure and send up and send out its branches on all sides, but all its deeper bonds of
relation are hidden and held firm in the soil and this helps it to live.

Woman is endowed with the passive qualities of chastity, modesty, devotion and power of self-sacrifice in a greater measure than man is... This passive quality has given woman that large and deep placidity which is so necessary for the healing and nourishing and storing of life... Life should be like a lamp where the potentiality of light is far greater in quantity than what appears as the flame. It is in the depth of passiveness in woman's nature that this potentiality is stored. 32

Tagore is most positive that woman's place is in the home and not in organized business. It is a religious responsibility for her to live the life which is her own.

"For their activity is not for money-making or organizing power, or intellectually probing the mystery of existence, but for establishing and maintaining human relationships requiring the highest moral qualities. It is the consciousness of the spiritual character of their life's works, which lifts them above the utilitarian standard of the immediate and the passing, surrounds them with the dignity of the eternal, and transmutes their suffering and sorrow into a crown of light."33

As he views the tasks of the modern woman, free after so long a subjugation, he believes it is within her power to build a more spiritual civilization.

"At last the present age has sent its cry to woman, asking her to come out from her segregation
in order to restore the spiritual supremacy of all
that is human in the world of humanity."34

"O woman, you are not merely the handiwork of
God, but also of men; these are ever endowing you
with beauty from their hearts.
Poets are weaving for you a web with threads
of golden imagery; painters are giving your form
ever new immortality.
The sea gives its pearls, the mines their
gold, the summer gardens their flowers, to cover
you, to make you more precious.
The desire of men's hearts has shed its glory
over your youth.
You are one half woman and one half dream."35

A poet who has idealized womanhood until her glory
is no longer confined to the ordinary virtues of woman-
hood, a fictionist who sees in woman a creature "half
woman and half dream", will not, one fears, make a very
successful appeal to the womankind of India!

As an adequate representation of Rabindranath's
love of song, found so amply in Lover's Gift and Crossing,
The Gardener, and Gitanjali we quote:

"It has fallen upon me, the service of thy
singer.
In my songs I have voiced thy spring flowers,
and given rhythm to thy rustling leaves.
I have sung into the hush of thy night and
peace of thy morning.
The thrill of the first summer rains has
passed into my tunes, and the waving of the
Tagore's love of his country has already been discussed. We may re-emphasize his love for the youth of India which caused him to establish his schools. Love of his country and love for humanity is based on the theory that love is the conciliatory factor which must govern all relationships that are to assist in one's realization of the Infinite.

_Gitanjali_ is largely devoted to poems in praise of the Great Lover. It is the poet's wish that his song put aside all adornments, that he may make his life "simple and straight, like a flute of reed," for Him who is the master Poet.

"Let all my songs gather together their diverse strains into a single current and flow to a sea of silence in one salutation to thee.
Like a flock of homesick cranes flying night and day back to their mountain nests let all my life take its voyage to its eternal home in one salutation to thee."37

Tagore prays for a love that knows no restraint, for
a love that is "cool and pure like your rain that blesses
the thirsty earth and fills the homely earthen jars", for a love that will soak down into the center of his
being and from there will spread like the unseen sap
through the branching tree of life, and for a love that
keeps the heart still with the fulness of peace.

What James said of Browning—"The meeting point of
man and God is love"—may appropriately be applied to
Tagore. Love, for the latter poet, is the supreme prin-
ciple both of morality and religion. Love, once for
all, solves that contradiction between them, which, both
in energy and practice, has embarrassed the world for so
many years. Love is the sublimest conception attainable
by man; a life inspired by it is the most perfect form
of goodness one can conceive. Therefore love is, at the
same moment, man's moral ideal, and the very essence of
Godhood. A life actuated by love is divine, whatever
other limitations it may have. Such is the perfection
and glory of this emotion, when it has been translated
into self-conscious motive and become the energy of an
intelligent will, that it lifts him who owns it to the
sublimest heights of being.

Love is for Tagore the magic word which means life. Realization means freedom; it means beauty; it is to be accomplished by love. One must love, that is all; love the stars, the sea, the grass, love the child, the mother, the aged man, the poet. Love is the law of life, the road to freedom, the pathway to God. As we love, we find that what we love is of like nature with ourselves. In the sun and the stars, in the fragrant rose and the singing bird, in the poorest, the lowliest, of our fellowmen, we find our brother, our spiritual kin, our souls. A common life, revealed and quickened by our love, is seen in them all. We become one with them all; we become one with them and they with us. We find our souls. We discover this higher, better, noble self unknown before, and the task of self-realization is accomplished.
Chapter IV

NATURE AS A PATHWAY TO MAN'S VISION OF UNIVERSAL UNITY
Chapter IV

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Thou art the sky and thou art the nest as well. 0 thou beautiful, there in the nest it is thy love that encloses the soul with colours and sounds and odours.

There comes the morning with the golden basket in her right hand bearing the wreath of beauty, silently to crown the earth.

And there comes the evening over the lonely meadows deserted by herds, through trackless paths, carrying cool draughts of peace in her golden pitcher from the western ocean of peace.

But there, where spreads the infinite sky for the soul to take flight in, reigns the stainless white radiance. There is no day nor night, nor form nor colour, and never, never a word. Gitanjali 67.

In discussing thus far Tagore's scheme for the realization of universal unity, his stress upon self-realization as an essential step has been noted. Extending the principle of unity outside self, Tagore has recommended the spirit of love as the unifying power in social relationships and in the communion between an individual and the Infinite.
It is the purpose of this chapter to study still further those obstructions which might blind one to a perception of the spirit which dwells in all things alike; it is the writer's purpose here to explain Tagore's views of man's relation to nature and through nature to the Infinite; further, to present, by means of quotation from representative poems, some conception of Tagore's feeling of close kinship with nature and his resultant treatment of that subject; finally, to compare his interpretation of nature with that of some English mystic poets.

Tagore's biography is so replete with questionings in his early years as to the mysteries that lurked in the sky and in the sprouting seeds, that it is not at all unnatural he should have arrived at the mystical conclusion that the secret of the universe is written clearly all around us, could we but train and purify our minds and emotions so as to behold it.

It was the great out-of-doors that impressed him so deeply at the time of his first journey when he watched "...the ebb and flow of the tide on the Ganges; the
various gaits of so many different boats; the shifting of the shadows of the trees from west to east; and, over the fringe of shade-patches of the woods on the opposite bank, the gush of golden life-blood through the pierced breast of the evening sky. Some days would be cloudy from early morning; the opposite woods black; black shadows moving over the river. Then with a rush would come the vociferous rain, blotting out the horizon; the dim line of the other bank taking its leave in tears; the river swelling with suppressed heavings; and the moist wind making free with the foliage of the trees overhead."

Many years later he was led to a new consciousness of the joy and beauty in nature by one evening's revelation. The glow of the sunset combined with the wan twilight seemed to take on an especially wonderful attractiveness. Rabindranath was pacing the terrace of the Jorosanko house when the unusual glow seemed to lift the covering of triviality from the world.

"Was this due to some magic in the evening light?"

he wondered. Never!

"I could see at once that it was the effect of the evening which had come within me; its shades had obliterated my self. While the self was rampant during the glare of day, everything I perceived was mingled with and hidden by it. Now that the self was put into the background, I could see the world in its true aspect. And that aspect has nothing of triviality in it, it is full of joy and beauty."
This experience was followed by a peculiarly mystical revelation when a sudden vision of the world, bathed in a wonderful radiance, "pierced in a moment through the folds of sadness and despondency" that had accumulated in his heart. These two experiences broke down the barrier between himself and Nature. As Tagore explained in later years, he had always enjoyed a simple and intimate communion with nature.

"Each one of the coconut trees in our garden had for me a distinct personality. When, on coming home from the Normal school, I saw behind the sky-line of our roof-terrace blue-grey water-laden clouds thickly banked up,—the immense depth of gladness which filled me all in a moment I can recall clearly now. On opening my eyes every morning, the blithely awakening world used to call me to join it like a playmate; the fervid noonday of the siesta hours, would spirit me away from the work-a-day world into the recesses of its hermit cell; and the darkness of night would open the door to its phantom paths, and take me over all the seven seas and thirteen rivers, past all possibilities, right into wonderland."

We have, however, a few examples in Tagore's earlier poetry in which the tempestuous spirit of nature was treated as antagonistic to human welfare, indicating that his final mystical interpretation of nature was evolutionary in its development together with his belief in
universal unity.

As a particular instance of the portrayal of this other side of nature, there is the poem "Sea Waves", from Manasi, regarded as the greatest sea poem in the Bengali language. The poem is too long to quote in its entirety, but the first stanza is representative of that vigor and turbulent spirit which Tagore poured into some of his earlier poems.

"On the breast of the shoreless sea Destruction swings and sweeps,
In dreadful festival;
The indomitable wind is roaming, ungovernable in strength,
Beating its thousand wings.
Sky and sea in one are reeling together in vast confusion;
Darkness veils the eyes of the universe.
The lightning flashes and threatens, the foam-fields hiss,
The sharp, white, terrible mirth of brute Nature.
Eyeless, earless, houseless, loveless,
The mad Forces of Evil Rush to ruin, without direction, they have cast off all restraints."6

If any mark of distinction were to be made between Tagore's early and later treatment and love for nature, it would be that it was the mere beauty of Nature, a
sense of its forces and powers, which brought him joy
and peace at first; in later years it was a vision of the
life in Nature that transformed the whole of existence
for him. It was the latter vision of nature that Words-
worth possessed more or less from early youth.

Rabindranath has the eye which pierces into the
secret of nature. He is a poet in whose hands the
crudest stuff of existence requires a poetic coloring.
The spiritual phases of nature leap up to his God-filled
soul, kindle devotion in his heart, and set songs to his
lips. At times it is a fairy universe where the stars
talk and the sky stoops down to amuse him, and all nature
comes to his window with trays of bright toys. To him,
"the touch of an infinite mystery passes over the trivial
and the familiar, making it break down into ineffable
music." The trees, the stars, and the blue hills "ache"
with a meaning which can never be uttered in words. A
breath of divine passion passes over the world, making it
pure and perfect. He feels "a thrill passing through the
air with the notes of a far-away song floating from the
other shore." He can never escape the divine presence,
twist and turn as he will. The deep shadows of the rainy July and the stormy night suggest God's presence. His is a mystic soul which can hear the voice of God in the tempest and see His hand in the stilling of the waves.

It is no wonder that Rabindranath advocates life in nature and in the open as the best means of spiritual progress, for in nature the religious eye will see the Infinite lying stretched in silent repose. Rabindranath sings not of the cloister or the retreat, but of the open highway. He revels in the open air, he joys in the light of the sun and the moon. According to him, the best way to derive divine inspiration is to lose one's self in the contemplation of the wonders of creation.

"I woke and found his letter with the morning. 

......

When the night grows still and stars come out one by one, I will spread it in my lap and stay silent.

The rustling leaves will read it aloud to me, the rushing stream will chant it, and the seven wise stars will sing it to me from the sky." 9

Rabindranath feels that he understands the voice of the stars, the silence of the heavens; he believes that the songs of the Infinite, "like birds from the lonely land
of snow," will find some form of expression in him because his life has filled itself at the fountain of nature.$^{10}$

The contrast between the regard for nature felt by the East and the West, respectively, has been felt keenly by Tagore. Western utilitarianism not only prevents man's discovery of his higher self, but it precludes any realization of the harmony between man's spirit and the spirit of nature. Fear that India's people might lose faith in the long-cherished view that the world and man are one great truth, has been one cause for Tagore's resentment at the intrusion of the Western modernism into India.

The forest-dwelling sage of ancient India, by his contact with the living growth of nature and his constant intercourse with her varying aspects, lost all desire to extend his dominion over his surroundings. "His aim was not to acquire but to realise, to enlarge his consciousness by growing into his surroundings."$^{11}$ The sage held with the Upanishads, that the emancipation of the soul lay in its realizing the ultimate truth of unity and he said,
"Know all that moves in the moving world is enveloped by God; and find enjoyment through renunciation, and not through greed and possession." 12

Whether or not Tagore is fair in his judgment of Westerners when he says that they take pride alone in subduing nature, that they create an artificial association between themselves and universal nature by considering the world as something to be conquered, cannot be judged here. It is Tagore's conclusion, however, that Westerners consider nature as belonging exclusively to inanimate objects and beasts, and that they feel a sudden unaccountable break between animal life and human nature. Tagore likens the folly of such an elevation of human life to the attempt to divide bud and blossom into two separate categories, and

"...the attributing of their beauty to two different and antithetical principles." 13

India's nurture of her love for the out-of-doors and the way in which she has cherished the beauty of mountains, forests, and rivers, reverts to the teaching of the ancient rishis. Earth, air, water and light, fruits and flowers, are not merely physical phenomena to be
used and left aside, but they are just as elemental to
the maintenance of universal harmony as man's existence. 
Not that India has ignored the superiority of man in the
scale of creation, but her definition of his preeminence
differs from a Westerner's. It is not in his power to
conquer that which is below him, but in the power to
unite himself and nature that man may assert his superi-
ority.

The things of nature and the events of the world
will cause trouble and vexation of the spirit, if, in-
stead of utilizing them for spiritual ends, we make use
of them for our own sensation and enjoyment.

"Why did the lamp go out?
I shaded it with my cloak to save it from
the wind, that is why the lamp went out.
Why did the flower fade?
I pressed it to my heart with anxious
love, that is why the flower faded.
Why did the stream dry up?
I put a dam across it to have it for my
use, that is why the stream dried up.
Why did the harp string break?
I tried to force a note that was beyond
its power, that is why the harp string is broken."14

Human consciousness and animal life are different
stages of the same development, different grades of the same
energy. This does not necessitate any antagonism between spirit and nature. The same light dwells in the world that dwells in the human soul. Man is differentiated from beast by his possession of reason. This freedom of reason is incomplete, however, unless united with perfect sympathy.

"For man stands at the parting of the ways. His strings have to be tuned for a deeper and more complex music than those of nature. Man has his own path. These have not yet found their full harmony with their surroundings. Therefore they are apt to break out in the ugliness of discord." 15

There is in man's nature also a division between the fleeting and the permanent which animals have not because they live on the surface of life.

While the whole universe is regarded by Rabindranath as the expression of God, still, different things express God in different degrees. Tagore thus admits the conception of degrees of reality.

"The revelation of the infinite in the finite, which is the motion of all creation, is not seen in its perfection in the starry heavens, in the beauty of the flowers. It is in the soul of man." 16

"Where lie hidden the boundaries of recognition between man and the beast whose heart knows no spoken
language?" Tagore has tried to answer this question indirectly in several poems where animal life and human beings are pictured side by side, drawn together usually by the bond of affection.

In the brief story of the workman's children in The Gardener, there is a typical example. While the workman and his wife are busy with their digging, the little daughter plays at the landing-place by the river. She is absorbed in her childish scouring and scrubbing of pans and pots, when she hears the sudden bleating of a lamb and her brother's scream. Leaving the cleaning of her dishes, the girl runs to her brother, and taking the lamb under one arm and her brother under the other, and dividing her affection and caresses between them, she binds "in one bond of affection the offspring of beast and man."18

The fact that man can have such an affection for beast indicates that the two have something in common beneath their disguises. This Infinite spirit which has manifested itself alike in all forms of creation is this unifying power which makes possible the understanding and
affection between beast and human nature.

It is this Deity that is praised in the Gayatri, the verse regarded as the epitome of the Vedas, which is used as the text for meditation by the students of Santiniketan.

"The Deity who is in Fire and Water, who pervades the Universe through and through, and makes his abode in tiny plants and forests--to such a Deity we bow down forever and ever."19

The dualism referred to previously as a characteristic of all creation, has many manifestations in nature. It may be broadly classified under two divisions: the outward nature which is constantly shifting, busy, restless, and the inward nature which is quiet and peaceful. There can be little dispute of the statement that Tagore is usually attracted to the peaceful aspects of nature; but he is not always thus attracted, for the storms and the rains are a continual inspiration to the poet. The deep shadows of the rainy July, the lightning, like a fiery snake, biting the darkness again and again, the groaning sky on a stormy night, the clouds appearing on the aerial stage like "dancers
shaking their tambourines" of thunder, the ink-black river, and the flashing angry sky--what a wealth of imagery they add to the Indian poet's scenes! What a heard of moods they suggest to his fanciful mind! But these moods are usually melancholy—not exultant. Vision of primitive nature leads him to withdrawal into introspection, but it does not inspire him to make a glorious plea for freedom, as it did Shelley.

Tagore gazes at the far-away gloom of the sky and his heart wanders wailing with the restless wind. He looks out from his window where he can see the day, dim with rain; he watches the angry lightnings "glance through the tattered cloud-veils", he hears the low groan of the forest that frets and sways like a "caged lion shaking its mane in despair."

"On such a day amidst the winds beating their wings, let me find my place in thy presence. For the sorrowing sky has shadowed my solitude, to deepen the meaning of thy touch about my heart."21

One feels almost an annoying monotony in Rabindranath's repeated treatment of this phase of nature. From another description comes an identical picture.
"The scouts of a distant storm have pitched their cloud-tents in the sky; the light has paled; the air is damp with tears in the voiceless shadows of the forest." 22

Many a page seems to be soaked, almost sodden, with his intense realism of the rainy season. What is perhaps his finest short story, Cloud and Sun, opens:

"It had rained all yesterday. To-day, the rain had ceased, and all morning straggling rays of sunlight and dense masses of cloud drew their shadows, like the strokes of a brush, over the autumn fields of ripening paddy. The spreading green canvas would flush beneath the streaks of sunlight, only to fade into darkness again; growing golden, it swiftly exchanged its brightness for cool shadows and quiet colours. Cloud and sun, sole actors in the sky's vast theatre, played their part; and their every movement found immediate response on that lower step, an endless flicker and alteration." 23

Nature is so often made the reflection of gloom or of introspective phases of human nature, that the verdict of Tagore's fellow-countrymen is justified: that his two greatest gifts are his interpretation of nature and his interpretation of sorrow.

During the years spent at Shileida, Tagore was particularly susceptible to the melancholy character of the river. The type of speculation found in one of his letters of 1891, occurred more often in his youth than..."
in his later years, and yet it is a mood that is quite characteristic.

"I sat wondering. Why is there always this deep shade of melancholy over the fields and river banks, the sky and the sunshine of our country? And I came to the conclusion that it is because with us Nature is obviously the more important thing. The sky is free, the fields limitless; and the sun merges them in one blazing whole. In the midst of this, man seems trivial. He comes and he goes, like the ferry boat, from this shore to the other; the babbling fun of his talk, the fitful echo of his song, is heard; the slight movement of his pursuit of his petty desires is seen in the world's market places, but how feeble, how temporary, how tragically meaningless it all seems amidst the immense aloofness of the Universe."24

Added to the list of Tagore's favorite scenes, there should be those of the night, the dawn, the noon-day, and dusk, each of which re-emphasizes his preference for the non-turbulent phases of nature.

The beauty of an evening sky comprehends forces that are tremendous in their awfulness. Nevertheless it reveals to Tagore a harmony that must be at the center of the world's activities.

"Because we are able to take view of this evening world where the distant and the near are brought face to face, we can see what is positively
true in it, its beauty and unfathomable peace." The stillness of the twilight hour, when the birds have sung their last and the winds are at rest on the waters, in the poet's imagination, this is the wedding hour of the sunset with the Unseen Comer.

"Make me thy poet, O Night, veiled Night! There are some who have sat speechless for ages in thy shadow; let me utter their songs. 

Many a questioning mind has stealthily entered thy courtyard and roamed through thy lampless house seeking for answers. From many a heart, pierced with the arrow of joy from the hands of the Unknown, have burst forth glad chants, shaking the darkness to its foundation. The wakeful souls gaze in the starlight in wonder at the treasure they have suddenly found. Make me their poet, O Night, the poet of thy fathomless silence." 

Tagore usually makes night the symbol of peace and quiet; it is the time of dreams and the fruition of unity between loved ones; it is in the deep silence of the night that the unseen Visitor comes most often to remind the poet that he must be a hospitable host to the Infinite spirit who is abroad on the stormy night, threading his course through the mazy depth of gloom.

The light of morning sheds a radiance on all the
earth. In so doing she bares the heart of truth. In the light all contradictions of life are seen, and yet an inner harmony is felt.

"Morning appears in her simple robe of white. Hope and joy come in her wake all the more triumphant, because not a single blade of grass or thorn is hidden. Morning has dawned upon me at last. My heart looks out upon the undulating field of life, chequered with the fruitful green and the pallor of the sandy waste, and feels that all is good. It is vast; it is free to all the horizons; and over it from end to end reigns the light of the sky."29

There is a veritable languor in some of the poet's descriptions of montane scenes. Nature is listless, man is indolent. Few poets can make their sentences heavy with the lassitude, the tense, blinding quietness of a tropical afternoon, as Tagore has in some of his typically Indian scenes.

"The noonday air is quivering, like gauzy wings of a dragon-fly. Roofs of the village huts brood bird-like over the drowsy households, while a Kokil sings unseen from its leafy loneliness. The fresh liquid notes drop upon the tuneless toil of the human crowd...."30

Again, in The Gardener:

"It was midday when you went away. The sun was strong in the sky. Fitful gusts came winnowing through the smells of
many distant fields.

The doves cooed tireless in the shade, and a bee strayed in my room humming the news of many distant fields.

The village slept in the noonday heat. The road lay deserted.

In sudden fits the rustling of the leaves rose and died.

.....

The river ran unruffled under the shady bank. The lazy white clouds did not move...."31

So Tagore has not confined his prose or poetic interpretations of nature to the disclosure and praise of the Unity that joins in one bond all creation. What is just as interesting to the reader is the number of poems revealing Tagore's deep love of nature, his feeling of unity with it, that permits him to read messages in phases of lower life which may be applied to human relationships.

Rabindranath is not content to sit in idle contemplation of nature's panorama. He is ever attempting to reproduce in song the "light of music that illumines the world." He wants to join in the revelation of the life breath of music that "runs from the sky", the "holy stream of music that breaks through all stony obstacles
and rushes on."

"My heart longs to join in thy song, but vainly struggles for a voice. I would speak, but speech breaks not into song, and I cry out baffled. Ah, thou hast made my heart captive in the endless meshes of thy music, my Master!" 32

He has tried to capture in rhyme the whistle of the wind, "the beat of the oar-strokes from a passing boat." 33

So complete is the inter-communication between nature and the poet that Tagore can not help feeling that he has added something to the color of nature's scenes and perhaps some glory to his life-long playmate.

"I feel that my heart will leave its own colour in all your scenes, O Earth; when I bid you farewell. Some notes of mine will be added to your season's melody, and my thoughts will breathe unrecognised through the cycle of shadows and sunshine.

In far distant days summer will come to the lovers' garden, but they will not know that their flowers have borrowed an added beauty from my songs, nor that their love for this world has been deepened by mine." 34

The thought that he may have been a part of nature in some former birth and that his emergence into human consciousness has separated him from the great Earth, fills the poet with a genuine sadness.
"How often, ... Earth, have I felt my being yearn to flow over you, sharing in the happiness of each green blade that raises its signal banner in answer to the beckoning blue of the sky!

I feel as if I had belonged to the ages before I was born. That is why, in the days when the autumn light shimmers on the mellowing ears of rice, I seem to remember a past when my mind was everywhere, and even to hear voices as of playfellows echoing from the remote and deeply veiled past.

When, in the evening the cattle return to their folds, raising dust from the meadow paths, as the moon rises higher than the smoke ascending from the village huts, I feel sad as for some great separation that happened in the first morning of existence." 35

In contrast to those poets who hail the approach of spring, who watch nature with trained eyes as she discards her winter garments, who see beauty replacing the drabness of a non-variegated world, Tagore sings a joyful song to spring because of the new life that she brings to his own physical body and the joy that she pours into his heart. All this serves as more evidence of the complete absorption of his self in nature and of nature in his soul.

"The spring with its leaves and flowers has come into my body.
The bees hum there the morning long, and the winds idly play with the shadows.
A sweet fountain springs up from the heart of
my heart.
    My eyes are washed with delight like the dew-bathed morning, and life is quivering in all my limbs like the sounding strings of the lute."

A similar emotion is expressed in *Fruit-Gathering* LXXXIII, in which the poet says that he feels the stars shining within him.

"The world breaks into my life like a flood. The flowers blossom in my body. All the youthfulness of land and water smokes like an incense in my heart; and the breath of all things plays on my thought as on a flute."

So steeped in the wonders of nature has been the genius of Tagore that every phenomenon of nature has a particular symbolic importance. God's imminence is the indirect theme of a dialogue between the sun and the dew-drop.

"What is there but the sky, O Sun, that can hold thine image?"
"I dream of thee, but to serve thee I can never hope", the dew-drop wept and said, "I am too small to take thee unto me, great lord, and my life is all tears."
"I illumine the limitless sky, yet I can yield myself up to a tiny drop of dew," thus the Sun said; "I shall become but a sparkle of light and fill you, and your little life will be a laughing orb."

Tagore possesses the unique ability of merging the human figures of his stories with the landscape. Some-
times this mingling of personality with setting is a matter
of subtle and exquisite perception of the ultimate inter-
relation between mind and matter.

"But the black eyes need no translating; the
mind itself throws a shadow upon them. In them
thought opens or shuts, shines forth or goes out in
the darkness, hangs steadfast like the setting moon,
or like the swift and restless lightning, illumines
all quarters of the sky."39

At other times this mingling takes the form of an
indistinct picture where background and foreground are
perfectly blended in an atmosphere of weirdness. Such a
haunting picture adds to the artistry of "The Auspicious
Vision."40 The reader is aware of an uncanniness in the
first scene where the child is made the center of a
perfect image of beauty as she stands at the lakeside,
a white swan beneath each arm. Again at noon, when the
boatmen and fisherfolk have gone to their dinners, when
the villagers are asleep and the birds are still, when
the great busy world pauses in its toil, then beneath the
vast impressive heavens there are only dumb Nature and a
dumb child sitting very silent, one under the spreading
sunlight, the other where a tree casts its shadow.

The emotional effect of such a fusion of scene and
character is well demonstrated in the most pathetic scene of the novel, Gora. The misunderstanding between Binoy and Gora had made an awkward gap in their friendship. Binoy has come to apologise and explain his position. The two men are alone on the roof-terrace, resting on their mats. The sky is filled with the autumn moonlight. Thin white clouds, "like short spells of drowsiness", pass over the moon and then float away. On every side up to the horizon, stretch rows of roofs of all heights and sizes, mingling here and there with the tops of the trees, "like an unmeaning, unsubstantial phantasy of light and shade." 41 In the midst of this quiet glory, Binoy reveals his very heart to Gora, trying to explain the new joy that love has brought to him. The depth of feeling that is exposed in his confession and in the renewal of the friendship pledge between the two "brothers" is suffused with the moonlight splendor. One feels that Nature had a part in the reconciliation.

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Wordsworth's special gift was rather to interpret than to describe. He was, in time, convinced that nature's
phenomena had special messages for man, providing he was capable of interpreting them.

"For the Man--
Who, in this spirit, communes with the Forms
Of nature, who with understanding heart
Both knows and loves such objects as excite
No morbid passions, no disquietude,
No vengeance, and no hatred—needs must feel
The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy."42

Continuing in the same trend of thought, Wordsworth said,

... by contemplating these Forms
In the relation which they bear to man,
He shall discern how, through the various means
Which silently they yield, are multiplied
The spiritual presences of absent things.

... time will come
When they shall meet no object but may teach
Some acceptable lesson to their minds,
Of human suffering, or of human joy.
So shall they learn, while all things speak of man,
Their duties from all forms.43

Tagore greatly resembles Wordsworth in his interpretation of nature as the great exponent of love from which man may draw all his ethical and moral principles.
There is a proverbial manner and simple symbolism in some of nature's precepts for man as translated by Rabináranath.
Take for example the doctrine of humility as treated variously in *Stray Birds*.

"The cloud stood humbly in a corner of the sky.
The morning crowned it with splendour."44

The honey bee and the butterfly, blessed with garments of different richness, have dissimilar expectations of the world.

"Does sip honey from flowers and hum their thanks when they leave.
The gaudy butterfly is sure that the flowers owe thanks to him."45

"The roots below the earth claim no reward for making the branches fruitful."46

Love to the lover is simple as a song. Likewise nature to its lover loses its complexities and acquires a simplicity which is an ideal for individual and social behavior. The sun decked in the richness of one simple garment of light excels all the clouds decked in an ever-changing gorgeousness.47

The joy and happiness of life that spread themselves abroad in the sunshine of an early autumn day fill the poet's heart. He looks about and sees the silent sky and the flowing water; he feels that happiness is spread
abroad as simply as a smile on a child's face.

Tagore's love for children and his belief that their simplicity gives them an added power of perception, accounts for his description of their relation to nature. Like primitive man, a child is not thwarted in his ability to comprehend the deeper truths of nature because pressure from the realm of necessity has not yet reached him.

"That ancient cry of nature--her dumb call to unborn life--has reached this child's heart and leads it alone beyond the fence of our times: so there she stands, possessed of eternity!"48

The world of nature, in its constant willingness to consent to man's exorbitant demands, is one of the greatest teachers of sacrifice in all creation.

"The woodcutter's axe begged for its handle from the tree.

The tree gave it."49

It should be man's aim to attain a vision of the whole and he should be dissatisfied with an approximated knowledge gathered from synthesis. For "by plucking her petals you do not gather the beauty of the flower."50
Objects of nature acknowledge their dependence upon outside sustenance even as the human soul must acknowledge its insufficiency before the Supreme Giver.

"To fledgling birds' flight in the sky may appear incredible. They may with apparent reason measure the highest limit of their possibilities by the limited standard of their nests. But, in the meanwhile, they find that their food is not grown inside those nests, it is brought to them across the measureless blue. There is a silent voice that speaks to them, that they are more than what they are, and that they must not laugh at the message of soaring wings and glad songs of freedom."51

To commune with the unutterable we should get away from the noisy world of action, escape from the machinery of life which kills the soul. Dull mechanical work degrades and brutalizes the individual, while life in nature elevates and purifies the soul. Rabindranath beautifully depicts an enthusiastic surrender to the spontaneity of natural scenery leading a man to his goal.

"The repose of the sun-embroidered green gloom slowly spread over my heart. I forgot for what I had travelled, and I surrendered my mind without struggle and songs.

At last I woke from my slumber and opened my eyes. I saw thee standing by me, flooding my sleep with thy smile. How I feared that the path was long and wearisome, and the struggle to reach thee was hard!"52
Nature is guileless and unsuspecting. She is unconscious of man's untruthfulness.

"The light that plays like a naked child, among the green leaves happily knows not that man can lie." Nature reminds the poet of man's transitory life.

"The sky gazes on its own endless blue and dreams. We clouds are its whims, we have no home. The stars shine on the crown of Eternity. Their records are permanent, while ours are pencilled, to be rubbed off the next moment. Our part is to appear on the stage of the air, to sound our tambourines and fling flashes of laughter. But from our laughter comes the rain, which is real enough, and thunder which is no jest. Here we have no claim upon Time for wages, and the breath that blew us into being blows us away before we are given a name."  

Tagore's cry for freedom, for emancipation of his own consciousness from the fetters of worldly existence, are not vigorous, like Shelley's. Still, Tagore's prayer for freedom has a true poetic spirit.

"Free me as free are the birds of the wilds, the wanderers of unseen paths.
Free me as free are the deluges of rain and, as the storm that shakes its locks and rushes on to its unknown end.
Free me as free is the forest fire, as is the thunder that laughs aloud and hurls defiance to darkness."  

Tagore realizes that however closely united he may be
with the inner spirit of nature, that same spirit may speak with entirely different voice to another listener or observer.

"I loved the sandy bank where, in the lonely pools, ducks clamoured and turtles basked in the sun; where with evening, stray fishing boats took shelter in the shadow by the tall grass.

You loved the wooded bank where shadows were gathered in the arms of the bamboo thickets; where women came with their vessels through the winding lane.

The same river flowed between us, singing the same sang to both banks. I listened to it, lying alone on the sand under the stars; and you listened sitting on the edge of the slope in the early morning light. Only the words I heard from it you did not know and the secret it spoke to you was a mystery forever to me."

Finally, one who knows and realizes the wonders of growth, of the glory and power stored within the single sand-grain, or the tiniest drop of dew, knows the supreme message of nature; he has approached that much closer to the realization of the Infinite who sees the same spirit in the small and the great of all creation.

"The day breaks in the east, like a bud bursting its sheath to come out in flower. But if this fact belonged only to the outside world of events, however could we find our entrance to it? It is a sunrise in the sky of our consciousness, it is a new creation, fresh in bloom, in our life."
Open your eyes and see. Feel this world as a living flute might feel the breath of music passing through it; feel the meeting of creative joy in the depth of consciousness. Meet this morning light in the majesty of your existence, where it is one with you. But if you sit with your face turned away, you build a separating barrier in the undivided sphere of creation, where events and the creative consciousness meet."57

The human cry, "Whither am I bound?" or "How may I fulfill my purpose?" is like that of the odor enclosed securely within the bud. The odor watches the day depart while he remains prisoner. While he mourns his fate, the spring breeze passes by and overhears the wish of the odor to fulfill its being.

The breeze says reassuringly to the odor:

"Do not lose heart, timid thing! The perfect dawn is near when you will mingle your life with all life and know at last your purpose."58

Tagore's interpretation of nature goes very much deeper than love for the out-of-doors or a gift of landscape. He has lived so close to the world about him that his sympathy seems to pass into its body, returning thence charged with a knowledge and subtle understanding that make language haunted. Looking into nature's face,
he remembers; once the dust that is now his limbs was
dust that grew her rice and banyans, or was racked in the
sway and toss of her surges. In the years spent on the
river, he saw that in water new forms of life are con-
tinually coming into being; and the man who is familiar
with that shifting, endlessly-peopled element is in the
very flux of existence.

In the later poems which all the world knows, love
and intimate knowledge of nature have passed into re-
ligious experience. His work is singularly rich in in-
tuition, the subtlety of his observation often going to
the heart of a matter in unique fashion. He has gone
deeper and closer to the secrets of nature, and has
passed from Nature nearer to experience and companions-
ship with God.

To summarize Tagore's beliefs regarding nature and
its relationships to man: it has been shown that nature,
like man, is a part of God's manifestations; therefore a
realization of the unity in nature leads to an appre-
hension of universal unity; secondly, that Tagore has
personally experienced divine inspiration by his com-
munion with nature, with the result that the world of triviality is submerged in an emancipated consciousness; thirdly, that Tagore's emotional reactions to nature are different, consisting at times of melancholy and on other occasions of joy; fourth, that his studies of nature are not analytical, but impressionistic; he prefers to describe the broader phases of nature: the river, the rains, the forests, the clouds, the sky, the seasons, and the times of day, and by his disregard for details he displays his small scientific knowledge; fifth, that he is supremely conscious of how nature has inspired his poetic instinct.

In view of these facts, it is fair to add Tagore to the list of poets whose interpretations of nature have been mystical. The true mystic is "one who knows there is a unity under all diversity at the center of all existence, and he knows it by the most perfect of all tests for the person concerned, because he has felt it."59

* * * * * * * * *

In making a selection of English nature poets with
whom one may appropriately compare Tagore, it is just, therefore, to choose those who are mystically inclined because of their interpretations of nature. We shall consider three poets, and one prose writer, each representative of a different period in English literature: Henry Vaughan, William Wordsworth, Richard Jefferies, and George Russell (A.E.).

Vaughan and Tagore bear so little resemblance in their poetic methods that it seems a slight perversion of the truth to say that the twentieth century Bengali poet and the seventeenth century English poet share ideas in common. It is easier to illustrate their differences than their similarities. Vaughan was of a meditative cast of mind, as Tagore also is; Vaughan, like Tagore, held a belief in pre-existence; but Vaughan was more of a mystical philosopher, read in Plato and the medievalists. The marked feature of his poetry was a constant comparison of natural with spiritual processes. He pondered over the silk-worm's change into a butterfly ("Resurrection and Immortality"); he brooded over the mystery of the continuity of life as seen in the plant
("The Hidden Flower"). Vaughan, like many of his contemporaries, refrained from a complete unveiling of his soul in his poems. As contrasted with Tagore, his poems seem impersonal, even though he writes of his own meditations. Furthermore, his identification of the principles of unity in nature with the Christian God makes him quite different from Tagore. The Christian tone is very marked in Vaughan's poetry.

Vaughan's mystical ties with nature were more intellectual than Tagore's. The reverence he developed for nature lacked self-abandonment. Last of all, Vaughan seldom alludes to his poetic genius and the effect of nature upon his gift of song.

The following selections illustrate at the same time the similarities and the dissimilarities of the two poets.

"Happy those early days

... When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity."60

Compare this with the personal vein in Gitanjali 43.

"The day was when I did not keep myself in readi-
ness for thee; and entering my heart unbidden even as one of the common crowd, unknown to me, my king, thou didst press the signet of eternity upon many a fleeting moment of my life.

And to-day when by chance I light upon them and see thy signature, I find they have lain scattered in the dust mixed with the memory of joys and sorrows of my trivial days forgotten.

Thou didst not turn in contempt from my childish play among the dust, and the steps that I heard in my playroom are the same that are echoing from star to star."61

To make an accurate study of the likenesses and contrasts between Wordsworth and Tagore would call for a separate study. Wordsworth stands out as the greatest nature mystic in English poetry; there is little difference between this Englishman and the Indian poet in their attitudes toward nature. It is poetic method that differentiates them, in the main.

There is one broad distinction, however. Wordsworth, having caught a vision of the life in nature, felt, too, that it transformed the whole of existence for him; but he devoted his life's work to an analysis of the processes of feeling in his own nature which might be used as a guide by others pursuing the same course.

Tagore makes no explanation of how each individual
may adjust himself to an understanding of nature. That is apparently attained by divine inspiration alone. The whole problem of the realization of unity has its stages, but the fact that one must undergo renunciation, and endure a period of concentration and aspiration as preliminary steps to mystic consciousness of the Infinite in nature, is not worked out so definitely by Tagore.

Tagore and Wordsworth have both praised simplicity; their employments of this principle in narration, and occasionally in description, make their styles similar, indeed. But Tagore did not have a Wordsworthian eye for observation. Wordsworth and Tagore have both been carried from their poetical mysticism to ethical speculation and thence to a deep interest in humanity and man's problems during their respective lives.

Tagore's mystical allusions are at times more difficult to understand than those of Wordsworth because of the Indian's involved symbolism which is so much a part of his expression. And again, as a distinguishing mark, Tagore's love of song and his feeling that nature has poured itself out into the world in rhythmic measures
through his poetical interpretation, make him unlike the master nature poet of England.

The intense self-consciousness lacking in Vaughan and Wordsworth is found in ample measure in the prose autobiography of Richard Jefferies. A comparison of the account given by Jefferies and Tagore respectively, of their spiritual illuminations are almost identical. But Jefferies's belief in an existence beyond deity, the philosophical concept of his later years, makes the resemblance between himself and Tagore break suddenly.

The fact that Mr. George Edward Russell (A.E.) has studied the Vedas, and that he has translated and imitated Vaishnava songs, accounts for his keen understanding of the Indian type of mysticism. In symbolism, moods, phases of nature—in innumerable ways, Tagore and A.E. are of the same belief. If any broad distinction might be made, it would be that the Irish mystic reveals a more exalted tone, and this is owing to his fluent and superb use of the English language; A.E.'s images have not had to lose their vigor or variety as Tagore's have through translation.
The following poem is quoted as an illustration of how well A.E. embodies many of Tagore's ideas, as revealed in this chapter.

"One thing in all things have I seen:
One thought has haunted earth and air:
Clangour and silence both have been
Its palace chambers. Everywhere

I saw the mystic vision flow
And live in men and woods and streams,
Until I could no longer know
The dream of life from my own dreams.

Sometimes it rose like fire in me
Within the depths of my own mind,
And spreading to infinity,
It took the voices of the wind:

It scrawled the human mystery--
Dim heraldry--on light and air;
Wavering along the starry sea
I saw the flying vision there.

Each fire that in God's temple lit
Burns fierce before the inner shrine,
Dimmed as my fire grew near to it
And darkened at the light of mine.

At last, at last, the meaning caught--
The spirit wears its diadem;
It shakes its wondrous plumes of thought
And trails the stars along with them."
Chapter V

THE DOCTRINE OF UNITY APPLIED
Chapter V

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"Therefore, as the Upanishads say, mind can never know Brahma, words can never describe him; he can only be known by our soul, by her joy in him, by her love. Or, in other words, we can only come into relation with him by union—union of our whole being. We must be one with our Father, we must be perfect as he is.

But how can that be? There can be no grade in infinite perfection. We cannot grow more and more into Brahma. He is the absolute one, and there can be no more or less in him.... Once our soul realises her ultimate object of repose in Brahma, all her movements acquire a purpose. It is this ocean of infinite rest which gives significance to endless activities. It is this perfectness of being that lends to the imperfection of becoming that quality of beauty which finds its expression in all poetry, drama, and art.

—Sadhana

Tagore has at all times made it clear that no one is forced to acknowledge the region of the infinite as unity or to realize that this unity is God. In the matter of this supreme realization God has permitted complete freedom of the will. It is not the function of the soul to gain God, but all we can ever aspire to is to become more

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and more one with God. Therefore the struggle of the soul to be one with the All, if dominated by the consciousness of purpose, becomes a struggle of joy, a willingness to sacrifice. The idea of becoming replaces the Christian idea of heavenly reward.

Granted that a unity does pervade all existence, it is interesting to examine the works of Tagore for his answers to certain common theological or personal queries.

Take, for example, the problem of the body's relation to the soul. This may be expanded to the more general problem as to the relation between physical and spiritual existence. It is Tagore's conception that the soul's realization of its unity with the Universal reconciles the physical wants with the spiritual. Physical existence is apparently an obstacle to spirit. It has every aspect of bondage, and to all appearances it is a perpetual humiliation to the soul. But just as the sculptor sees in the unplastic, insensitive, inert stone certain resistances and obstacles which he may utilize to his own advantage in expressing his creative idea, so the fetters of our physical wants, the limitations of our
outer circumstances, furnish material through which the 
soul may manifest itself. By the overcoming of obstacles, 
the soul proclaims her freedom and realizes truth.

Life, moral or physical, is not a completed fact, 
but is a continual process, depending on its two forces, 
the force of resistance, and that of expression. Divid-
ing those forces into two mutually opposing principles 
does not help one, for the truth dwells not in their 
opposition but in their continual reconciliation.

Our living body in its relation to the physical 
world has its various wishes for food, sleep, or warmth, 
as necessity demands. But there is one permanent wish 
of the physical self which is deeper and therefore 
hidden. It is the wish for health. The physical self 
works every moment fighting diseases and making constant 
adjustments with changing circumstances, but the greater 
proportion of the body's activities which try to main-
tain this state of health are carried on behind our con-
sciousness. He who has wisdom in regard to his physical 
wellfare knows this and tries to establish harmony between 
the bodily desires that are conscious and this one desire
which is latent. He willingly sacrifices the claims of his appetites to the higher claim.

The wish of the soul is to realize the distinction of its individuality, but it has its inherent wish to surrender itself in love to the Great Soul. The wish for health takes into account the future of the body. The wish of the soul to be one in love with the Great Soul transcends all limitations of time and space.

"In other words, on the one hand we have the wishes of the moment, and on the other the wish for the eternal. It is the function of our soul to unite these two and build its heaven upon the foundation of the earth."¹

As another legitimate question, one may ask how Tagore accounts for the co-existence of beauty and ugliness, if the infinite is the embodiment of truth.

In his discussions of "The Realisation of Beauty,"² Tagore asserts that beauty is everywhere. This does not mean that the word ugliness should be abolished from the language, just as it would be absurd to say that there is no such thing as untruth.

"Untruth there certainly is, not in the system of the universe, but in our power of comprehension,
as its negative element. In the same manner there is ugliness in the distorted expression of beauty in our life and in our art which comes from imperfect realisation of Truth."3

The sense of beauty in an individual permits him to realize the harmony in the universe. Therefore, in so far as one gains mastery over himself, will his recognition of beauty become catholic. As long as the realization is incomplete there necessarily remains a division between things known and unknown, pleasant and unpleasant—between things beautiful and things ugly.

"When he has the power to see things detached from self-interest and from the insistent claims of the lust of the senses, then alone can he have the true vision of the beauty that is everywhere. Then only can he see that what is unpleasant to us is not necessarily unbeautiful, but has its beauty in truth."4

Thus Tagore unites with Keats in declaring "beauty is truth, truth beauty." As one becomes conscious of the harmony in his own soul, his apprehension of the world becomes universal and the expression of beauty in his life moves in goodness and love towards the infinite.

In the chapter on "Realisation of Beauty" in
Sadhana Tagore has traced, in a fashion, the history of aesthetics, which is nothing more than a record of accentuations rather than a recognition of harmony in all things. He has pointed out how there have been periods when the recognition of beauty in things both great and small has led to an exaggeration of the commonness of commonplace things. Then again there have been special cults of beauty which, by the cultivation of some phases, have built up affectations and exaggerations which were made a matter of pride for a chosen few.

Tagore has felt that music is the purest form of art and therefore the most direct expression of beauty, because it is simple and less encumbered with anything extraneous. He has exclaimed many times at the music in the Infinite's finite forms of creation; he has felt the vibrations and heard the music of an evening sky and of the rainy night.

"Last night, in the silence which pervaded the darkness, I stood alone and heard the voice of the singer of eternal melodies. When I went to sleep I closed my eyes with this last thought in my mind, that even when I remain unconscious in slumber the dance of life will still go on in the hushed arena of my sleeping body, keeping step with the stars. The heart will throb, the blood will leap in the
veins, and the millions of living atoms of my body will vibrate in tune with the note of the harp string that thrills at the touch of the master. 5

Tagore is himself a musician of no mean ability. That fact combined with his poetic feeling of rhythm and music has enabled him to see perfection in each individual strain of music. No one of the notes of a song is final; yet each reflects the infinite.

Tagore has devoted much space to the problem of evil. As in the case of physical self opposed to spiritual self or ugliness opposed to beauty, he discloses the reconciliatory power of Infinite Unity.

"The current of the world has its boundaries, otherwise it could have no existence, but its purpose is not shown in the boundaries which restrain it, but in its movement, which is toward perfection." 6

With Rabindranath it is not a question of "Why does evil exist?" but rather, "Is this imperfection the final truth, and is evil absolute and ultimate?" Tagore admits his inability to answer the first question, pronouncing it comparable to the query, "Why is there creation at all?" It is as futile to puzzle over the existence of evil as it is to ask "Why are we?"
But the proposition of unity enables him to answer definitely the second question. In symbolic terms, imperfection bears the same relation to truth that banks do to the river. The fact that the banks set boundaries to the river is not the final fact; the function of the obstruction is not an ultimate answer, but the banks themselves give the river an outward motion.

Thus Tagore arrives at his conclusion that "imperfection is not a negation of perfectness; finitude is not contradictory to infinity; they are but completeness manifested in parts, infinity revealed within bounds."?

If the idea be accepted that all evil is a sign of imperfect realization of unity, numerous correlative statements may be made. For example, it becomes the function of man's intellect to realize the truth by surmounting untruth. Science will arrive eventually at the truth by casting aside falsities.

"...knowledge is nothing but the continually burning up of errors to set free the light of truth."8
The answer to the question, "What does our moral nature mean?" is essentially the same. To live in perfect goodness is to realize one's life in the infinite.

"When a man begins to have an extended vision of his self, when he realizes that he is much more than at present he seems to be, he begins to get conscious of his moral nature."

So Tagore would have one believe that the most important lesson man can learn from his life is not that there is evil in the world which at times inflicts pain upon us, but that it depends upon the individual to turn it into good account, that it is possible for him to transmute evil into joy by the process of realization.

In sin man takes part with the finite against the infinite that is in him, sometimes inflicting just punishment upon himself. The story of the painter who sought revenge for an injury to his father depicts such a circumstance. The man continued to paint, sensing, nevertheless, a loss of perfection in his figures. He was puzzled, but found no valid reason for his decreasing power of expression. One day he jumped up from his work, startled by the portrait that had
taken shape beneath his fingers: it was the figure of his enemy.

"He tore up the picture crying. 'My revenge has returned on my head.'" 11

The false view which makes imperfection ultimate is due to an inadequate understanding of the place of evil and imperfection in the world. If one detaches the facts from their setting in the whole, they would look away and unintelligible. In Tagore we also come across passages where he makes out that the suffering and misfortune of the world are the opportunities employed by God to draw man's attention to his real destiny.

"Misery knocks at thy door, and the message is that thy lord is wakeful, and he calls thee to the love-tryst through the darkness of the night." 12

"When desire blinds the mind with delusion and dust, O thou holy one, thou wakeful, come with thy light and thunder." 13

It is out of love that God sends suffering. In The King of the Dark Chamber, Sudarshana feels that the very possibility of her union with God has become unthinkable to her on account of her sin. But her lord says:
"It will be possible in time... the utter and bleak blackness that has today shaken you to your soul with fear, will one day be your solace and salvation. What else can my love exist for?" 14

To Rabindranath, imperfection is not the sign of fall from the high estate but a condition of progress in it. It is a matter of gratification that this world is imperfect.

"None lives forever, brother, and nothing lasts for long. Keep that in mind and rejoice. Beauty is sweet to us, because she dances to the same fleeting tune with our lives. Knowledge is precious to us, because we shall never have time to complete it." 15

But this does not mean that the Absolute is imperfect, for Rabindranath says:

"All is done and finished in the eternal Heaven." 16

As the sun has spots and the mountain chasms, so the Absolute has imperfection, but the whole is perfect and sublime. Imperfection is a necessary factor; it is as real as the created universe itself. A universe without imperfection would be a static, unprogressive blank. It is not the end in itself. It exists only to be overcome by the perfect. As the unreal is the incomplete, so the imperfect is the partial. Were imperfection the last
thing in the universe, then the earth would be no place for human beings to live in. Nirvana, in the crude sense of death by destruction of self, would be the goal of man.

Tagore feels that selfishness is the root of individual sin; the same may be said of nations. In the individual selfishness is the failure of man to be true to his real self. It is the revolt against the spirit in man, the turning against the divine in himself.

"For sin is not one mere action, but it is an attitude of life which takes for granted that our goal is finite, that our self is the ultimate truth, and that we are not all essentially one but exist each for his own separate individual existence."17

Patriotism devoid of considerations of humanity is nothing but selfishness on a larger scale. Tagore's hatred of imperialism is directed against its evident foundation upon selfish nationalism.

Such topics lead one a trifle astray from the original topic of Tagore's explanation of evil, but it is to be seen that Rabindranath has been cognizant of
the reality of evil. Despite its overwhelming power, man's sin, a nation's sin, the whole evil of existence does not become the ultimate, but remains merely a necessity for the realization of self, for the emancipation of self, and for the continuation of progress in society.

Another question which one might ask would delve still deeper into Tagore's personal convictions. What, then, are his ideas concerning the nature of that God who must be realized and who is the expression of unity?

In the first place, it must be re-emphasized that realization does not take place in human nature alone. The Infinite Being is not complete if He remains absolutely infinite. He must realize Himself through the finite; that is, through creation.

"You cannot ask why it should be--why the Infinite should attain truth by passing through the finitude; why the joy should be the cause of suffering, in order to come back to itself--for it is so."18

Just as the joy of the poet in his poem, of the artist in his art, of the brave man in the pouring out
of his courage, of the wise man in his discernment of truths, ever seeks expression in activities, so Brahma himself gives expression to his own joy, for this joy is ever displaying itself in the dedication which is his creation. God himself is not completely free. If He were, there would be no creation.

"The infinite being has assumed unto himself the mystery of finitude. And in him who is love the finite and the infinite are made one."19

"To the birds you gave songs, the birds gave you songs in return. You gave me only voice, yet asked for more and I sing.

You made your winds light and they are fleet in their service. You burdened my hands that I myself may lighten them, and at last, gain unburdened freedom for your service.
You created your Earth filling its shadows with fragments of light.
There you paused; you left me empty-handed in the dust to create your heaven."20

Critics have long been puzzled by the Vedanta philosophy, finding in it so many ambiguities concerning the nature of God.

"True, it says, God is All, but it also says God is nothing. 'It is not this, not that.' This dilemma of mysticism which makes God sometimes All, sometimes nothing, is not peculiar to the Vedanta
writings but runs through all mystic literature."21

Rabindranath's poems are filled with these contradictions. In some pages the Absolute is an abstract, formless, featureless unity, and not a God who deserves to be adored and worshipped. He is the "inscrutable without name and form."22 On the other hand, Rabindranath makes the whole universe the manifestation of God much as Kabir did in his poems.

"He is neither manifest nor hidden. He is neither revealed nor unrevealed: There are no words to tell that which He is."23

"Only he knows who has reached that region: it is other than all that is heard and said. No form, no body, no length is seen there: how can I tell you that which it is?"24

"He is without form, without quality, without decay. But that formless God has a thousand forms in the eyes of His creatures: He is pure and indestructible, His form is infinite and fathomless, He dances in rapture and waves of form rise from His dance. The body and the mind cannot contain themselves, when they are touched by his great Joy. He is immersed in all consciousness, all joys, and all sorrows; He has no beginning and no end; He holds all within his bliss."25

The question naturally arises, "Is Tagore's God a
person or is He the impersonal Absolute of the Vedanta?"

The writer has failed to reach any definite proof that Rabindranath's God is a person, even though there is much evidence that he felt the personal contact of the Infinite Being. Taking Tagore's philosophical prose works, it would appear that the statement of Radhakrishnan claiming that Tagore's God is a person, 26 is unfounded. But, turning to the pages of Gitanjali, one is impressed with the intensely personal attributes manifested by Him. God is not a being seated high up in the heavens, but a spirit immanent in the whole Universe of persons and things.

The following words quoted from Devendranath's *Autobiography*, admirably depict the confusion of spirit in the heart of the devotee, due to his finiteness.

"O spiritual guide of the Universe, Thou art without form:
Yet that I have conceived Thine image in the act of meditation;
That I have ignored Thine inexpressibility by words of praise;
That I have set at nought Thy omnipresence by making pilgrimages and in other ways--
For these transgressions committed through confusion of spirit,
O Almighty God, I implore Thy forgiveness." 27
Let us study some of the attributes Tagore has bestowed upon the Infinite in songs and poems.

God, by his forms of creation, is continually pouring out his love for humanity.

"God says to man, 'I heal you and therefore I hurt, love you therefore punish.'" 28

God loves the poor, the commonplace; He loves man's humble attempts better than his own creations.

"God loves man's lamp lights better than his own great stars." 29

God's manifestations are hidden in the sand-grain and the dewdrop, where they are more proudly apparent than Himself.

"You hide yourself in your own glory, my King.

***
You make room for us while standing aside in silence; therefore love lights her own lamp to seek you and comes to your worship undesired." 30

God's love for the poet differs from that of others. It is patient, enduring, and not forced.

"... it is otherwise with thy love which is greater than theirs, and thou keepest me free.
Lest I forget them they never venture to leave me alone. But day passes after day and thou art not seen.
If I call not thee in my prayers, if I keep not
thee in my heart, thy love for me still waits for my love."31

It is He, "the innermost one," who wakens the poet to his own being; it is He who makes the world smile and strike the chords of the poet's heart "in varied cadence of pleasure and pain." It is at His feet that the poet kneels, forgetting the veil of maya that robbed him of self-perception; it is ever He who thrilled the heart of the poet and made him pour out in phrase and rhyme his "rapture of joy and sorrow."32

There is an artlessness, a simplicity in God's manifestations quite in contrast with man's awkward and elaborate creations.

"He who can open the bud does it so simply. He gives it a glance, and the life-sap stirs through its veins. At his breath the flower spreads its wings and flutters in the wind."33

As the Boatman,34 God is unafraid of the wild sea at night. He startles the night with the shining white of his sails, and she for whom the Boatman braves the stormy quest, waits in the silence of her wayside hut, knowing that with His presence, the dust of her hearth shall be blessed, the light from her lamp will fill the
room, her heart will be glad, and all doubts will vanish.

The Unknown is called "the perpetual freedom." He is pronounced pitiless in his love.

"He crushes the shell for the pearl, dumb in the prison of the dark."35

The epitome of Tagore's faith in humanity is found in those few words from Stray Birds:

"Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man."36

God finds no joy in the complicated systems of society arranged by man.

"God grows weary of great kingdoms but never of little flowers."37

God expects man to express his thankfulness for these smaller gifts of flowers and fruit, and not for the larger realities of sun and earth. God has the power of denial which he inflicts upon man steeped in personal desires.

"My desires are many and my cry is pitiful, but thou ever didst save me by hard refusals;... Day by day thou art making me worthy of thy full acceptance by refusing me ever and anon, saving me from perils of weak, uncertain desire."38

The exultation felt in Bliss Carman's proclamation
of God’s magnanimity in Lord of My Heart’s Elation is of the same nature as Tagore’s when the latter prays that he may some day stand before the Lord of his life, and meet Him face to face.

"Under thy great sky in solitude and silence, with humble heart shall I stand before thee face to face?
In this laborious world of thine, tumultuous with toil and struggle, among hurrying crowds, shall I stand before thee face to face?
And when my work shall be done in this world, O King of kings, alone and speechless shall I stand before thee face to face?"[39

With the Indian people God is not a distant God. He is both powerful and kindly.

"God’s right hand is gentle but terrible is his left hand."[40

He belongs in the homes as well as the temples; the people feel His nearness in all the human relationships of love and affection, and in all festivities He is the chief guest.

"In the season of the flowers and fruits, in the coming of the rain, in the fulness of the autumn, we see the hem of His mantle and hear His footsteps."[41

Besides these poems in which the poet hears the voice of his God, or feels the greatness of his human virtues,
in his discussion of "Second Birth" Tagore makes one definite statement that God assumes personality.

"For we know that in us the principle of oneness is the basis of all reality. Therefore through all his questionings and imaginings from the dim dawn of his doubtings and debates, man has come to the truth, that there is one infinite centre to which all the personalities, and therefore all the world of reality, are related. He is "Mahantam purusham," the one Supreme Person; he is "Satyam," the one Supreme Reality; he is "Jnamam," he has the knowledge in him of all knowers, therefore he knows himself in all knowings; he is "Sarvanubhuh," he feels in him the feelings of all creatures, therefore he feels himself in all feelings. But this Supreme Person, the centre of all reality, is not merely a passive, a negatively receptive being. --Ananda-rupam amrtam yad vibhāti. He is the joy which reveals itself in forms. It is his will which creates.""43

But even the possession of these attributes of joy, will, knowledge, reality, fail to convince one of the personality of the Infinite Being.

It has been mentioned elsewhere that Tagore is the great poet of sorrow, and that his experiences with death in his early life were largely instrumental in bringing about Tagore's belief in the doctrine of unity. We have no poems which reflect the spirit of doubt and travail that Rabindranath must have experienced upon his
first encounter with death. When he later commemorated his feeling of loss for his sister-in-law, he pictured an imaginary meeting with her.

There was no tone of rebuke in her voice when Rabindranath failed to recognise her. "I am the first great Sorrow whom you met when you were young." Nor was there disapproval in her whispered reminder, "Once you said that you would cherish your grief forever." There was an air of benediction in her parting words:

"What was once sorrow has now become peace," she said.

Almost an unlimited number of references can be cited in which Tagore explains the fact of death, "that tritest of truisms," as a necessity of life. Stray Birds reiterates the idea again and again.

"Death belongs to life as birth does. The walk is in the raising of the foot as in
the laying of it down."44

Man learns to know the meaning of the Infinite through pain and death as well as through the flowers and the sunshine.45 The poet prays for release from an unfulfilled past which makes death difficult. He feels that the "fountain of death makes the still water of life play." Death
contrasted with active life, reinforces the fact of unity among the many; and to this Tagore appends the rather caustic prediction, "Religion will be one when God is dead."45

Death's stamp gives value to the coin; through the gaps left by the departure of loved ones comes the sad music of a deeper unity and peace. The world is only true when "death's wheels leave no mark on it."46

The pause in life brought about by death weaves a perfection in the music of living.

"Life droops towards its sunset to be drowned in the golden shadows. Love must be called from its play to drink sorrow and be borne to the heaven of tears."47

But Tagore sees in this parting no cause for tears. Instead, he reminds his fellowmen that there is truth in death which they must admit—a truth in which man may rejoice.

In *Gitanjali*, written shortly after his wife's death, Tagore reached the climax of his glorification of life's end. In the light of the previous melancholy by which Rabinindranath had been overcome, the reader cannot
overlook the amazing peace, surrender, and genuine faith revealed in Tagore's poems of death where he not only mourns those who have departed but acknowledges the necessity of his own departure. He feels that his summons will not be long in arriving. He is ready for the journey, and the songs of Gitanjali are a form of farewell. Death is a wedding of himself with the Great Unknown. Why should he fear this consummation? Because he had loved this life, he finds no reason why he should not love death as well.

"No more sailing from harbour to harbour with this my weather-beaten boat. The days are long passed when my sport was to be tossed on waves. And now I am eager to die into the deathless. Into the audience hall by the fathomless abyss where swells up the music of toneless strings I shall take this harp of my life. I shall tune it to the notes of forever, and, when it has sobbed out its last utterance, lay down my silent harp at the feet of the silent."

Tagore has himself experienced the sense of futility that overcomes man as he imagines that death will take away all past possessions and will rob him of the "self" he has tried to cultivate in manifold ways. Such a regret is voiced in a letter of Tagore's to his friend, Mr. Pearson.
"I know that I must pass through death. God knows, it is the death-pang that is tearing open my heart. It is hard to part with the old self. One does not know, until the time comes, how far it has spread its roots, and into what unexpected, unconscious depths it had sent its thirsty fibres draining out the precious juice of life.

But the Mother is relentless. She will tear out all the tangled untruths... The toll of suffering has to be paid in full."49

While adherents of Christian doctrines find consolation for the necessity of death in the promise of immortality, Tagore is not positive in an affirmation of continued life after death, nor does he deny it. Read death would, of course, consist of no realization of the infinite. Immortality means complete absorption of self with the infinite. But Tagore's thought concerning life after death varies. There are passages where he seems to look forward eagerly to what must be a fuller, and in a real sense, a personal life. Tagore scorns the desire for an eternal life which will be an eternity of habit and comfort; such a conception forgets that immortality is repeatedly transcending the definite forms of life in order to pursue the infinite truth of life. Tagore compares those who believe life's true meaning to be in the persistence of familiar forms, to misers "who
have not the power to know that the meaning of money can only be found by spending it, by changing the symbol into truth." Those who build their vision of the Eternal life upon the foundation of desires of the present life "merely show their want of faith in Eternal Life. They cling to what they have because they cannot believe that their love will persist through their growth, stimulating it, and not that it will retard their growth altogether."50

Tagore's characterization of immortality never goes beyond a recognition of it as a state of deathless life, of endless growth, and ever-renewed hope of perfection. He finds proof of an ideal of Paradise in the sunlight, the green earth, in the flowing streams, in the gladness of springtime, the repose of a winter evening, in the beauty of a human face, and the wealth of human love.

"Everywhere in this earth the spirit of Paradise is awake and sending forth its voice. It reaches our inner ears without knowing it. It tunes our harp of life, urging us to send our aspirations beyond the finite, as flowers send their perfume into the air and birds their songs."51

Again in Lover's Gift, Tagore has described heaven
as fulfilled in the body of the child, in the "sea beating its drums in joy," in the flowers, "a-tiptoe" to greet the joy of new life in the child.

"Where is heaven? you ask me, my child?
... heaven is born in you, in the arms of the mother dust."52

In short story, poem, and drama, alike, Tagore has frequently made reference to the possibility of reincarnation. It is difficult to ascertain with what intensity Tagore has believed in this doctrine. It is the writer's impression that the Indian poet has played with the idea in his imagination, following in the path of previous Indian mystics. For example, The Fugitive II, 9, is no definite assertion of faith but a mere speculation.

"I think I shall stop startled if ever we meet after our next birth, walking in the light of a far-away world.
I shall know those dark eyes then as morning stars, and yet feel that they have belonged to some unremembered evening sky of a former life."53

Tagore, too, has intimated that immortality may consist of a continuation of man's perfected deeds and his greatness after his death. Rabindranath has described the whole "forward glance" which motivates the life of man in the following passage:
"Man truly lives in the life that is beyond him; he toils for the unknown master, he stores for the unborn, he leaves the best harvest of his life for reapers who have not yet come; the time which is yet to be is truer to him than the time which is. Man offers himself as a sacrifice for all that lies in the future; the motive power that guides the course of his growth is expectation... Our greatest men bring in their life the message of man's future birth; for they dwell in the time to come, making it ready for ourselves." 54

* * * * * * * *

Thus it may be shown that Tagore's belief in a unity permeates his theories concerning life and death; to his own way of thinking, it reconciles all disputes between the physical and spiritual self, between the existence of beauty and ugliness, between life and the possibility of extinction. In addition, unity is the essence of his characterization of God, and as such, it is proper that his mysticism be compared with that of other philosophic speculators of English poetry.

Tagore's doctrine of unity identifies him with the mystics and their tenets. It is interesting to compare the way in which his doctrine is worked out with the general definition of mysticism as presented by Evelyn
"... mysticism alone postulates, and in the persons of its initiates proves, not only the existence of the Absolute, but also this link: this possibility first of knowing, finally of attaining it. It denies that possible knowledge is to be limited (a) to sense impressions, (b) to any process of intellectation, (c) to the unfolding of the content of normal consciousness. Such diagrams of experience, it says, are hopelessly incomplete. The mystics find the basis of their method not in logic but in life: in the existence of a discoverable "real", a spark of true being, within the seeking subject which can, in that ineffable experience which they call the "act of union", fuse itself with and thus apprehend the reality of the sought Object."  

According to Mrs. Burr, if one were to test the validity of a mystic’s doctrine, one would be compelled to analyse that mystic’s particular vision. If that were our only clue to the understanding of Tagore’s philosophy, his message would lack conviction. Tagore’s description of his early self-discovery is after all only a personal impression of a highly emotional moment, and his later poems which carry any mention of the experience are vague.

"I travelled the old road every day, I took my fruits to the market, my cattle to the meadows, I ferried my boat across the stream and all the ways were well known to me.

One morning my basket was heavy with wares. Men were busy in the fields, the pastures were
crowded with cattle; the breast of the earth heaved with the mirth of ripening rice.
Suddenly there was a tremor in the air, and the sky seemed to kiss me on the forehead. My mind started up like the morning out of mist.
I forgot to follow the track. I stepped a few paces from the path, and my familiar world appeared strange to me, like a flower I had only known in bud.
My everyday wisdom was ashamed. I went astray in the fairyland of things. It was the best of luck of my life, that I lost my path that morning, and found my eternal childhood."58

But there are other convincing proofs of Tagore's mysticism besides the description of one exalted moment of vision. His poems, dramas, and essays are saturated with characteristic beliefs of other mystics, so that there can be no doubt as to his convictions. The one statement that "the vision of the Supreme One in our soul is a direct and immediate intuition, not based on any ratiocination or demonstration at all",59 is proof in itself.

Before attempting any comparison between Tagore and English mystic poets, it must be noted that the English men of letters listed here as mystics are not mystics in the full sense of the word. The list would be limited to two, Wordsworth and Blake, in such a case. But there are other authors who have upheld some inmost principle which is rooted in mysticism so that their attitude of
mind is not fully to be understood apart from it. When poets so dissimilar as Shelley and Donne, Wordsworth and Thompson are considered alike as mystics, one is struck with the diversity of approach leading to a common conclusion. It becomes necessary to classify the English poets in some fashion according to their approaches—
their pathways of vision.

Thus we may list as love mystics: Shelley, Browning, Rossetti; Wordsworth, Vaughan, and A.E., have been discussed as nature mystics; Donne and Carlyle represent the purely philosophical mystics; Craske, Blake, and Thompson may be called religious mystics.

Of the English love and beauty poets, Shelley, Keats, and Rossetti, it is evident at once that no one of them was permeated by the theory that love might lead them to unity with the universe, as was Tagore. The greatest distinction between these nineteenth century poets and Tagore is found in the fact that love to Shelley, Keats, and Rossetti brought no peace, but resulted in unsatisfied desire. Shelley's belief in the Soul of the universe, as shown in Prometheus Unbound, his conviction that death
was but a rending of a veil which would admit us to the full vision of the ideal, as revealed in _Adonais_—these ally Shelley's thought with Tagore's. At the same time, Shelley sought for freedom of the individual in a different manner from Tagore, for the latter believed that such a state could only be arrived at by self-sacrifice, suffering, and control over the outer passions. Shelley's mystical concepts resemble those of Tagore before the latter's self-discovery and his resolution to devote his life to the fulfilment of his vision.

The optimism of Browning and Tagore has its roots in the same philosophical beliefs. With Browning, the belief in a center of existence, a unity in diversity, grew into a faith that adversity was necessary to upward growth. The keynote of Browning's teaching is that the object of life is to know God, which may be realized by knowing love. Browning, too, never wearied of dwelling on the inadequacy of physical knowledge. Browning's theory of evil, his sense of the value of limitation, voiced in the following passage, seems almost a duplicate of some of Tagore's theories.
"Life is probation and the earth no goal
But starting point of man...
To try man's foot, if it will creep or climb
'Mid obstacles in seeming, points that prove
Advantage for who vaults from low to high
And makes the stumbling-block a stepping stone."

Rossetti's mysticism is so completely dominated by beauty—beauty of form which is conceived of as the symbol of something greater and higher than itself—that it is a far step from such poems as Hand and Soul to the songs of Gitanjali.

It is easy to ascertain the distinction between the theories of Donne or Carlyle, as contrasted with those of Tagore. Rabindranath possesses a sensitive and emotional nature unlike that displayed in either the poetry of Donne or the prose of Carlyle. Beneath the guise of a seer-like appearance and the earnestness of his political pleas, Tagore is a poet. He has not arrived at his conclusions by means of philosophical speculation.

In distinguishing between the mystical genius of Blake and Tagore, one is immediately impressed by the diverse paths of their imaginations. In substance, their beliefs are identical. Tagore believes with Blake that
"Man has no body distinct from his soul;" but he goes a step farther, and unlike his father, who was a dualist, believes in the monistic doctrine of the Vedanta that this world is not made only by God, but it is made of God as well. Tagore's assimilation of Western ideas and his coordination of Eastern concepts with Western thought has made him approximate the mystical heights of Browning, but he has not reached the metaphysical realm of Blake or Thompson. In Thompson's works, there is a reverence for childhood that reminds one of Tagore; but Thompson has laid more stress upon the physical beauty of woman than has the Indian poet.

It is the writer's opinion that in the philosophical realm, Tagore's position most nearly approaches that of Browning. Humanity--not a collection of individuals, but one whole--was very close to the heart of Browning as it is to that of Tagore.

"--When I say "you" 'tis the common soul,
The collection I mean: the race of Man
That receives life in parts to live in a whole
And grow here according to God's clear plan."
Chapter VI

CONCLUSION
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"While the day is bright and the world in the pursuit of its numberless tasks crowds round, then it seems as if my life wants nothing else. But when the colours of the sky fade away and the blinds are drawn down over the windows of heaven, then my heart tells me that evening falls just for the purpose of shutting out the world, to mark the time when the darkness must be filled with the One. This is the end to which earth, sky, and waters conspire, and I cannot harden myself against accepting its meaning. So when the gloaming deepens over the world, like the gaze of the dark eyes of the beloved, then my whole being tells me that work alone cannot be the truth of life, that work is not the be-all and the end-all of man, for man is not simply a serf—even though the serfdom be of the True and the Good."

--The Home and the World.

Putting aside for a moment the question of whether or not any individual may become one with God, and what is required for such an achievement, the struggle to arrive at complete realization and the aspiration to be one with God must have its natural results upon the life of the individual. Without self-realization, one's life remains merely a series of habits. The world still ap-
pears as a machine that must be employed where it is use-
ful, and guarded against where it is dangerous; nature
holds elements to satisfy man's necessities; love knows
no joy of fulfilment, and the world is never to be known
in its full fellowship, alike in its physical nature, its
spiritual life, and its beauty.

The state experienced by the man who feels that his
whole life must be a struggle to perceive the extent of
God's unity, and that only through complete self-sur-
render can he become one with God—that is

"...like a morning of spring, varied in its life and
beauty, yet one and entire. When a man's life,
rescued from distractions, finds its unity in the
soul, then the consciousness of the infinite be-
comes at once direct and natural to it as the light is to the flame. All the conflicts and contradic-
tions of life are harmonized; pleasure and pain be-
come one in beauty, enjoyment and renunciation equal
in goodness; and the breach between the finite and
the infinite fills with love and overflows; every
moment carries its message of the eternal; the form-
less appears to us in the form of the flower, of
the fruit; the boundless takes us up in his arms as
a father and walks by our side as a friend. It is
only the soul, the ONE in man which by its very
nature can overcome all limits, and finds its
affinity with the Supreme One."

A man with a spiritual vision has an acquaintance
with the world's natural phenomena never experienced by
the man of science or the self-engrossed person. To the spiritual man, water is not only a means of cleansing his body but it gladdens his mind with its beauty. When a man does not realize his kinship with the world, "he lives in a prison house whose walls are alien to him." But when the spiritual man feels the Infinite unity in all objects, then he knows the meaning of an emancipated consciousness, for then he discovers the fullest significance of this world into which he is born. This man feels not only a purpose in his own existence, but he feels himself a part of a larger harmony.

When the perception of unity is not merely intellectual, but unfolds our whole being into a luminous consciousness of the All, then life becomes a radiant joy, an over-spreading love. Tagore is a singer of that joy which is the realization of the truth of oneness, the oneness of the individual soul with the world, and of the world soul with the supreme lover. He sees joy in the earth's "riotous excess of the grass"; in the journey of the twin brothers, life and death, over the world; in the sweep of the tempest which shakes and awakens "all life with laughter"; in the tears of pain on the open
lotus blossom"; he sees the joy "that throws everything it has upon the dust, and knows not a word."3

A man filled with God-consciousness feels that God has made him endless.

"This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life."

"At the immortal touch of thy hands my heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable."4

The man filled with the joy and love resulting from self-emancipation makes sure the continuation of such joy, not by isolation and contemplation of beauty and nature, but by giving joy fruitful expression in his life's work.

"Our life is the material whereby we have to build the image of Truth that we have in our mind."5

The Infinite Being himself is in a continual process of realization by his own creations. Therefore man, even after he has sublimated self, and made himself one with the All, must continue the process of creation. Complete realization permits man to attain his true nature or dharma.

"Dharma is the ultimate purpose that is working in
our self.\textsuperscript{6}

The results of the search for unity upon the individual are a realization of his own possibilities outside the realms of acquisition, a realization that evil, physical nature, death, are not ultimate in themselves, a realization that man himself is meaningless, except as he relates himself to the rest of life.

For civilization, a concentrated struggle for realization of unity would mean several alterations in present conditions. In the first place, man's status in the world would become that of a lover rather than that of a slave as it is now. Tagore has been particularly impressed with the fact that the salvation of the Indian people depends upon a change in each man's valuation of his importance. Civilization, as a form of unity, would be an ideal harmony. It is his opinion that the Indian nation as a whole, historically maintained a high degree of harmony until Western modernized civilization set other ideals before the conquered peoples. Rabindranath's sympathies have not been with the nationalists because he has felt that their methods would not result in the proper
status of the individual; nor would Indian nationalism result in cooperation between nations.

Civilization should maintain laws which have one principle of harmony just as God's creation is dominated by one law of unity. Harmony is wrought by cooperation. Therefore Tagore has urged in vital words the cooperation between individuals, between states, between nations, between races, and between creeds.

He has particularly urged the coordination of the cultures of East and West, by which each will give to and take from the other. His idealism has carried him so far that Tagore prophesies for the coming age this adjustment of knowledge and intellectual cooperation between nations. In speaking of the assimilation of European culture in his own country, he has said,

"Though our assimilation of it is imperfect and the consequent aberrations numerous, still it is rousing our intellectual life from its inertia of former habits into growing consciousness by the very contradictions it offers to our mental traditions."  

The ideal of harmony advocated for his own people has made Tagore resist the non-cooperation movement; it
has made the poet plead for the abolition of the caste system; it has made him encourage the extension of women's rights and the preservation of the Indian ideal of wifely devotion.

True unity of mankind cannot, in Tagore's estimation, vindicate sectarianism. The result of man's belief that he is in possession of God because he belongs to some particular sect is a feeling of indolent comfort where God is no longer needed except as a subject for quarreling about with those whose idea of God differs from one's own. Therefore Tagore has scorned creeds and rituals, because they are channels thwarting man's real self-expression.

Tagore has been vitally concerned with the welfare of his own country. He has prayed that she might be a place where mind is without fear, where "knowledge is free", where the world has not broken up into fragments on account of narrow domestic walls; where words come out from the depth of truth; where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection; where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way in the dreary desert sand of
dead habit; where the mind is led forward by God into ever-widening thought and action--into this "heaven of freedom", Tagore has prayed that his country might awaken.8

For one to estimate the significance of Tagore's teachings one must be fully aware of the tenor of national and international thought during the years when Tagore's poems were first published outside his own country.

It is significant that just at the time when Western life was moving faster than ever before, when clap-trap realism was infesting the stage, when composers, having long since exhausted the combinations of tones prescribed in manuals of harmony were jumping hither and thither in their efforts to invent new styles of music, when painters and sculptors were copying rather than creating, and imaginative literature was being superseded entirely by a true-to-life substitute, a three thousand year old culture should be introduced to a cosmopolitan world, bringing with it a vision of a past age when things moved more leisurely and calmly, when men were fascinated by the mystery of life and when art was a reflection of God's
world, not man's.

To both the United States and Europe, Tagore's prophetic voice has given warning of catastrophe if the spiritual life continues to be sacrificed for the sake of material gain and selfish pride.

The fact that Tagore has applied his doctrine of unity to problems he has seen in the every-day world, and the fact that his message first came at the time when the West was turning with greater interest to the East, accounts for the sudden popularity gained by Tagore in the second decade of the twentieth century. It was in the entrance at that time of so typically an Eastern mind into the very heart of Western life, that the true significance of Tagore lay.

With the passing of time, for Westerners it will be the spiritual message of Tagore that will keep his name alive. Because of his literary treatment of that spiritual message, he cannot be turned to as a seer from an entirely remote civilization, but he will have to be measured side by side with English mystic poets, because
he has assimilated so much of Western spirit. Then to estimate Tagore's literary importance in the West, he must be compared with such poets as Shelley, Wordsworth, and Browning. The nineteenth century is still too close for poetry-lovers to lay aside their affections for these geniuses. This accounts for Tagore's tardy reception and small audience outside of his own country.

It remains to be seen whether better translations may not give his works a fairer opportunity to make their full appeal to Western minds.

In India the situation is quite different, for there Tagore has heralded a new age. His name stands out with great prominence because there have been so few Indian poets who have even approximated his genius. He has effected a revival of spirit in India, the importance of which cannot be over estimated. Dostoevsky's message to the Russian peoples that "adversity is the main-spring of self-realization", has been preached by Tagore to his countrymen, and the result has been a display of great heroism.
Tagore's name in India will surely rank beside that of Kalidasa as representative of a historic period. In Bengali literature he stands alone, the greatest poet as well as philosopher of his province.
Appendix A: A Chronological Outline of Tagore's Life.


1867-1872
1867 Educated at Oriental Seminary, Norman School,
1875 Bengal Academy, St. Xaviers, and by private tutors.

1872 Trip to Himalaya Mountains with his father.

1875 Beginning of his writings. His literary career
is usually said to have begun in 1877, but
some essays were published in Gyananukur in
1875.

1877 The Bharati magazine established by Tagore's
brother published much of Tagore's earliest
writings.

September 20th. Tagore left for his first trip
to England where he spent fourteen months
in law study.

1881 This period was in general one of intellectual
ferment, literary experiment, and unusual
activity. The terms "Heart Wilderness" and
"Emergence" have been applied to the nature
of his thought during these years.

1881-1887
1881 Tagore prevented from making his second trip
to England.
1883 Trip to Karwar on west sea coast. Marriage
in December.
1885 Death of sister-in-law. Contributions to
Balaika, a child's magazine.
1887 to 1890 Retirement to Ghazipur, United Provinces.

1891 September 10th. Tagore reached London on his second visit to the West. Returned to India by November 6th.

1891 Removal to Shileida, on the Padma, where Tagore spent the greater part of the next nine years, combining zemindari work with literary activity. Much of the time was spent in travel between estates by land and water.

1891 to 1900 1691-1695. Contributions to the Sudhama magazine.

1896-1699. Editor of Bhojra, monthly magazine.

1896. First edition of Tagore's works.

1900 Ksanika published, which marked the turning point in his popularity in India.

1901 Established school, Santiniketan, at retreat of his father's outside Bolpur.
Edited magazine, Bandadashan.

1902 Death of his wife, followed by the death of his daughter in 1904 and the death of a son in 1907.

1903 Babu Mohitchandra Sen's edition of Tagore's poetry.

1905 Beginning of the "Gitanjali" period; marked by a change in his religious ideas.

1905 Partition of Bengal and swadeshi movement in which Tagore took an active part, establishing national schools, lecturing, and organizing patriotic associations.

1907 Retired suddenly to Santiniketan.

1910 Returned for a short time to participate in the reorganization of the Adi Brahmo Samaj.
1910 to 1911 Retirement at Bolpur.

1912 Third visit to England and first trip to America.

1913 Nobel award.

1914 Knighthood conferred by English government.

1916 Trip to Japan and America.

1917 to 1919 Work at Santiniketan.

1919 Punjab riots resulting in Tagore's renunciation of his knighthood.

1920 to 1921 Travels in Europe and America. From October 28, 1920, to March, 1921, spent in America.

1921 December 23rd, Visva-Bharati or World University established.

1923 to 1929 Spent in alternate periods of travel and retirement.
Appendix B: Chronological List of Tagore’s Books Written in Bengali

Kavikāhini (A Poet’s Story). V., 1876.
Karuṇā (Pity). F., 1876.
Gāthā (Ballads). V., 1876.
Vanaphula (Wild Flowers). V., 1879.
Rudrachanda. V. D., 1881.
Bhagnahṛdaya (The Broken Heart). V. D., 1881.
Ālochana (Discussions). E., 1883.
Vividha Prasaṅga (Miscellaneous Essays). E., 1883.
Bhanuśinghaṭhākurer Padāvalī (Poems of Bhanu Singh). V., 1884.
Bauthākuranir Ṛat (The Young Queen’s Market). F., 1884.
Nalini. P. D., 1884.
Sandhyāsangīta (Evening Songs). V., 1884.
Prabhāṭasangīta (Morning Songs). V., 1884.
Śaisavasangīta (Songs of Childhood). V., 1884.

Chhavi o Gan (Pictures and Songs). V., 1884.
Rajarshi (The Saint King). F., 1885.
Rammohana Ray. E., 1885.

citation

Padaratnavali (Gems of Poetry)—with Srischandra Majumder—an anthology of Vaishnava lyrics. 1885.

Samalochana (Discussions). E., 1886.
Kadi o Komal (Sharps and Flats). V., 1886.
Raja o Kan (King and Queen). V. D., 1889.
Manasi (The Mind's Embodiment). V., 1891.

Vaikunther Khata (Vaikuntha's Manuscript). P. D., 1891.

Yuropayatriri Dayari (Diary of a Traveller in Europe). 1891.

Visarhhana (Sacrifice). V. D., 1892.

Chitrangada. V. D., 1892.

Godsaya Galad (Wrong at the Start). P. D., 1892.

Genervaki o Valmiki-Pratibha (Songs and the Genius of Valmiki). V., 1893.

Chho'ta Galpa (Short Stories). F., 1894.

Kathachatusaya (Four Stories). F., 1894.

Vichitra Galpa (Miscellaneous Stories). F., 1894.

Vidaya-Abhisapa (The Curse at Farewell). V., 1895.
Chhelebhulāna Chhadā (Lullabies). V., 1895.
Galpadaśaka (Ten Stories. F.), 1895.
Soñār Tārī (The Golden Boat). V., 1895.
Chitra. V., 1896.
Chaitāli. V., 1896.
Kanikā (Chips). V., 1899.
Katha (Stories). V., 1900.
Kāhini (Tales). V., 1900.
Kalpanā (Imagination). V., 1900.
Galpaguchchhohha (Tale-Bunches). F., 1900.
Kṣanikā (Moments). V., 1900.
Aupanīṣad-Brahma. E., 1901.
Naivedya (Dedication). V., 1901.
Cholher Bāli (Eyesore). F., 1903.
Kāvyagrantha (Poetical Works). 1904.
Utsergā (Dedications). V., 1904.
Svadeśa Sankalpa (Country and Resolution). V., 1904.
Smarana (In Memoriam). V., 1904.
Sīēu (The Child). V., 1904.
Baul, 1905.
Bharatavarṣa (India). E., 1906.
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NOTES

Chapter I.
(Pp. 2 - 60)

1 My Reminiscences, pp. 72, 74, 112.


3 My Reminiscences, p. 74.

4 Sachana, pp. 19, 78.

5 My Reminiscences, p. 106. Dhan Mukerji has described, with great detail, the family reverence for these two epics in his autobiographical novels: Caste and Outcaste (N.Y., 1925) and My Brother's Face (N.Y., 1924). Tagore places far more emphasis on the lyric poets and the Upanishads than upon ancient epics. This may be considered as one of the marks of deviation from strictly Hindu sympathies.

6 Born about 1360 A. D.

7 For Tagore's English translation of some of the Vaishnava songs, see The Fugitive, pp. 45-6.

8 Thompson, E. J. Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist (London, 1926), p. 25.

9 Thompson, E. J. Rabindranath Tagore, His Life and His Work (Calcutta, 1921), p. 1.


11 Thompson's Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist, p. 6.
Literally, poet-fellows.

Thompson's Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist, pp. 6-7.

Debendranath is the father of Rabindranath. He is otherwise known as the Maharshi. The latter title, meaning "great sage", was bequeathed to Debendranath by the peasant folk of Bengal.

Rishi is literally "sage".

These three groups are: Bharatavarshiya Brahma Samaj or the Church of the New Dispensation; Adi Brahma Samaj, the survival of the parent group, which bases its doctrines on extreme orthodoxy; Sadharam Samaj,—Sadharam meaning universal or democratic. The latter is the most vigorous branch at present, and it is the one with which Rabindranath is the most sympathetic.

For mention of Meghnaadbadhkavya in Tagore's work, see My Reminiscences, p. 148.

Ibid., p. 204.

Ibid., pp. 115, 247-52.

International Encyclopedia (2nd.), III, p. 137.


Sadhara, viii.

A valuable study as an introduction to Tagore's use of Hindu philosophy is available in S. Radhakrishnan's *The Hindu View of Life* (N.Y., 1927).

Thakur means "Lord". It was a title used by the early British officials for any Brahmin in their service. It has been Anglicized to Tagore. The family name was originally Benerje.

*Gitanjali*, the first work of Tagore's published in English translation, dates between 1907 and 1910.

A weekly magazine; not his later English book.

Evening Songs or Sandhyasangita, 1864. Morning Songs or Prabhasangita.
For a description of these years, see My Reminiscences, pp. 178-86.

Lover's Gift 28, p. 48.


Ibid., p. 165.

Ibid., p. 216.

Ibid., pp. 223-24.

Sadhana, pp. 36-37.

Roy, Basanta K., Rabindranath Tagore (N.Y., 1925), pp. 77-9.

Thompson, E. J., Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist, p. 50.

My Reminiscences, p. 222.

Ibid., pp. 257-63. She was the wife of Rabindranath's older brother, Jyotirinda.

Ibid., pp. 261-62.


Thompson, E. J., Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist, p. 104.

Glimpses of Bengal, p. 29.

Ibid., p. 72. Written from Shileida, June 16, 1892.

Thompson, E. J., Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist, p. 110.
63 Mr. Mahalanobis completed in 1928 the most recent and comprehensive edition of Tagore's Bengali prose and poetry. It fills ten volumes.

64 Thompson, E. J., Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist, p. 110.

65 Thompson, E. J., Rabindranath Tagore, His Life and His Work, p. 74.


67 Ibid., p. 126.

68 Thompson, E. J., Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist, pp. 111-12.

69 Pp. 140-41.


72 The Gardener 37, p. 68.

73 For a direct translation of Urvasi see Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist, p. 121, for Thompson's version. For Tagore's English version see The Fugitive, I,ii.


75 Nationalism, p. 117.

76 Thompson, E. J., Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist, p. 273, gives a copy of the complete letter to Lord Cholmsford.


78 Nationalism, p. 119.


82. *Literary Digest*, XLVII (Dec. 6, 1913), 1114-15.

83. That of his wife.

84. *Gitanjali*, 69, p. 64.


88. These letters are from pages 47, 54, 55, 59-60, 74.
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1. Sadhana, p. 27.
2. Thought Relics, p. 4.
4. Sadhana, p. 16.
5. Sadhana, p. 25.
7. Ibid., p. 94.
8. The Gardener, 75, p. 130.
9. Fruit-Gathering, xxi, p. 27.
17. Ibid., p. 11.
19  Thought Relics, p. 12.
20  Ibid., p. 12.
21  Ibid., p. 13.
22  Sadhana, p. 70.
23  Ibid., p. 70.
24  Letters to a Friend, p. 76. Written to C. F. Andrews on March 10, 1918.
25  For an analysis of the states of self-forgetfulness according to the Upanishads, see The Philosophy of the Upanishads, pp. 69-71.
26  Thought Relics, p. 86.
27  Hungry Stones and Other Stories, pp. 111-32.
28  The Devotee (Hungry Stones and Other Stories), p. 119.
29  Letters to a Friend, March 10, 1918, p. 77.
30  The Fugitive, pp. 148-50.
31  Ibid., p. 149.
32  Lover's Gift and Crossing, pp. 73-5.
33  Sadhana, p. 75.
34  Gitanjali 8, pp. 6-7.
35  Hungry Stones and Other Stories, pp. 135-169.
36  Thought Relics, pp. 16-17.
37  Nationalism, pp. 40-1.
38  Thought Relics, p. 15.
40 Stray Birds, 214, p. 62.
41 Sadhana, p. 34.
42 Thought Relics, p. 36.
44 Ibid., pp. 110-11.
45 Thought Relics, p. 62.
46 Ibid., p. 62.
47 Sadhana, p. 34.
48 Letters to a Friend, p. 71, October 12, 1915, from Sringar, Kashmir.
49 Sadhana, pp. 120-21.
50 Ibid., p. 125.
51 Ibid., p. 127.
52 Gitanjali 75, p. 68.
53 The Gardener 45, p. 78.
54 Stray Birds 324, p. 91.
56 Stray Birds 110, p. 34.
57 Ibid. 296, p. 64.
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59 Crossing 36, p. 115.
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62 Stray Birds 170, p. 51
63 Ibid. 43, p. 17.
64 Sadhana, p. 127.
65 Ibid., p. 124.
66 Ibid., p. 125.
67 Personality, p. 11.
68 Ibid., pp. 52-3.
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2. Stray Birds 284, p. 80.
3. Hume's The Thirteen Principal Upanishads, pp. 417-18, 442.
5. Ibid., p. 115.
7. The Fugitive, p. 115.
8. Stray Birds 162, p. 49.
9. Thought Relics, p. 27.
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12. Ibid. 16, pp. 35-7.
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19 The Fugitive, pp. 37-42.
20 Ibid., p. 40.
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36 Crossing 74, p. 153.
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2. Ibid., p. 215.
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5. Ibid., p. 225.
6. Thompson's Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist, p. 79.
7. Sadhana, p. 43.
10. Ibid. XV, p. 16.
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18. Ibid., p. 134.
19 Thompson's Rabindranath Tagore, His Life and His Work, p. 97.
20 Gitanjali 18, p. 15.
21 Crossing 20, p. 98.
22 Ibid. 5, p. 83.
23 Thompson's Rabindranath Tagore, His Life and Work, p. 73.
24 Glimpses of Bengal, pp. 28-30.
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34 Ibid. III, 32, p. 190.
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46 Ibid. 154, p. 40.
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58 Fruit-Gathering LX, pp. 82-3.
59 Spurgeon, C. F. E. Mysticism in English Literature (Cambridge, 1922), p. 11.
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61 *Gitanjali* 43, p. 35.

62 *The Story of My Heart*, pp. 87-8.

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25 **Ibid.** XXVI, pp. 74-5.
26 Radhakrishnan's **Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore**, p. 51.
27 **Ibid.**, p. 57.
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55 For a general treatment of the subject see Mysticism (London, 1911), 600 pp.
56 Pp. 27-8.
58 Lover's Gift 48, p. 60.
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5 Letters to a Friend, p. 77.
6 Sadhana, p. 74.
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*Note. This bibliography is not intended to suggest or guide an exhaustive study of Tagore. The writer has included only those volumes which were of assistance in the gathering of material for this paper. For a more extensive bibliography, the reader is referred to Miss Kitch's Bibliography of Rabindranath Tagore.
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