

by internal considerations. Methodologically, there is little harm in doing so, provided one is aware that it is only a methodological device and that the counter vision which sees civilizations as interacting units within a developing whole constituted by humanity as a unit on this planet is equally valid and, perhaps, more significant. The ecumenical religions try to do something of this sort but as they themselves are exclusively attached to their own prophet or saviour or book, they only live and thrive by exclusion. Not only this, they suffer from the same fallacies and illusions which the votaries of particular civilizations do, that is, they deny the possibility of future revelations as if God's potential had been exhausted by the revelation he made through Christ or Mohammed, or Buddha, or Mahāvira or the Vedic seers. Also, they are as much attached to the little egoities of names and persons and places as if the past vehicle of the revelation or the place where it was allegedly revealed is more important than the content of the revelation itself. Moreover, they too seem to see their story as isolated and as determined by a primeval, original vision which immanently determines the rest. It is strange that the normal story of religions as much suppresses the borrowings, the changes and the developments in the course of its history as the story of civilizations in the manner it has been generally told until now.

 2

Mapping the Field: Illusions, Temptations and Possibilities in the Enterprise of Understanding Civilizations

That civilization ought not to be identified with any particular region or people or visions or *weltanschauung* creates a dilemma for the working historian of civilizations as well as for the empirical task of the writing of any particular history. One has not only to continuously refer to the places and the people in which it originated and where and among whom it flourished as well as to the values and ideals it tried to articulate and embody, but also to locate oneself in some region and culture, particularly where one happened to be born and brought up. Thus, the historian has inevitably to have a name which, whatever philosophers may say about proper names, identifies one with a particular country, group or religion or tradition. The very fact of growing up, implies this and hence, both the subject and object of any historical construction are specific in terms of those very characteristics which we have considered as being, in the last analysis, accidental to them. In a sense, this is the basic dilemma of man, as the deepest wisdom reveals to him/her that the truth about him or her cannot be captured by any set of predicates and yet he or she cannot know or feel or act without some sort of identification with that which is ultimately only accidental to his or her being. Even the gender difference which is so deeply embedded in language that, in order to overcome it, we have

continuously to use words referring to both the genders, is ultimately as accidental as any other property which we tend to ascribe to ourselves or which others ascribe to us. But just as the gender identification determines the deepest part of our consciousness, so does identification with other levels such as race, religion, language or culture. The classical Indian thinkers tried to meet this situation by distinguishing between *vyavahāra* and *paramārtha* and suggested that the truth of the one is not the truth of the other. The doctrine of the two truths, however, led to an ultimate dichotomy at the very heart of man so that he did not know how to relate the two, particularly how to bring the truth of *paramārtha* to bear on the truth of *vyavahāra*. One of the ways in which the two could be related would perhaps be through an awareness that while identifications are necessary, they are only provisional and temporary and that at least one part of one's being should be aware of this even when one lives and acts and feels in the realm of *vyavahāra*. The idea of a detached witness-consciousness or *dr̥ṣṭi*, along with those of a detached actor and enjoyer have been celebrated in the tradition and worked out in different contexts, even though they have not been brought into a unified focus. The idea of the *draṣṭā* who merely observes or is a witness is familiar to all students who know even a little about Indian philosophy; while the idea of detached, disinterested actors is usually familiar to all those who have even vaguely heard of the *Gītā*. The idea of a detached enjoyer or a *Niḥaṅg Bhakta*, though available in reflections on art, particularly on literature in the Indian tradition seems not to have been formulated outside the aesthetic context. The reason for this perhaps was that the idea of a detached, uninvolved enjoyment seems almost to be a contradiction in terms as the very idea of enjoyment seems to involve a total immersion in the process along with the object or objects that are both the source and the cause of it. Yet, Mukund Lath has recently attempted the almost im-

possible feat by asking if the idea of *niṣkāma karma* is not a contradiction-in-terms, why the idea of a *niḥsaṅg bhoga* should be regarded as such. In any case, the idea is worth pursuing as it suggests possibilities which have not yet been developed in the tradition. Yet, as everybody knows, this is only an ideal which is seldom achieved. But there can be little doubt that one can try to approach the ideal even if it be only to a very little extent. The same should be true of a historian of civilizations who, though himself identified with some one particular region, people, culture and language, studies a civilization which suffers from the same limitations. He should be continuously aware that these are only limiting constraints which can be overcome in case there is the awareness, the will and the wisdom to do so.

Amongst the many possible ways of overcoming the limitations imposed by those natural identifications which are an inevitable concomitant of having been born and grown up in a particular regions, language, religion and culture, perhaps the most important is the attempt at an imaginative identification with the other and trying to see things and situations from his or her point of view. Experiments of this kind have been attempted in some mixed racial schools in the UK and the USA where children have been made aware of what children of the other ethnic groups feel by making them dress and behave in the way they do, and to 'experience' in this way the treatment the others are usually subjected to. The same can be achieved to a certain extent by a dramatic enactment where one performs different roles, specially those belonging to persons whose identification is with those opposite to one's own. In a cognitive enterprise such as history for example, one may imaginatively try to write different histories from multiple points of view. No one of course has yet attempted it, but it would be an interesting exercise for any one historian to undertake and attempt to write different historical accounts of the same event or sets of events by imaginatively identi-

ying oneself with diverse groups and persons involved in the historical event. In the Indian context, for example, it would be an interesting exercise for a historian who has been born a Muslim to attempt to write the history of the medieval period from a Hindu point of view and vice-versa. The exercise itself would lead at least to some partial de-identification which could lead both of them to become aware of the unconscious biases and perspectives which get imposed upon one by the accidental fact of being born in a particular community. Similarly, the history of the British period could be written from a triangular perspective including the viewpoint of the English, the Muslims and the Hindus.

One could multiply the cognitive game and try to write a Rashomon type of history but then the inevitable question is bound to be asked as to which is the real history and whether there is any possibility of transcending the limitation imposed by one single perspective. The reader would, of course, bring his own perspective, but by reading the histories written from different perspectives and points of view, he or she might become aware not only of the multiple truth of events but also of his/her own biases and prejudices.

Another possible way out would be to argue that history should be written only by one who is not identified with any of the persons involved in the events concerned, such as is the case with the histories of ancient times or those of Mesopotamia or the Aztecs or even the Romans and the Greeks, though in the case of the latter it would be difficult to say whether a modern Greek or Italian tends to identify in some sense with those former ancestors of his current civilization or whether western people in general, particularly those belonging to western Europe, treat Graeco-Roman history as a part of their own history. The point is that even in respect to ancient history one tends to identify with it in some sense or other, although there are

some civilizations which have become so detached and cut-off from any current group of people that one may safely assume that no one in the present identifies with them.

We may then have two sets of ancient civilizations, one with which no one in the present feels any identification with at all and another with which either a very limited group or much larger group identifies itself and sees the carriers of the older civilizations as one's ancestors with whom one has some sort of continuity and of whose achievements one can be proud because one feels they are one's own. One of the solutions suggested in both cases of the second variety may be that the civilization concerned is studied by persons who do not identify themselves with those civilizations. This, however, would imply that no western historian is really entitled to write the history of the Graeco-Roman civilization. The situation gets still more complicated by the fact that in contemporary times the history of all civilizations has been radically affected by the fact that the west European people had conquered or colonized almost all other civilizations during the last three hundred years or so and hence though they do not identify themselves with those civilizations in any important sense, their perception of even the ancient period of those civilizations is radically affected by this very fact and thus they find themselves incapable of seeing the ancient past of those civilizations except in terms of the present where they have played a decisive conquering role which they cannot forget.

The paradoxical question, then, with respect to the study of many ancient civilizations is that if the historians belonging to the west cannot study them because of this reason even when they do not identify themselves with them and if those who identify themselves with them cannot study them for this very reason, then who else shall study them? One may perhaps suggest that those who have neither conquered or been conquered and who do not identify them-

selves with a particular civilization are the best qualified to study these civilizations. The Chinese and the Indians come closest to qualifying with this criterion as each of them has never conquered the other. Also, neither of them identifies with the present or past of the other civilization. But that would lead to the narrowing down of the enterprise of writing the history of civilizations to a very narrow domain and hence would not be acceptable to the practicing historians, even if it were shown to be tenable on pure theoretical grounds.

The problem that we have posed with respect to the writing of history has been discussed at length in cultural anthropology where the debate has centred around the possibility of studying other cultures. The controversy has centred around the contention as to whether the outsider in the person best qualified to study and understand a culture objectively or whether it is the person who is born and brought up within the culture who alone can understand it best. The usual terms of denoting the insider versus the outsider controversy are 'etic' and 'emic', which instead of being more illuminating only reveal academicians' fondness for coining difficult unintelligible terms for that which can be conveyed by simple and more widely understood terms. The bridge between the two is supposed to be provided by the 'outsider' who tries to become a 'participant observer' of the daily life of the culture and who also keeps a distance by recording what he observes and then detaches himself further by leaving the cultural community and trying to articulate it in conceptual and theoretical terms which may have nothing to do with the concepts or theories which people of that culture articulate regarding themselves. The 'distancing' can be carried even further by an act of translating the concepts and theories which the insiders use to articulate their own experience of the concepts and categories prevalent in the cognitive domain to which the outsider scientist belongs and thus

explicitly or implicitly implying the inadequacy of the insider's understanding of his or her own culture.

The situation has been even more complicated by the contention of some outstanding theoreticians such as Lévi-Strauss that a culture can become an *object* for study only by those who have reduced it literally to the status of an object by conquering and subjugating it in the first place. This denies the possibility of any one's 'studying' any culture unless the precondition of political conquest and subjugation were fulfilled by the polity and the culture to which the studying 'scientist' belongs. The exact contention of Claude Lévi-Strauss is:

The suggestion has been made that in order to render anthropology *less distasteful to the subject* it will suffice to reverse the roles and occasionally allow ourselves to be ethnographized by those for whom we were once solely the ethnographers. Well meant as it undoubtedly is, this solution appears to me naive and unworkable, as though the problems were as simple and superficial as those of children unaccustomed to playing together whose quarrels can be settled by making them follow the elementary rule 'Let me play with your dolls and I shall let you play with mine.' To arrive at an understanding between people who are not merely estranged from each other by their *physical appearance* and their peculiar way of life but who also stand on *an unequal footing to one another*, is a different question altogether.¹

In fact according to Lévi-Strauss 'Anthropology is daughter to this era of violence, its capacity to assess more objectively the facts pertaining to the human condition reflect on the epistemological level, a state of affairs in which one part of mankind treated the other as an object.' And, he goes on to say, it was 'the outcome of a historical process which has made the larger part of mankind subservient to the other, and during which millions of innocent human

beings have had their resources plundered and their institutions and beliefs destroyed, whilst they themselves were ruthlessly killed, thrown into bondage, and contaminated by the diseases they were unable to resist.²

Lévi-Strauss is far more explicit in his contention than are most other cultural anthropologists. But what is surprising is that no non-western or western cultural anthropologist has cared to challenge or dispute what Lévi-Strauss was arguing for, particularly as it cuts at the roots of all social sciences in its denial of the very possibility of any contribution being made by the intellectuals of the majority of humankind. But if one accepts the necessary linkage between military subjugation and the possible attainment of a particular kind of knowledge, then one would have to engage in war and conquest if one wanted to acquire that knowledge.

The strangest thing in this context perhaps is that though an international conference was called by the Smithsonian Institute and the Wenner-Gren Foundation to discuss the issue raised by Lévi-Strauss, it did not even discuss this part of his contention. But though there has been hardly any discussion on the astounding methodological statement of Lévi-Strauss, he himself seems to be not only totally unaware of the socio-political implications of his statement but also of its methodological sterility. Lévi-Strauss does not realize that if a culture can only be studied when it becomes an object in the sense of being under total political and cultural subjection to someone else, then it can only be studied as something that has ceased to be alive, for to be alive means to be the subject of experience and not to be merely an object of someone else's study. Not merely this, he also seems to have forgotten the profound insight of Hegel when he argued that the relation between master and slave enslaves the master as much as the slave, or the profound insight of Sartre, when he argued that anybody could become an object by the gaze of another.

To forget that the object of study is also a subject in its own right has been the greatest bane of cultural anthropology. But the problem that the historian faces is essentially of a different order as he does not deal with peoples living in the present and thus enjoys a subjectivity of their own which is denied to them by being made into pure objects of study by visiting scholars from other lands and cultures. Its subject matter deals with people who were there in the past on the basis of evidence they have left behind and thus whose subjectivity is to be reconstructed on the basis of the evidence. The problem therefore of regarding who is best equipped to do so is radically different from that of the cultural anthropologist who studies the living people belonging to other cultures in his own contemporaneous times.

There is perhaps an important difference in the study of those elements of the past of one's own civilization with which one feels a living identity and which is in a deep sense, resonate with one's own being as one seems to understand them in a more vital way than one does while studying even those elements in the past of one's own civilization which strike one as alien and strange even though one has to accept that they belong to the same civilization. This capacity to resonate and feel a living continuity is the heart of understanding of at least some aspects of a civilization with which one feels identified and in harmony. But ultimately, there has to be some balance and fair play between the inner and the outer, as in all other attempts at understanding human beings and what they have created.

Besides the problems discussed earlier, there is another which is encountered in constructing the history of any civilization, particularly from non-literary sources, which can only be understood in terms of the notion of the empirical *a priori*. The concept of the empirical *a priori* may seem at first sight to be a contradiction-in-terms, as if it is empirical it cannot be *a priori* by definition; in case it is the latter, it obviously cannot be the former. Kant had raised

the problem in the context of the synthetic *a priori*, but what we have called the empirical *a priori* is distinctly different from what in philosophical literature has been considered as the problem of the synthetic *a priori*. The synthetic *a priori* raises the question as to whether there are any necessary statements about matters of fact; but what we are interested in, in the empirical *a priori*, is the question whether a particular piece of empirical evidence which is a human creation necessitates the postulation of some other things in the human realm without which it cannot have been what it is and hence which may be deemed to have been there even if there is no independent evidence available for them. This, it should be realized, is not purely a matter of causality, though it certainly has an element of that also in it. Its analogy in the realm of nature is the inference based on causal knowledge, but as causal knowledge in the natural realm is itself a function of our knowledge which goes on continuously changing and is both incomplete and partially erroneous, it has always an element of indeterminacy in it. An evidence in the human realm, which constitutes the subject matter of the construction of history has, however, a status of a different kind. It suggests not so much the causal nexus in which it occurs but rather the structural nexus of which it must have been a constituent part and without which it would not have come into being. Also, it is defined by the role or roles it plays in the life of the people and the community of which it formed a part and in which it was supposed to perform an important function in the business of living. Wittgenstein had pointed out that language is rooted in a form of life and of apprehending its intelligibility in its terms. But this is true not only of language but rather of everything human, and hence whatever man leaves as an evidence has to be understood in the context of the form of life in which it was embedded. A piece of pottery found at an historical site is not just a physical object but indicates a whole array of ac-

tivities of which it formed an integral part and without which it does not have much sense in human terms. It presupposes not only the art of the potter or whether it was shaped on the wheel or was made independently of it, but also that it produced something in which people stored things of necessity. Not only this, things had to be of such a nature that they could be stored in it. Besides this, the design of the pottery would also be an indication of the artistic sensibility of both the maker and those for whom it was made. And if the designs were abstract or realistic, this would tell a great deal about the way things were perceived by the person who was making the pottery as well as about those who were using them in their daily life. It would also imply that there must have been a tradition of passing the skill from generation to generation and in case the same type of pottery was found in different places, it would indicate that there was a demand for it and trade in it, a trade that was carried on by a different set of people who must have had some means of transporting the pots in such a way that they did not break in transit. One may go on multiplying what exactly is presupposed by a piece of pottery that is found in a place or different places. However, what is important is that these presuppositions are cognitively as certain a piece of knowledge as the piece of pottery which is perceived and found and treated as the 'objective' piece of knowledge about which alone we may be reasonably justified in being as sure of as it is possible to be in the human situation. The point is that there is no difference between what is found as evidence and all that is presupposed and involved by it *qua* pieces of knowledge. This is the notion of the empirical *a priori* which, to my mind, obtains only in the human realm of culture, though analogues of it might be found in the empirical world of the living where ecological independence may be considered as similar to the one we find in the human world. But, while the human world shares the ecological dependence with the world of

the living non-human, it has, besides these, other kinds of dependence which is related to institutions, both formal and informal, within which the forms of life are lived by a community and within which generations are reared through whom the traditional skills of all kinds, including knowledge, are transmitted and modified.

I had earlier talked of the dimensions of *śilpa*, *śāstra*, *puruṣārtha*, *smṛti*, *saṃskāra*, and *varṇas* as the basic concepts in terms of which history should be articulated and constructed on the basis of the evidence that has been left to us at both the literary and the non-literary level. The key question, therefore, with respect to any civilization will be whether it shows some significant difference that gives it that particularity and individuality which distinguishes and demarcates it from other civilizations and which the historian constructs on the basis of evidence which has been examined in the light of these concepts which we have considered as the key concepts for the understanding of civilizations. It may however be kept in mind that the concept of the empirical *a priori* in the sense in which we have used it here, is independent of the question as to whether there is any such thing as 'human nature' or whether there are 'essences' which define a thing to be what it is. Many contemporary thinkers are suspicious of there being any such thing as human nature and the more radical among them seem to feel that not only do human beings not have any precise essence in terms of which they may be defined to be what they are, but that nothing whatever has any essence at all. The Buddhists had long ago talked of *satta* as being *nisstava* and had suggested that the cognitive enterprise can be meaningfully pursued without postulating any such things. The post-modern votaries of this view, though hardly aware of their Buddhist antecedents, are repeating the story once again. The point in this connection evidently is not whether there are essences or not or whether ultimately things have any determinate nature of their own,

but whether there are any such connections between things that, given any one element, we can reasonably infer the existence of others. Even if, for example, human beings have no 'human nature', we may safely assume many things about them, such as their mode of reproduction, the fact that children have to grow and that they have to learn a language and be told to distinguish correct from incorrect speech as well as correct from incorrect behaviour and whether they have a settled or nomadic style of living, and so on. These are empirical necessities and whether one accepts any 'essence' of human nature or not, it is not irrational to accept them.

Even today we tend to identify many of the prehistoric cultures by the type of pottery they produced and/or the designs they formed on their pottery or the representations they made on them. Not only this, we distinguish between the techniques that were used to produce the kind of pottery that is found. Also we tend to make a distinction between those kinds of pottery which were used for religious or ritual purposes from those which probably were not so used. One can immediately see a distinction between this last dimension of our postulations and the previous ones as while there can be little doubt about the necessities of the previous postulations, there can always be some questioning about the fact as to whether a particular piece of pottery was used for some religious purpose or not, or, for that matter, what the religious purpose was in the community in which it was used. The presupposition in respect to technology is thus different from a presupposition in respect to religion in the context of which the two constructions are being made. But what about the taste and sensitivity of both the creator and the consumer of the pottery as evidenced by the pattern and shape of the pottery which these people have left behind? The postulated judgement here is certainly far more objective than the one about religion, but less than that which we ascribe to

the technology presupposed and its product. There is presupposed, for example, a congruence in the taste and judgement of the people and the ones that we ourselves have regarding the esthetic beauty of the patterns and forms of the objects concerned. But, then, are we not presupposing that there could be no alternative techniques that could have resulted in the production of the same kind of object that we have as evidence for the reconstruction of the past civilization? Even if this possibility were granted, there can be little doubt that the possibility of there being alternatives is far more limited in the latter case than in that of the former. The congruence of aesthetic taste and sensibility between us and the peoples of the past only attests to the objectivity of the realm of aesthetics as does the fact that in case the pottery is of a certain type, it must have been produced by a technology which used a rotating wheel for its production. But if there was a rotating wheel then were not there other kinds of wheels which were used for other purposes? The congruence of aesthetic taste is not just a replication and repetition of our own aesthetic sensibility when encountering an object from the distant past but also involves an encounter which may, and many times does, result in an extension of our own aesthetic sensibility.

The evidence of aesthetic sensibility in one domain need not, however, lead us to infer the same kind of sensibility in other domains as generally there seems to be little correlation between the sensibility found with respect to one field and those relating to others. Yet, in case other kinds of evidences have been left by a bygone culture, it may be interesting to compare and contrast the aesthetic sensibilities displayed in them and also to discover whether there is any similarity of spirit between them. The same may be asked about the technology presupposed, for normally a technical skill is not just specific but presupposes a more generalized kind of knowledge of doing certain kinds of

things. For example, if evidence for technology of metal working is found in certain kinds of pots then it is extremely unlikely that the same kind of technology would not be used for making other metal things in the culture. And, if there is an evidence for building huts or houses involving the use of bricks, and so on, then one may safely infer the technology presupposed along with a sensibility to structural form reminiscent of the ones displayed more consciously in public buildings which generally tend to claim some architectural excellence in a particular culture.

These are, of course, very general considerations which apply to cultures for which no literary evidence is available; but once the literary evidence also becomes available the situation changes radically, for the written text, if deciphered, proclaims its meaning more loudly than any non-literary evidence ever does. What is a matter of inference in the context of a non-literary evidence left behind by a people becomes manifest and explicit the moment one starts getting literary evidence as well. The problem of the relation between the literary and the non-literary evidence stares one in the face, as it is not necessary that the two types of evidence may point in the same direction. The situation can become even more complicated when the literary evidence assumes the form of a prescriptive manual or a *śāstra* for the production of that which is embodied in evidences of a non-literary kind. The relation between a text on music or dance or architecture or poetry detailing how to do these things and the way they were actually done in song or dance or the construction of a building is not so simple and direct that one may read the one from the other. All the *śāstras* are, of course, not prescriptive manuals. They may be descriptive in nature or sometimes they may be a mixture of both as, for example, a work on grammar which simultaneously describes the structure of particular language and also prescribes what is and what is not correct usage.

The point is that once literary evidence begins to be found with respect to any culture or civilization, it starts to assume a preponderating importance in the understanding and construction of that civilization and all other evidence is either seen as secondary or primarily interpreted in its light. Literary evidence, however, is not all of one piece and may relate to such different subjects as mathematics, astronomy, geometry and physics or such things as philosophy, religion, literature and the arts, or one concerned with language, logic, poetics, and so on. There may be little if any significant relationship between them. And yet, they all provide evidence for intellectual activity and the value that was placed on it in that culture. The more important thing, however, is whether the culture displays a self-conscious, critical, second-order reflection on these very activities. In other words, how does it conceive of the value of intellectual activity *vis-à-vis* other activities in the culture or, once a culture becomes self-conscious, then the problem arises as to how to evaluate the different kinds of activities in which it is engaged and this reflection on the different activities and their relative evaluation may itself be regarded as the distinctive mark of that particular culture.

The relations between *śilpa*, *śāstra* and *puruṣārtha* that we have been trying to articulate above have a complexity which has not been quite appreciated in the study of civilization. There is nothing, literally nothing, which does not have a technology behind it. Also, technologies have both a specific and generalized dimension and once discovered tend to spread and be applied to domains and contexts other than those in which they were discovered or invented. A *śāstra* however, is altogether different; it presupposes literacy and self-conscious observation and reflection on what is observed. But what is more important for understanding civilizations is to grasp the multiple levels on which the *śāstras* may be constituted. There can be a horizontal plu-

rality of the diverse domains with respect to which the *śāstras* may come to be written. There may also be a vertical hierarchical building of the *śāstras*, that is, where the *śāstric* activity or the activity of building a *śāstra* becomes the subject of reflection. Normally, this happens in other domains also. It is this self-consciousness functioning at the second level which gives rise to a reflection on the ends of life what are, or ought to be, the worthwhile ends which human beings should pursue. Even technology has an implicit end to achieve and so also the cognitive enterprise embodied in the construction of a *śāstra*. But a reflection on *puruṣārtha* is a totally different thing as it tends to reflect on the totality of human life and thus has both the ends embodied in technology and the *śāstras* as an object of critical reflection from a standpoint that is other than their own.

A civilization, therefore, which leaves a written record of itself has to be scrutinized in terms of its self-conscious reflection on the nature of the *śāstric* enterprise in case it has engaged in it to any extent, and on the modes of life worth pursuing by a human being and the hierarchy as well as the inter-relationship between them. It is, of course, possible that a civilization which leaves written records of itself may not build a *śāstra* in any field of knowledge or that it may not leave any reflection upon the ends of life or what it means to be a human being. Yet even where the evidence of such reflection is lacking we may assume that there must have been an attempt to distinguish men from all other animals and define or understand his uniqueness in some way or other. Furthermore, as there is an obvious similarity between the higher animals and human beings there must have been a ritualization of the procedure to distinguish the human child from the animal world and to induct him into human society as its distinguished member. This is found in all known societies and its extension to past societies may be treated almost as an empirical a

priori. The point is not the specific ritual that is employed for this purpose but rather the self-consciousness of being human, as being distinct from the whole of the animal world, and being a member of a specific group as against other groups. The one that distinguishes it from other human groups giving rise to distinction between 'we' and 'they' even though both belong to the human world. The written evidence, even where it shows no explicit awareness of a self-conscious reflections, may still be searched regarding the use of the terms 'I', 'you', and 'they'. The use of the word 'I' is crucial for it embodies the self-consciousness which distinguishes a human being from all other beings, a fact which later on gives rise to profound reflections on the nature of the self and introduces a dichotomy between the self as an object of reflective consciousness and that to which it is the object. In fact, the earliest records may also be scrutinized for an awareness not only of the self or of human beings as distinct from the world of animals, but also in terms of the awareness of nature which surrounds man and his relationship with it.

Writing, wherever it is found, involves many aspects besides those that have been referred to above; it involves not only a technology of making a permanent mark on some material, but a co-relational activity between the mark and the object signified or referred to by the mark concerned and though in imitative pictograms the relation may be clear and obvious, as soon as the signs become shortened, stereotyped and symbolic, there has to be a systematic attempt to teach others regarding their meaning. A distinction therefore immediately emerges between the sign and the meaning; this is not automatic and has to be learned, thus giving an extraordinary authority to one who knows the meaning, something which is not obvious to anyone who has not undergone the process of learning. This creates a division in society between those who know and those who do not know, a division which has had tremen-

dous significance for the structure and future development of society. There is another aspect to writing which has significance of a different kind. As the signs do not occur in isolation, but rather in interrelationship with others, one has to learn the significance of the ordered sequence in which the signs occur as the same signs in one sequence may mean something different from what they would convey if they were arranged in a different manner. The syntactic relations thus generated by the sequence among signs is a dimension of meaning that is independent of the one conveyed by signs in isolation.

Many of these considerations are well known in linguistics and grammar but their profound significance for the understanding of a civilization which has left written records has perhaps not been equally appreciated. The multiple aspects of language which have been subjects of study are not merely aspects of the language concerned but also embody in themselves factors determining the consciousness of its users. The point is that language simultaneously displays the mentality embodied in its structure and 'determines' the form that consciousness takes because of the very fact that it is using a language with a particular structure and not some other. In fact, language, both in its written and its spoken aspects, displays a distinction which, though not ascribable to language *qua* language, seems to be an integral feature of almost all languages. This has usually been designated as the 'chasteness' of a language, spoken or written and the 'uncouthness' or the 'vulgarity' of it. This distinction divides people into those whose usage marks them as being 'cultured' or 'uncultured'. In the Indian tradition, the very name of the language was called 'Sanskrit', that is, the language of the cultured people. Even today there is the well-known distinction in the way English is spoken or written by those trained in Oxford and Cambridge and others, specially those who happens to be the non-western users of the lan-

guage in the erstwhile colonies of England who never quite seem to come up to the native English standards. The same is, of course, true for the French and the Germans. Only Americans seem to have shaken off the dominant prestige of the way English is written and spoken by the élite groups in England, but they too have developed analogous distinctions of their own.

Language, thus, has a dimension of 'correctness' and 'purity' which is clearly analogous to the correctness and purity of ritual in the religious context or the context of the sacred. The Sanskrit grammarians, particularly Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya*, is supposed to have almost identified the two by suggesting that if the Sanskrit words were not correctly formed and spoken, one would not obtain the fruit of the Vedic *yajña* for which it has been performed. The arts of speaking and writing thus, have an aspect to them which confers a privilege on those who can use them in the way they are supposed to be correctly used in a culture. One of the functions of 'teaching' both the spoken and the written language is to train the student to use the language 'correctly'.

The use of language in the maintenance, preservation and transmission of culture is not only central in the sense in which it is generally understood, but at a deeper level it continuously 'corrects' or rather determines what is to be regarded as correct or incorrect, proper or improper. In fact, a growing child is continuously being told that what he has spoken or done is not the correct thing to speak or do. The same is the case with the more formal teaching of the student by the teacher concerned. And, if 'behaviour' be seen as analogous to a non-linguistic communication, then the notions of correctness and incorrectness may be seen as endemic to all communicative activities themselves. However, the notions of correctness and in-correctness which derive from the way language ought to be written and spoken or behaviour ought to be performed has a di-

mension other than that of merely achieving success in communication, for presumably all communication may be supposed to achieve this to a substantive extent. The other dimension which determines what is correct or incorrect, proper or improper seems to be concerned more with the aesthetic dimension than the pragmatic one. Sometimes, of course, there may also be a moral dimension involved as not only the use of certain words and phrases may be taboo in a society but may also display an undesirable attitude towards the person or persons to whom the communication is addressed.

The literary evidence that is left and on the basis of which the history of a civilization is to be constructed is thus to be seen not only in terms of its content but also in terms of its form and all that the 'form' is supposed to contain, that is, both the aesthetic and the moral dimensions that are as, or even more, important than the content which is so obviously being communicated. Moreover, as the texts are related to each other in a historical succession, they may be interrogated to find what differences, if any, have occurred, not only in the content that has been communicated but also in the form in which it is being embodied, thus providing a clue to the changes in moral and aesthetic sensibility over time. The collation of the evidence of written documents, both those which claim ostensibly to be regarded as literary and those which do not claim to be such, with those from other fields, such as philosophy, art and architecture, has to be attempted to discover if there is any supporting cumulative evidence for the judgement regarding changes in aesthetic and moral sensibility which one is ascribing to a civilization on the basis of literary evidence alone. On the other hand, in case there is discrepant evidence, one may opt for the hypothesis of a differential development of sensibility in these domains and argue that developments in one field do not necessarily indicate developments in other fields also.

Indeed, the correlation between different kinds of sensibilities is an issue that has not been much explored either in psychology or in the study of cultures and civilizations. The development of the ratiocinative capacity, for example, is itself a sign of the development of a sensibility to argument involving the relation between evidence and what is sought to be proved by one. Yet, the development of the ratiocinative faculty may interfere with the development of aesthetic sensibility which requires some sort of a check on the reasoning mind to enjoy and appreciate the aesthetic flavour of what is being said or presented. A certain blindness to the other's defects is perhaps a precondition of affective human relations, as, if one becomes too critical of one's friends and loved ones, it may be difficult to sustain the affective relationship for long. Yet, the human mind has such a remarkable capacity for developing relatively autonomous realms with conflicting criteria of judgement and development of habits of sensibility which are relevant only to the domain concerned that one need not be surprised if one finds evidence of simultaneous development of incompatible sensibilities in a particular culture. The Indian tradition, to some extent, has given remarkable evidence of such a development. The requirement that scholars should also be poets in order to be regarded as cultured individuals gave rise to a strange combination of the utmost hair-splitting, ratiocinative argumentation as epitomized in the Navya Nyāya tradition and the writing of poetic compositions of no mean merit being expected of the same persons. It is, of course, true that a person like Caitanya felt the need to give up his pursuit in Navya Nyāya to engage wholeheartedly in the devotional exercises in which he was a born master, but he seems to have been a lone exception as Mithila and Bengal were simultaneously the centres of the most obtruse philosophizing in the field of Nyāya as well as centres of ultra-emotional Bhakti without anyone feeling any contradiction

between the two different kinds of pursuits requiring opposing kinds of sensibility.

The relation between knowledge and feeling and the different attitudes and sensibilities required for their pursuit and development by individuals in a culture are fascinating subjects for exploration and study, but there may also be problems regarding the aptitudes and sensibilities required for the pursuit of different kinds of knowledge. Prima facie, there seems to be a radical difference between the types of sensibility and aptitude required for the pursuit of, say, mathematics, grammar, linguistics and logic as compared to many of the disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities where the positive and the normative intertwine in an inseparable manner such as in sociology, psychology, medicine, law, literature, politics, philosophy, and so on. The point is that all knowledge is not just of one kind and that different kinds of knowledge require different kinds of aptitudes and sensibilities for their successful pursuit. It should, therefore, be interesting in this context to discover what sorts of knowledge have been pursued in a civilization and which have assumed the *śāstric* form and when. Also, if there been a shift of interest from one set of disciplines to another over a period of time or whether some new fields of knowledge were opened up requiring aptitudes and sensibilities of a different kind. Again, one should try to correlate developments in one field of knowledge with those in other fields of knowledge and note the time lag between the two.

Besides this important division between types of knowledge that are pursued in a culture, there is the related problem as to what kinds of knowledge have been translated into relevant technologies for the transformation of man's internal situation. The latter is as important as the former, though it is generally neglected. The technologies for the transformation of man's consciousness or even his attitudes to himself and others are as or even more important than the technologies for the transformation of the outward

environment in which he lives. Generally speaking, the term technology is used only for the latter, and not for the former, but this is a mistake as both are equally important for man, as a self-conscious being, has both an inner and an outer dimension to his personality. Besides, the inner transformations determine the way the outer situation is perceived to a great extent, though it is equally true that a change in the external environment induces changes in the inner world also. Interestingly, man has pursued two different ideals arising from this dual situation in which he is irretrievably involved. On the one hand, he has pursued the ideal of transforming his inner world in such a way that it is not affected by changes in the outer environment, at least to any substantial degree. Alternatively, the other ideal conceives of such a central and transformation of the external environment that it may completely determine the type of inner being that one wishes to have. While the former ideal has a long history in almost all civilizations, the latter ideal has found its expression only in recent times, and that too in the western civilization alone. The deeper impulse behind it has been either to deny the inner being altogether or at least its independence and autonomy and to understand man completely in behavioural terms. The decoding of the genetic code and the resultant dream of genetic engineering has opened the way to the manufacturing of human beings according to an ideal depending upon one's own preference and choices. The developments in cybernetics and the information technology seem to lend added support to this alternative way of conceiving man on the pattern of inanimate nature where the advances in knowledge and their resultant technology have been most successful. The Marxian perspective on social and historical reality had provided support to this from another perspective by looking at man and society from the point of view of the social modes and relations of production. However, it is not only the Marxian

dream based on a self-proclaimed 'scientific' theory which lies shattered by the break-up of the Soviet Union and its satellite countries in western Europe as well as the passionate rejection of the ideal of communism in the land where it was practiced for more than seventy five years, but also the modern ideology which believes that man is a creature of external forces and hence can be transformed by manipulation. Perhaps, an even more basic indictment of this ideology emanated from a particular view of modern science is the loss of control over the natural environment in spite of all the knowledge of technology at the command of modern man as evidenced by the increasing ecological deterioration in all parts of the globe. The latter is an even greater indictment of the alternative view of conceiving man as it is the material environment on which all living beings depend that has been basically undermined by the very technology which was supposed to control the environment.

The deeper problem, however, relates not so much to external nature, but rather to the fact that the so-called 'external environment' of man is also shaped by other human beings and the way they behave towards each other. And it is this environment which shapes and effects one's internal being; but there is no known technology to shape the behaviour of human beings to each other in such a way that the internal being of each of them develops to its fullest extent. All societies try to ensure certain behaviour through criminal and civil law. But, as everyone knows, even when successful, it ensures this only to a minimal extent and while its relative fulfillment on the parts of most people is a precondition of peaceful social life, the real problems of human beings arise primarily in the context of those other human beings with whom they have intimate, affective relations of a personal kind and it is these relationships that create that external human environment which shapes to a large extent the psychic atmosphere of an indi-

vidual. Yet, even though it is a fact that no external manipulation of the environment of a 'scientific cum-technological' kind can do much to ensure anything in this domain, it is not quite clear if the traditional technologies of developing one's own psyche through meditative and other practices of a cognate kind, attempting a relative insulation of one's own psychic states, is very helpful either. The reason for this is that either one closes oneself to real relationships with others or reduces them to the minimal extent possible in order to ensure that one is not affected by others. But in either case one also minimizes the possibility of affecting the others positively in a substantial manner though most spiritual traditions of the world have tried to develop a kind of relationship between the master and the disciple in such a way that while the one affects the others positively, the master is not affected by them either positively or negatively. This, of course, is the ideal, even though in actual practice it is difficult to believe that the master is not affected by his disciples or the problems which his disciples create for him.

The more serious problem however is that even if the ideal relationship conceived of in the spiritual tradition is realized, the real problem of human beings is not solved by it as that problem relates not to the relationship of the master to the disciple but to ordinary relationships between human beings which are generally of a kind that obtain between those who are more or less equal. Perhaps the direction in which a more meaningful interrelational human environment may be sought and created is through an activity which is conceived on the pattern of what some of the spiritual traditions of mankind have tried to seek; but is also of a radically different kind in that the centre of human effort is concerned not so much with the achievement of one's own state of consciousness but rather with that of others with whom one is in an active relationship of some sort or other. If human beings are encouraged to

conceive of each situation in which he or she relates to some other human being as essentially concerned with the development of the other in all possible dimensions and not of one's own self then a type of human environment may be generated which is more conducive not only to human happiness but also to a deeper fulfillment of all the human beings who are involved in those relationships.

The traditions of self-centric knowledge and the technologies developed on their basis seem, therefore, to be as deficient for ensuring meaningful interpersonal and intersubjective lives as those which are concerned with the so-called objective manipulating kinds of knowledge and technologies which are a predominant characteristic of contemporary times. The inadequacy of both the past and the present are fairly obvious, in the sense that both have failed as far as the real problems of human existence are concerned. But the study of civilizations should pay some attention to the question as to how far a civilization has shown an awareness of the problem, and in case it has done so, what directions it has taken towards a solution. Also, it should take note of the problems and dilemmas it has created for itself by overemphasizing the self or *ātman*-centric knowledges and technologies, on the one hand, or the inanimate, nature-centric or even socio-centric knowledge and technologies of the external, manipulative kind, on the other. Another interesting study of civilizations could be in terms of the range and variety within these two broad domains which have characterized different civilizations during the different stages of their growth and development.

Besides the varieties and the types of knowledge and their translation into technological skills for the transformation of the outer or the inner, or the interpersonal environment of man, there is the additional question regarding which kinds of knowledge have assumed a *śāstric* form in a culture and what has been the relation between skills in all

fields to *śāstric* knowledge in general and to the knowledge which has taken the *śāstric* form in particular. The interaction between the development of skills and the development of self-conscious formulations of knowledge, whether they assume a *śāstric* form or not, is itself an interesting issue for investigation, and it would be worthwhile to find how far in a civilization the two have developed in relative independence of each other. There is also the issue as to what kinds of skills and what kinds of *śāstric* knowledge are accorded primacy and prestige in a particular civilization and whether this has changed over a period of time. Also it would be interesting to find if the respect accorded to the *śāstric* formulation of *śāstric* knowledge by the actual wielders of technological skills related to that domain is only of a formal ritualistic kind or whether it really affects the actual exercise of the skill concerned. The problem is well known in the field of what we call performing arts, where the actual exercise of the skill and the developments in it are only tangentially related to the developments in the theory of those arts. The problem, however, is of a more general kind and applies almost to all skills which are of a performative kind as well as to the self-conscious, critical and conceptual formulations with respect to those very skills.

The relations between what we have called *śilpa* and *śāstra* in a very generalized sense are important but their relation to the self-consciously conceived ends of life which make living worthwhile in the eyes of a culture is even more important as not only is the hierarchy between the skills and the related knowledge determined by what we have called the *puruṣārthas* but also the attention paid to their cultivation in a civilization is generally determined by the valuation it places on them. This itself is more or less a function of the importance it gives to different *puruṣārthas* and the way it tries to see the diverse ends of life according to its own way of looking at the universe. The idea of the

puruṣārthas, it should be remembered, is neither confined to nor exhausted by those which have been usually formulated in the Indian tradition. Every civilization is bound to have its own *puruṣārthas*, and hence a comparative study of the *puruṣārthas* in different civilizations will provide as significant a clue to the understanding of civilizations as anything else. It would also help us to understand why certain types of knowledge or certain kinds of skills were not developed in a civilization or played only a minor role in it.

The obsolescence of skills and knowledge and their replacement by other types of skills and knowledge is another interesting phenomenon which may provide us significant information about the development of a civilization, particularly if we remember that each type of skill and knowledge is embedded in a matrix of social institutions which make their actual exercise effective, and thus any change in them entails a change in those institutions also. Normally, the idea of the obsolescence of techniques, skills and types of knowledge is only discussed in the contemporary context where rapid changes in all these spheres have made the phenomenon obvious to everybody. But the same has happened a number of times in the past and is bound to take place in any civilization over a period of time. Yet, neither has this fact been noted nor has its reverberating impact on the whole social and economic fabric been investigated. A Braudel might have enlarged our sensitivity to the immense transformations that can be brought about by changes in the little things of daily life, but the insight that he has given need not be confined merely to the period he has written about or to the things which have engaged his attention. The phenomenon is far more universal both in space and time, and may be seen as an integral feature of all civilizations, and on the basis of what may be called the empirical *a priori* we may feel fairly safe in inferring its occurrence and existence. However, many a time it

is not true that the evidence is not there, but only that we have not looked for it because we have not asked the right sort of questions. Braudel himself seems to suffer from the illusion that the period of history with which he is concerned is the only period in which the phenomenon he is describing has taken place. The illusion is fairly common to everyone who deals with a particular period as he or she is likely to be so impressed by the richness and complexity of the data that the idea of their uniqueness is bound to be felt at least to some extent by the investigator. It is only the idea of the empirical *a priori* which may perhaps save historians or scholars from succumbing to this natural illusion.

The problem of structural illusions embodied in different cognitive enterprises, particularly when they assume a *sāstric* shape and are pursued by a professional class specially recruited and designated for this purpose, is a subject which has never been investigated as far as I know until now. The so-called enterprise in what has come to be known as the sociology of knowledge or its Marxist variety which has tried to talk both of ideology in a pejorative sense as well as the relationship of history to class consciousness, are not only different kinds of enterprises but are radically different from the idea of a structural illusion which we are trying to indicate here. The clearest example of an illusion determined by the very structural conditions of the activity concerned is provided by the visual illusions, such as the meeting of the sky and the earth on the horizon or of the appearance of a straight stick as bent when immersed in water. The one characteristic of all such illusions is that they are shared by all such persons who have the same structural mechanisms for seeing things and hence have an objectivity which is of an inter-subjective character. The characteristic of illusion thus cannot be known if we operate only at that level and if we have no other faculty which could critically examine the 'inter-subjective objectivity' of

that appearance. Normally it is 'reason' that is supposed to expose the illusoriness of such an appearance even when it is shared by everybody and continues to appear in the same way after reason has pronounced it to be illusory. The correction, therefore, is only a theoretical correction and does not affect the perceptual experience in any substantial way. But if perception can have structural illusions whose illusory character cannot be realized at the level of perception, can 'reason' not have such structural illusions of its own? Kant tried to suggest that it has and used a transcendental critique to expose the illusory nature of those seemingly objective realities brought into being by reason itself. Kant however did not discuss as to how reason could possibly expose its own illusions even by a transcendental critique, if they were the result of the very structure of reason itself. This is not the place to go into details regarding the theory of structural illusions or the radical implications it has for the understanding of the human situation. What is of immediate interest is merely this that there may be structural illusions involved in the cognitive enterprise itself and that there may be specific structural illusions of the diverse kinds of cognitive enterprises in which man engages. Once one grants this possibility, then the question arises as to what the structural illusions of the cognitive enterprise known as history are. In a certain sense, this is the same question which we had asked earlier, that is, what are the transcendental conditions of the cognitive enterprise known as history? But, though the two questions are closely related and may even be seen as identical from a certain point of view, they are different in the sense that the structural illusions which the transcendental conditions of any activity generates are not the same as the transcendental conditions themselves. In the Kantian framework, normally, the illusions are generated when it is forgotten that the transcendental conditions are 'transcendental' in nature and not really transcendent in character. To put it

slightly differently, the structural illusions in the Kantian framework are generated when that which is the transcendental precondition of knowledge is treated as if it were its object. Space and time, for example, generate the famous antinomies in Kant when they are treated as if they were 'objects' of sensibility, rather than as being transcendental conditions of what we perceive by the senses.

The transcendental conditions of historical knowledge, therefore, would result in the historical illusion or illusions, or rather in structural illusions belonging to the domain of historical knowledge only when they are seen not as being its transcendental conditions, but as being the object or objects discovered by the historical consciousness or provided to it. Perhaps, the structural illusion in the case of history arises from the fact that the historian inevitably projects his own cultural mentality into that which he is trying to study and finds it objectively displayed therein by the evidence that he *chooses* to marshal in its support. This would imply that besides the general structure of understanding and reason with its universal categories of thought, which may be either the same or different from those of Kant, there is such a thing as cultural reason which differentiates itself from universal reason, or rather supplements it in a special sense as the necessary presupposition of understanding that which is created by man. Kant does not seem to have made this important distinction, for in his analysis there seems to be no radical difference between the categories required for the understanding of nature and those which are required for understanding man and his creations. Even at the level of perception, Kant seems to be concerned only with the transcendental forms of sensibility which would be relevant for the perception of any object whatsoever. He does not even seem to realize that space and time which he regards as the transcendental forms of sensibility are not the same in the case of a natural object and the one which is an integral part of any ob-

ject created by man. The space of painting, for example, or of architecture, is not the same space in which the 'starry heavens' of Kant are situated, nor is the time of music the same as the time by which we measure the movement of the earth around the sun and which, at the human level, is measured by clocks. But if the space and time of natural objects is radically different from the space and time of cultural objects then even at the perceptual level we will have a problem of distinguishing between the two and finding the relation between them.

Another problem which does not seem to have been noticed by Kantian scholars is that there seems to be a radical difference between space and time in the way Kant treats them; if this is so, they cannot be treated at par on equal terms even in the context of their being the transcendental forms of sensibility. For Kant, if I understand him correctly, the objects of inner sensibility cannot be in space though they necessarily involve the *a priori* form of temporality. In fact, everything has to be in time, for the objects of outer sensibility necessarily have to be apprehended through the inner sensibility whose essential transcendental form is time. One does not know what exact status the auditory faculty has in Kant. It obviously will have to be included in outer sensibility. However, will it necessarily involve spatiality as well? Is sound always apprehended as being located in space or as having a spatial extension? Analogous questions may also be raised regarding some of the other senses, specially the olfactory ones. In any case, if Kant regards the radical difference between the inner and the outer sensibility then he is once again reinstating the Cartesian dichotomy between mind and matter in a new way. There is of course the important difference that while for Descartes matter has the essential property of extension, mind for him essentially is a thinking substance and not just that which has the transcendental form of temporality inherent in it. Perhaps the idea of temporality may

be brought into the Cartesian framework by emphasizing that the *cogito* is essentially an activity and hence involves time. There is, of course, the added problem even in the Cartesian framework as to whether any object of sensory apprehension can be considered to be material if it does not necessarily involve spatiality.

However, neither Descartes nor Kant seems to have faced the problem of the types of spatiality and temporality which are associated with art objects as well as socio-cultural activities and objects. The space and time involved in works of art are usually described as 'virtual', implying thereby that they are not 'real' in character. But, besides the so-called 'virtual' space and time which are supposed to characterize works of art, there is another type of 'space' and 'time' which can neither be characterized as 'physical' or 'virtual' as it is distinct from both. This is the 'space' and 'time' of socio-cultural events which, though sharing the characteristic of 'reality' with physical space and time, yet have substantive differences from it. The notion of socio-cultural space and time as distinct from the space and time of the physical world, is almost a commonplace of socio-cultural writing. But there seems to have been little attempt to relate the three types of 'space' and 'time' which are encountered in physics, socio-cultural anthropology, and art studies.

The deeper question raised however by the fact that if even such basic *a priori* forms of sensibility as space and time differ radically with respect to different perpetual worlds which are apprehended equally as objects, whether it is likely that the categories of understanding and the ideas of reason, to use the well-known Kantian terminology, would also be different with respect to each of these domains. Kant worked out his categories of understanding and the ideas or reason primarily in the context of understanding the physical reality and though he did discuss the categories pertaining to aesthetic apprehension in the last

Critique he does not seem to have treated it as an autonomous realm with its own distinctive categories, besides the one he mentioned as 'purposiveness without a purpose'. Even here Kant seems to have been primarily concerned with the primacy of the physical world and in 'seeing' the world of art only in relation to it. It is true that Kant did write a work on anthropology, but strangely its structure has nothing to do with the pattern of the three *Critiques* and he does not seem to have asked the question as to whether there are any categories of understanding and ideas of reason with respect to the socio-cultural world with which the socio-cultural anthropologist is primarily concerned. In fact, there seems to be little attempt in Kant's thought to relate his central concern with morality, which is the field of practical reason *par excellence*, with the socio-cultural domain where alone morality may operate, at least within the framework of his thought.

The relevance of this discussion to the central issue of the understanding of civilizations with which we are primarily concerned here, relates to the issue as to whether there are any transcendental categories peculiar and specific to the understanding of socio-cultural reality in general, and the history of civilizations in particular. And taking a cue from Kant, we may ask if there are any necessary illusions with respect to these domains arising from the dialectic of the reason resulting in antinomies analogous to those that Kant pointed out so powerfully in his first *Critique* and, to some extent, in his subsequent *Critiques* as well.

Sundararajan has recently developed the Kantian perspective in relation to the realm of culture in his book entitled *Towards a Critique of Cultural Reason*. Building on Ricoeur and Kant, he has distinguished between signification and symbolization on the one hand, and the determinative and the reflective judgement on the other. The former distinction relates to the context-bound and the

context-free notion of meaning which is derived from Ricoeur's distinction between speaking and writing which we have discussed earlier. The other distinction between determinative and reflective judgement is based on the distinction where the concept or the essence determines completely the nature of the perceptual object which falls under it, while the latter, that is, the reflective judgement, is supposed to be about those perceptual objects which have an immanent organic unity in them which, though perceived and comprehended as such, cannot be exhaustively articulated in any finite set of judgements because there is no preexistent essence outside the organic unity of the work which is perceptually apprehended. Sundararajan makes another distinction among objects which are apprehended as organic unities and whose comprehension is articulated in a reflective judgement. The distinction made is that while an aesthetic object is normally apprehended in terms of itself, the cultural object is always related to a whole background set of meanings to which it is essentially related and thus functions more as a symbol or rather as a product of symbolization than what he has called signification. Sundararajan further makes the interesting point that both the aesthetic and the cultural object are revealed by a disinterested feeling of pleasure which, in this context, performs a cognitive function.

In spite of the very interesting theory that Sundararajan has built around some of the major insights of Ricoeur and Kant, he does not seem to have realized that the dichotomous distinctions on which he is relying are basically untenable not only in practice but in principle. The distinction between signification and symbolization, for example, is untenable on the ground that the latter is not as context free as Sundararajan tries to make it. The context may be larger or narrower or even completely specific like those of indexical expressions such as 'I', 'you', 'there' or 'here' or those which assume a whole *weltanschauung* or a cultural

context for the apprehension of their meaning. Language itself, which is a cultural object *par excellence* and is the primary vehicle of meanings, is embedded in a whole set of syntactical and semantic relationships through which it acquires its specific meaning. Similarly, the distinction between determinative and reflective judgement, though supposed to be derived from Kant, is basically defective because there is always an interplay between the concept and the precept, as the concept also becomes modified in the light of our perceptual experience whenever necessary. Also, there are always borderline cases where it is difficult to determine whether the precept falls under the concept or not, thus leading to a situation where we have to choose between coining a new concept or changing the connotation of the old concept in such a way that it can possibly accommodate the new precept.

Sundararajan's other distinction between the 'aesthetic' and the 'cultural' suffers from the same serious limitations. It is true that an aesthetic object can also function as a cultural object, as he points out, but it is not quite correct that a cultural object is discerned by a disinterested pleasure as aesthetic objects usually are. In fact, cultural objects are generally not the object of disinterested pleasure. Rather, they are cultural objects because they are seen as partisan and specific, and a standing in opposition and contrast to the symbolic objects of other cultures. A temple or a beautiful sculpture of the Buddha can arouse aesthetic joy in an orthodox follower of Islam, but as a cultural object it can only arouse hostility, repugnance, and an impulse to destruction.

The problem of decontextualizing an object, whether in the context of cognition or feeling or action, which Sundararajan has raised, has perhaps to be seen in a different light. The issue basically relates to an objective's potential utilizability even though what is so apprehended or experienced occurs not only at a particular point of space and time but also in a determinate context, whether the

context be of persons or events or even natural surroundings or any other such things. As for the potential freedom from the bondage of 'origins', it is a function of many factors including both the nature of the object apprehended or felt or willed and the mode of apprehending or feeling or willing. There are cognitive objects which are easy to free from the context of their origins. Mathematics and knowledge relating to natural phenomena are well known examples of such a kind of cognition. However, even here it must be remembered that the context from which this knowledge is freed is the spatio-temporal context, on the one hand, and the context of the person on the other. But it cannot and does not become free of the context of related knowledge in mathematics or the natural sciences. Rather, its necessary interrelationship becomes more and more evident as our knowledge increases and the relative non-contextuality which appeared to be so 'self-evident' earlier seems to be illusory in the context of a fuller knowledge. The same appears to be true of certain kinds of technologies which because of this character, easily travel from one cultural zone to another and are freely borrowed by those who had no share in their invention. But this capacity of being free from a certain kind of context of origins not equally available to all products of human consciousness, though it will be difficult to say that there is any object which does not enjoy this capacity at least to some extent, because of the simple reason that all men have the capacity of imaginative empathy to enter into a world different from their own. Perhaps, it is those realms where feelings and emotions are integrally involved in the cognitive apprehension itself which prevent a greater difficulty in the achievement of such freedom, since it is difficult to summon them at will. There are habits of emotions as there are habits of action and thought. But while it is relatively easier to change an individual's habits of thought and action, it is far more difficult to change those of feelings and

emotions. Not only this, feeling and emotions are more intimately bound to the object which arouses them, and this may be the reason why one primarily responds only to those kind of works of art to which one is habituated in one's culture. The so-called 'disinterested pleasure' which most aesthetic objects are supposed to arouse is 'disinterested' only in the context of what are known as the pragmatic ends of action. They are not 'disinterested' either in the sense that they are related to one's earlier experience of that sort, or in the sense that one does not seek them because one had experienced them earlier in relation to the same or similar kinds of objects. One returns back to the aesthetic object which had given one the so-called 'disinterested' pleasure so that one may experience it again and hence the return can at least not be said to be as 'disinterested' as it might have been in the first instance. Moreover, the 'disinterested pleasure' is not a 'decontextualized pleasure' as Sundararajan thinks.

Sundararajan seems to have been misled by taking Ricoeur's distinction too seriously and by misreading the Kantian enterprise in the field of knowledge. However, the issues to which he has addressed himself are important and do serve an independent study on their own. Even within the Kantian framework, the essential question would relate to the categories specific to the socio-cultural realm as well as to those specific to the politico-historical realm. Besides this, there would be the problem of finding the structural illusions belonging to those realms and the pseudo-antinomies that arise because of treating that which is transcendently involved in those domains as being empirically given in them. Furthermore, there would be the problem of finding the ultimate unity in all these realms and the unity between them and the realm of nature. Moreover, as the realm of history is not confined merely to the domain of the political, it will have to be disengaged from it altogether and treated independently. But these are all large enterprises,

and it is neither feasible nor desirable to undertake them here. What may be reasonably said is perhaps this that as the realm of the historical is demarcated by the emphasis on the past, it almost inevitably leads to the illusion of a closure of the time series and to the treatment of its material as if it had an end after which nothing more is supposed to have happened or nothing of importance has happened. There is also the corresponding illusion of a beginning which is always presented as a 'real' beginning of things as if nothing had happened before it. Historiography thus presents a case opposite to that which occurs when time is treated as objective in nature and regarded as beginningless and endless, giving rise to the well-known antinomies discussed by Kant. History is that which, by its very nature, imposes on the temporal flow of events a beginning and an end, and thus tries to see them as radically cut off from that which preceded and that which followed the events of that history. Not only does its 'past' have an end, but it also had a beginning, and the beginning is as arbitrary as the end, though the fact that it is, is rarely accepted by the historian. The structural illusion that history imposes is that of freeing time so that it can 'meaningfully' tell the story as having had a 'beginning' and an 'end'. Moreover, as the historian is concerned primarily with human events, he has not only to freeze time and impose an illusory closure on it by postulating a beginning and an end, he has also to impose a meaningful pattern on the whole and not merely on the isolated parts which constitute this whole. A history is composed of many histories. The temporal span which a historian chooses to write about consists of many smaller time-spans which may sometimes have a natural unity of meaning in them, but which together with other time-spans, do not make any meaningful pattern even though the historian would like it to do so. The dilemma, even when admitted, as by H.A.L. Fisher in his *History of Europe* cannot be overcome for the simple reason that it is intrinsic to the enterprise of history

and not something external to it. There can of course, be differences in the specificities of the pattern or the meaning apprehended, but that some sort of pattern or meaning has to be given to the material that is to be described is intrinsic to the enterprise itself. Even Fisher does so by the very fact that he is writing a history of Europe. By calling it such, he gives it a unity which is different from the unity he would have given if he were writing a history, say, of England or of any other European country situated in Europe.

But the unity that the historian attempts to give is not merely the unity of the manifold which all knowledge seeks, as Kant argued long ago, but a unity of a particular type which is different from the unity that a natural scientist seeks. The unity that the historian seeks is not so much a unity in terms of a law that the events exhibit or some law-like generalization of which they are instances, but rather the unity given by purposes which human beings seek or the meanings and the values they attempt to realize. This kind of unity is different from that which the theologian seeks or that which the apprehension of a work of art involves. Moreover, as both in the theological perspective and in the apprehension of a particular work of art there is present a closure, either in terms of the act of creation by God and the ultimate Day of Judgement or, as in the case of a specific work of art, there is always a beginning and an end even when time is an essential constituent of it. But such a closure does not happen in the case of that which the historian deals with and hence he has to impose on his material an arbitrary beginning and an end which it intrinsically does not have. To some extent, therefore, he does what the theologian does or what the religious perspective does to that which is involved in time, namely, it provides it with a beginning and an end which it intrinsically does not have. The theological or the religious understanding of the historian's craft is usually hidden by the scientific paraphernalia of a lot of evidence for the con-

tentions that he makes. But as the underpinnings are there only in the context of the human past, the one continuous temptation for the historian is to treat his material as if it were a part of natural theology. On the other hand, there is also a continuous temptation to see the past on the pattern of a work of art in which time is an essential constituent and of which the paradigmatic form is drama which has not only a beginning and an end, but also, following Aristotle, unities of time and place.

One must distinguish in this context between what we have called structural illusions and structural temptations. Structural illusion is one which is shared by everybody because of the fact that it is structural and whose illusoriness can only be realized by the critique of another faculty which may have structural illusions of its own. However, even if it has structural illusions of its own, their illusoriness will only be realized by a faculty that is yet of a higher order. The problem of an unending hierarchy of faculties having the capability of exposing the illusoriness of the structural illusions of a faculty of a lower order but not capable of destroying their 'appearing' at that level gives rise to interesting philosophical problems which it is not easy to pursue here. However, the difference between structural temptation and a 'structural illusion' is that the temptation is generated by the illusion, but one has the freedom to succumb to it or not, even within the accepted parameters of the illusion and even if the illusory character of that illusion is not realized or exposed by the transcendental critique of a faculty of a higher order. Thus, the structural temptation of the historian to give in to the theologian's perspective or to the religious or the aesthetic perspective on the phenomena that he is studying, though generated by the structural illusion within which historiography functions, is not necessitated by it as the historian, in the exercise of his craft, can avoid them even when he remains perpetually exposed to the temptation.

The avoidance of the structural temptations and the awareness of the structural illusion immanent to the domain of historical knowledge will result in a consciousness which would try to theoretically correct the illusion and not give in to the temptations to which it is continuously exposed. However, at a deeper level still, the attitudes to space, time and causality which the historian displays in his treatment of the subject matter may perhaps be of even far greater importance than the structural illusion imposed by this subject matter, for the historian is also a human being and as a human being he shares in the strange, complex fact that he or she does not belong only to the natural and the socio-cultural realm but also has the capacity to be self-conscious about it. The problem in fact is many-faceted and belongs to the complex nature of the human personality itself.

If it is accepted that the cognitive realm in general and that the specific cognitive realms in particular, have structural illusions of their own, then the question of the relation between these structural illusions will arise both at the epistemological and the ontological level, for man not only knows, but what he 'knows' determines his actions and thus brings a world into being which not only transforms the natural world which may be considered as pre-given to man, but also brings a totally new world into being which would not have been there but for the fact that he exists and has existed for a fairly long time on this planet. The enmeshing of the epistemological and the ontological is thus the central problem for all human reality, and as the historian is concerned ultimately with the grasping of this reality in the perspective of time, conceived as a succession where the past flows into the present and shapes the future, he cannot escape it either.

The point is how one should apprehend the human past in the historical perspective. It is clear that such an apprehension would be determined by the way we conceive of human reality, for what we are trying to apprehend is human

reality itself as it has unfolded in time and space on the basis of that which it has left behind. And what it has left behind consists either of written documents which relate either to direct descriptions of persons and events that took place or are themselves imaginative creations in which men have engaged or cognitive exercises about which men considered as knowledge in a particular field or what they thought about the world and the reality at that time. The evidence also tells us about the awareness which those people at that time had of their own past, for most of what survives in the form of written texts generally refers to persons, places, and events that happened in the past, and that are remembered and referred to, and evaluated. The point is that the past itself is present in the texts, for they are continuously referred to in some form or another and that constitutes them either positively or negatively in an important way, for it is in its own terms that the consciousness of a people articulates itself. It is thus that we reconstruct the past from the past itself, and sometimes search for and find what is referred to in these documents that have survived the ravages of time. But even when we do not find that which is referred to in the extant texts, we certainly can reconstruct on the basis of the references something of the past whose direct records may not be available to us. The hidden archaeology which is available in extant texts has not been a subject of independent investigation but, for a historian, the past that is present in the text and can be dug out and reconstructed from it is, or should be, as important as the content of the text itself. In fact, the texts themselves form a sequence in time and hence can be seen in the way we see successive layers in an archaeological excavation where each successive layer is related to the earlier ones and is also independent of them to a certain extent. The sequence of texts thus presents a temporal continuum where the later can be seen as responding to the former, selecting from it, and critically modifying it and carrying it forward. This generation of texts is as important as the successive generations of

human beings, where each generation carries on from where the earlier generation has left and builds on it and sometimes even strikes new paths of its own. But in this process, what is neglected or left behind is as important as what is selected, emphasized, and focused upon, for unlike the living generations, the historian is as much interested in the text of the past as in the later one. The story that he tells has thus to equally emphasize that which is lost on the way or that which branches out and develops in a different form, or that which though neglected at one time is revived at another.

The texts which form a successive continuum, however, are the products of a mind which is self-conscious and whose articulations are, basically, attempts to find answers to a question or the solutions to a puzzle or a problem, and hence the texts themselves are to be interrogated to find what exactly the questions are or the problems or the puzzles and the paradoxes to which answers and solutions are being sought. One's attention is normally caught by what is being said in a text and not by the underlying problematic to which what is being said is a more or less adequate solution. Yet what is more important is to find what troubled the mind and in what alternative ways it tried to find a solution to what troubled it. Also, as both the problems and the solutions are handed over to one by the past, one of the tasks of the historian is to become a textual archaeologist and try to uncover layers after layers of the successive formulations of the problems and their solutions and to reach, as far as possible, the earlier discoverable formulation of the problem and the question which, so to say, generated the sequence itself in recorded time. This search for the original formulation is almost like the search for the absolute beginnings or like the act of creation whose source is usually ascribed to God or regarded as beginningless. In this perspective however, the search for the original problematic is almost like asking why God created the world or what the problem was that troubled the Divine Mind which he sought to solve by

the act of creation of the World itself. Or in case one does not like the postulation of the divine problematic, one may equally ask why the so-called Big Bang occurred to which modern astronomy traces the beginnings.

There is a radical difference between the historian's and the theologian's search and that of the physicist, though there are some common elements in both. A human creation has certain characteristics which the natural world can not have, given the perspective in which the physicist sees it. The theologian postulates a God whose problematic can hardly be formulated in principle, for, given the postulates, it normally cannot be said to have any problems at all. There is, of course, the problem of the relation between omniscience and omnipotence, but the problem can only be regarded as a 'problem' for the human mind, as it alone seems to feel an incompatibility between them. Also, it is interesting in this connection to note that though western theology has thought of omniscience and omnipotence as characteristics of God, it has no word to describe this omni-character in terms of feeling, as the usual terms only refer to knowledge and power. It would be interesting to ask whether a being was both omniscient and omnipotent could still be regarded as being unhappy or unfulfilled, and whether the Act of Creation could be ascribed to that feeling? The Indians, on the other hand, have ascribed to the character of *ānanda*, ultimate reality though oddly they do not seem to have ascribed the notion of power or will to the ultimate in their characterization of it as *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*. There are of course concepts analogous to the notion of omnipotence, but at least in the Vedāntic formulation of the Absolute, the concept of omnipotence seems to be missing or at least underplayed.

However, the concerns of both the theologian and the physicist are irrelevant to the historian for he is concerned with a being who is finite both in the realms of knowledge and power, and is both happy and unhappy, fulfilled and

unfulfilled, and who is essentially a being who is born and who dies and unlike other animals is conscious of the fact that he is such. The search for the un-problematic of a civilization therefore can only be pushed as far as the evidence can take us and, in a certain sense, the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual history of that civilization may be regarded as being determined by this original formulation of the problematic, for it provided the background not only for the attempts at its solution but also for the awareness of what was to count as a problematic for the culture concerned. It is of course true that new problematics also arise in the course of the history of a civilization, and it is the mark of a genius that he not only gives a radical solution to the problematic as formulated in the culture but also sets a new problematic for his successors. The radical breaks in the history of a civilization may be seen both in the solution or rather the attempts at the solution of the original problematic as formulated by the founding fathers of the civilization as well as the apprehension of a new problematic that occurred later in the history of the civilization.

An even more interesting aspect about this way of looking at the history of a civilization is to see that each solution gives rise to a new problem, which itself demands to be solved and thus engages the minds of subsequent thinkers of the civilization. The history, then, is a history of the successive problematics that occur in the attempt by thinkers to solve a problem or answer a question which was set for them by earlier thinkers and the new problems and questions that they pose in their attempts at solution for the thinkers who follow them. Moreover, such a perspective will only apply to the temporal dimension of the civilization concerned. However, what is perhaps of equal importance is the spatial shift in the locus of the thinkers who were trying to tackle the problematics and who were taking part in this unending process which constitutes the cognitive dimension of a civilization. It should therefore

be as interesting to discover not only who succeeded whom, or who the thinkers are referred to in a work, but also where exactly the thinker who wrote the work lived for this also will give a clue, when it is available, to the successive spread of a civilization over space, just as it has a history of succession over time. Besides, the successive spatial locations where the cognitive enterprise was carried on, we may also think of what might be called the field of a civilization, that is, the area in which there is an intense interaction between centres where the cognitive enterprise is intensively pursued. Thus, it would be interesting to know if a number of thinkers were located in a certain region within a certain period of time and how these intensely interactive regions shifted over the years.

These considerations however relate only or primarily to the cognitive products of a culture. When we turn to the imaginative creations in the field of literature and art we see them not in terms of a solution to a problem or an answer to a question but as the creation of a world which embodies the fulfillment of the dreams of a civilization. The question therefore to ask of such works of literature and art is what dreams they embody, what wishes they reflect, whose fulfillment they seek and what fantasies they entertain. However, it would not be quite correct to see the imaginative creations of a civilization in one dimension alone. Rather, they are to be seen as a multi-faceted functioning of the imaginative faculty of man, giving shape simultaneously to his aspirations, ideals, desires, dreams, sensibilities, or in one word, all that he/she finds lacking in the actual lived day-to-day world that he/she inhabits most of the time. Yet, by a strange logic, these imaginative creations of man begin to play a transforming role in his life and shape it at least to a certain extent in the mould of the imaginative reality itself. Normally, the relation between cognitive knowledge and its resultant technology has caught the attention of thinkers in relation to the prob-

lem of the transformation of reality, in taking it nearer to the heart's desire and helping man in the fulfillment of his needs. But the imaginative creations of man play more of an important role in shaping man's lived life than has usually been thought. What, after all, is culture but a living enactment of imagination in giving a pattern to life itself? The imaginative creations of man therefore have to be seen by the historian in all these dimensions and, at a deeper level still, as shaping the life as it is experientially felt and lived by people over successive periods of time.

So the succession of imaginative creations has to be seen in terms of the imaginative creations of the past in a manner that is significantly different from the way one tries to understand the history of the problematic or problematics in the cognitive domain. Here there is at least a triple problematic. The first relates to what may be called the technology of the embodiment of creative imagination in different media. The point is that any attempt at embodying what is imagined presupposes two different kinds of technological knowledge which though not entirely unrelated to each other, are sufficiently independent to be considered separately. The first depends on developments in knowledge and their practical application in terms of technology which has little to do with the technology regarded as immanent to the field of imaginative creation itself. The former relates to the knowledge of materials in which, and through which, what is creatively imagined has to be embodied and given a palpable shape capable of being apprehended by the senses. And, as everyone knows, such knowledge goes on changing depending upon the development in practical knowledge whose relation to theoretical knowledge is sometimes direct but generally tangential and indirect. Thus, architecture has to depend on the knowledge of engineering which, in the strict aesthetic sense, is external to it. So also the availability of colours to a painter. In fact the arts may be distinguished by their

relatively greater or lesser dependence on technologies which are strictly outside their own domain. Literature is perhaps the most independent of the arts, so also is dance. Music depends, to a greater extent, on the availability of instruments as compared to dance but, seems to depend less on technology outside its domain than does painting. Architecture is the most dependent of art forms as it is the actual shaping of materials the knowledge of which is essential to the craft. In fact, the problem of size which creates all the engineering problems in architecture seem to be totally absent in the other arts. What, however, matters more to these imaginative embodiments of human creation are the technologies immanent to the domains themselves and these provide the most interesting subject from the historical point of view as the succession of imaginative creations may be seen in terms of the more or less successful attempts at solving the technological problems immanent to those particular domains. The relevant question from this point of view is regarding the way the problem was solved in the earlier work and how it was left half solved or unresolved so that the later work might be seen in the context of the solution of the problem of the technical embodiment of the imaginative vision that the artist was seeking to concretize so that it could be apprehended by a sensitive observer. There is thus simultaneously a history of the vision that was attempted to be embodied and the technical expertise involved in its embodiment.

The history of the imaginative creations of a civilization has to be seen simultaneously as the successive attempts at the embodiment of a vision through more or less successful technologies immanent to the domain or as the emergence of new visions or new technologies that open the way to the apprehension of the same vision in a different way. The interplay of external technologies that provide possibilities and immanent technologies that are integral to the embodiment of the vision and the vision itself can-

not be separated in such a clear-cut way as our formulation might seem to suggest, but for analytical purposes of understanding there is little harm in trying to see them as separate. The external technology which is presupposed is of course easier to separate while the internal technology immanent to the work of art is far more organically related to the vision concerned. The relation between the technique and the content in a work of art is too intimate to be separated in a mechanical way and yet the history of successive works of imagination has to be viewed both from the point of view of the vision embodied and the means by which it has been concretized for sensuous apprehension by an act which is both perceptual and imaginative.

The historian of civilizations has to see both the cognitive products of the civilization and its imaginative creations in a temporal perspective and the interrelationships between the two as they both belong to two different sides of the same consciousness, even if this consciousness happens to be located in different individuals. The problem of the larger *weltanschauung* or the world view implicit in the two enterprises has to be seen in a common focus as both influence that general reservoir of ideas, concepts, images and symbols which influences everyone in a culture who engages in an imaginative activity. The interesting point however is to see the time lag in the influence of the one on the other. The cognitive history of a culture is entwined with the history of its imaginative creations, even though it may not be immediately manifest to an eye that does not seek it. The conceptual creations and theoretic formulations take time to become a part of the common mentality of the people in a civilization so that we may safely postulate a time-lag between their creation and the influence that they have and the manner in which they shape the imaginative creations of the culture. Similarly, the imaginative creations in their own turn influence the cognitive enterprise not only by confronting it with art creations in

diverse fields but also by providing it with living metaphors for thought which are the unacknowledged lifeblood of thought. This continuous interplay between the cognitive and the imaginative creations of culture over a period of time has seldom been investigated. In fact, the usual histories which devote themselves either to the cognitive or the imaginative enterprise of man hardly ever try to comprehend them as a single whole, leave aside the question of the interaction between them. Even those who, like Spengler, have shown some awareness of the inter-linking between the two, have not seen their interaction in a temporal perspective. The leads and the lags are the heart of the matter. And not only this, but what is left and ignored and what is picked up and elaborated and developed in new directions is the most important part of it all, as the two enterprises have an independent autonomy of their own, and if they interact and influence and borrow from each other they do so on equal terms.

The imagination however has a mythic dimension, just as reason, which is the heart of the cognitive enterprise, has a metaphysical dimension. Neither has the relation between myth and metaphysics been explored, nor has the relation between reason and imagination been the subject of attention either by historians or thinkers in general. Perhaps myth is an attempt to clothe metaphysical reality with that quality which may give it palpable reality in terms of that which can be felt emotionally and responded to by the total being of man. On the other hand, the metaphysical impulse may be seen to provide a rational underpinning to that which is enjoyed as myth and to give it a cognitive respectability which is required by man who not only thinks of himself as a rational animal but also prides himself on being such. The point however in the context of the history of civilizations is to see the two of them together as providing an understanding of each in the light of the other. Normally both myth and metaphysics remain fairly constant over long periods of time. They

may even be supposed to provide that distinctive identity to particular civilizations which distinguishes them from each another. But it would be interesting to enquire if there are radical changes in myths and metaphysical apprehensions in the history of a civilization, as that would provide an interesting clue to the historical changes that have taken place in the reason and imagination of that civilization over time. Perhaps a more usual phenomenon is the rise into dominance of those myths and metaphysical apprehensions which were previously only marginal. Thus, the historian of civilizations would have to be on the look-out not only for the appearance of radical breaks in the appearance of myths and metaphysical apprehensions but also of those fluctuations in them which bring some to the forefront at the expense of others.

The story of cognitive enterprises, on the one hand, and the imaginative enterprises, on the other, and their interaction and interrelation would thus form an important focus in the history of any civilization as these are the two basic dimensions in which human creativity manifests itself. There are of course other dimensions of creativity which are as or even more important than these. But normally they remain hidden from the vision of the historian as they are seldom documented in the same way or embodied in a permanent record on whose basis they may be reconstructed. These are the dimensions of the transformations of the self and the transformations of society or the natural or the social environment of man. Creativity in these domains is difficult to decipher, particularly in the area that relates to the transformations in the human personality, especially those that concern the deeper psychic levels of consciousness, as they are difficult to discern through any objective evidence. Creativity in the dimension of the creation of the social and natural environment should at least be relatively easier to apprehend and discover, but here again the evidence is not only indirect but the very notion of 'creativity' as applicable to these realms

is not very clear. In fact, one might question as to what exactly creativity would mean with reference to either the transformation of personality or to the socio-cultural and natural environment, which, though difficult to characterize or articulate, is yet palpably and existentially felt and realized by anyone who at any time encounters the human world and the socio-cultural and natural environment. Yet, however difficult it may be to discern creativity in these domains, it is clear that it has to be attempted if we want to understand any civilization in its totality. In fact creativity in the field of action has seldom been the focus of the attention of historians even when they have concentrated on political or social history. The routine record of the succession of those who ruled a country or of their conquests and wars with other peoples is hardly an index of their creativity in these domains. Generally, this is not even attempted, as even with the stories of great conquerors and rulers we are hardly told what their 'greatness' really consisted in. What, for example, were the innovations that they introduced in the art of warfare or military strategy or in the use and invention of new weapons, is scarcely the focus of their attention. Similarly, there is hardly any discussion of the innovations in the art of rulership or the attempt at realizing values in the field of ensuring justice or prosperity to their peoples. Sometimes, of course, we have a reference to the patronage of the arts such as the building of temples, mosques, and churches, or to palaces and forts. But here the focus is primarily on the facilitation of creativity and innovation on the part of others and not directly in these dimensions which may be regarded as immanent to the political domain itself. Of course, the realm of the political may itself be conceived of primarily in instrumental terms, that is, as having no immanent, intrinsic values of its own. But, while this is true to a certain extent, it does not do justice to the values of the realm itself. In fact the relation between 'instrumental' and 'intrinsic' is

itself relative, as all domains can be regarded as instrumental to one another and, hence, the values that are intrinsic to the realm may be seen as instrumental from the point of view of the values in the other domains. This obviously is the case with all those who regard the realm of the political as primary and all other realms as being basically instrumental to it, whether these concern even such fundamental seekings of man as are evidenced in the field of religion, art, and science, or the pursuit of knowledge in general. Perhaps, for these thinkers, power is the central value belonging to the realm of the political, but if it were so, the question of the legitimization of power would be irrelevant. Yet, it occupies the centre stage in all political thought and thus questions the implicit assumption of most historians that power alone is the central value belonging to the domain of politics. Furthermore, even if it were conceded that power is the central value of politics, the question would remain as to what exactly creativity would be in the realm of power. Is it, for example, innovation in the generation, administration and consolidation of power, or is it in the uses to which power is put?

If the problem of creativity in the realm of the political is difficult to elucidate both at the theoretical and the operational level, the problem in the realm of the social seems even far more difficult to deal with. Yet, one may attempt to discover as to how far plurality, deviation, difference and dissidence is tolerated or even appreciated in a culture and how far uniformity is demanded. This of course may not be found uniformly in all fields and there may be important differences in this respect between one field and another. One important indication of this may be found in the notion of 'heresy' prevalent in a culture and number of heretics persecuted or punished in a certain period. Criminal law may be another important indicator in finding out what sort of behaviour is punished in a particular society and with what severity. Another important indicator could perhaps

be found in the degree of centralization or decentralization of power in a polity. A similar indicator could be found in the proportion of taxation on the rural and urban incomes and the amount that was left to be spent by local people for local purposes. These could tie up with the clues for finding creativity and innovation in the political domain. Similarly, one could take any information regarding concern with the environment or the creation of gardens, roads, plantations, rest-houses, and so forth, as indicators of an attempt to create a social environment in which human beings can live meaningfully. Beyond these, there is the whole realm of interpersonal relations and human life as it is existentially lived. Perhaps some indication of it and the changes that occur therein may be found in the literature that a civilization has left over a period of time.

The search for creativity in diverse fields as a hallmark of civilization would, however, have to be founded in the individuals who ultimately are the carriers of this creativity. Furthermore, as all creativity is built on the foundations of what was achieved before, the maintenance and transmission of that which is achieved becomes as important as the modification and innovation in what has been so transmitted. If the average life span of an individual may be taken to be about sixty to seventy years, then the first twenty to twenty-five years may be thought of as being devoted to the learning of what was achieved in the past and the rest may be taken as being devoted to the attempt at any modification or creative innovation in it. The biological cycle and the biological renewal of generation may thus be taken as providing the fundamental unit in terms of which the creativity span of civilizations has to be studied and measured. We may therefore roughly take a century as our unit for the understanding of a civilization in all its dimensions, as the generations overlap and provide grounds for both continuity and change. Moreover, as most of the civilizations until now have valued the past more

than the future and given more prestige to the old than to the young and emphasized conservation more than innovation, one would not only have to develop strategies to discern departures and innovation, but also to expect that such a thing is more likely to be found in the third generation which is farther from the earlier ones and thus can be more independent of them. It is the grandchildren who normally feel freer with their grandparents; in any case, the latter are generally dead by the time they themselves have grown up. The basic point is that the cycles of cultural creativity in a civilization are embedded in the biological cycle of generations. This, however, is only one dimension of the problem. The other relates to the fact that the concept, the image, or the value which demands to be explored is full of such unknown implications and possibilities that it may take even generations or millennia to exhaust what is contained in them. The innovation and creativity may thus consist in the exploration of the possibilities that have not yet been seen or apprehended in them. It may also consist in the creation of a new concept or image or value which then may interact with the old or even start a new cycle of its own in terms of the unfolding of the possibilities inherent in them. Furthermore, as we usually do not have just a single concept or image or value, but rather a cluster of them, it is the interactional possibilities between them that may be explored by successive generations in a culture or civilization. Even here, the innovation may lie in what concept or image or value is treated as dominant or central in the cluster, and what are regarded as subsidiary or peripheral in nature.

However, as the values apprehended do not entail just a cognitive or imaginative dimension, but also a demand for their practical realization, any history of their apprehension would also include a history of the actions undertaken for their actualization and realization. The attempt at the actualization of a value, however, not only encounters dif-

faculties but also shows both the incompleteness and the abstraction involved in the apprehension of the value. Moreover, as any attempt at the actualization of a value always comes into conflict with some vested interest or other, it is in the realm of action that one encounters opposition and hostility which is different from the one that is met within the realm of thought. The dialectics of action, thus, is radically different from the dialectics of thought. In the latter, the opposition comes from either the apprehension of incoherence in what is said or from having ignored the counter evidence. The play of interests only comes from the entrenched division and the habituation to a style of thought to which one is accustomed. However, in the realm of action, the interests that are touched upon happen to be more vital and to relate to the advantages in terms of wealth and power that individuals and groups enjoy which are affected by the new value that is sought to be realized. In fact, even where pure privileges of status, which have nothing to do with either power or wealth, are adversely affected, the opposition aroused is as intense as when the former are adversely affected. Normally, therefore, the reformulation occurs more often in the realm of thought than in the articulation of a value where recourse is often taken to the excuse that there was nothing wrong with the value that was apprehended, but only with the circumstances that did not let it be actualized. The apologetics on behalf of all ideals, whether religious or secular has always been the same. Yet, new value apprehensions do arise and old values do get reinterpreted in the light of new circumstances that obtain in the history of a civilization. These, therefore, are even more important than the changes in thought whose curve is normally different from the one we find with respect to the history of value apprehension in a culture. The historian of civilizations, then, has to be especially on the lookout for the changes that occur in the formulation of older values over

a period of time and the apprehension of new ones that take the centre stage in the history of that civilization.

The history of conceptual change is as important as that of change in the value apprehensions of a people, but its story is different. The character of thought is by its very nature such that it is not only aware of what it negates but that it lives and thrives through this negation. The history of conceptual thought, therefore, is always the history of dispute between diverse schools of thought, and it is this conflict which the historian has to capture and to show how thought grows through this conflict over a period of time. Concepts, of course, themselves undergo changes in the way they are understood. This has to be articulated by the historian of civilization as much as the growth through conflict between diverse schools of thought. The extension and changes in the meaning of concepts over a period of time and their changing interrelationships with other concepts, thus, forms an important field of study in the history of civilization. However, there is a difference between concepts that refer to empirical domains of knowledge and those that relate to such fields as philosophy. Changes in the former occur primarily because of changes in the field of empirical knowledge itself, while changes in the latter occur mainly because of reasons which are internal, due to a reflection on the problematic and ambiguous nature of both the concept and the critical response to it by its opponents. The concepts relating to the realm which is created by imagination have a peculiar character of their own, as they relate to something which is external to themselves and yet which does not exactly have the character which empirical knowledge displays in other domains. Changes in them, therefore, reflect both the changes that are occurring in the realm of imaginative emotions and the theoretic problems that are being faced in the articulation regarding the problematic in thinking about that realm. The second order conceptual reflection in any domain will always show this double characteristic.

The changes in them, then, will provide a clue to the changes that are occurring in the realm which is being reflected on, though there is bound to be a certain time lag between them. The converse relationship, that is, the influence of the second order reflection on the activities in the first order domain has also to be taken into account. There would, therefore, be a double interplay between the theoretical reflection and the domain on which it is a reflection, each intertwining with the other and thus creating a complex relationship where each influences the other with a time lag, both directly and indirectly. The question which one has to ask is what constraints, if any, had been placed on the development of the first level enterprises by the second order reflection on them resulting in a *śāstric* form of knowledge with respect to them. In the Indian context, one has to ask, for example, whether Pāṇini's or Bharat's *śāstric* formulations, influenced either the Sanskrit language or the arts. Similarly, one may ask as to what influence the formulation of the science of erotics in Vātsyāyana's *Kāma Sūtra* had on the development of aesthetics and on man-woman relationships as conceived of in literature.

Creations in the world of imagination have a close relationship to the world of feelings as they portray human beings in relationship to one another in diverse situations. They provide imaginary ideal forms of human relationships to be translated into actual life. The feelings and emotions depicted in a work or art are relived by the person who apprehends them, but in addition there is also a second order feeling or emotion which is generated by them and which in its own turn is apprehended to be significant and meaningful. There may also be a supervening judgement that this is how life ought to be lived, or that this is how it should never be if life is to be meaningful or significant. This perhaps explains to a certain extent how feelings and emotions depicted in a work of art may be aesthetically enjoyed and yet morally rejected as providing ideals or

norms for actual human living. The centrality of feelings and emotions with regard to the imaginative creations of man infects even those arts which do not directly deal with human beings or their inter-relationships. Architecture is perhaps the clearest example of this. It not only does not, but cannot deal with the intricate relationships of human beings, and yet the forms it creates are apprehended not only in terms of the feelings that it arouses but are also seen as embodying in concrete form something that is emotionally meaningful and significant. Indeed, the organization of space embodied in a work of architecture makes the third dimension of space visible as no other art form does, and hence our concretely lived experience of space in which we move is captured perhaps by architecture, both in terms of dynamic and tactile qualities, as no other art form does. The mention of tactile qualities in this context may seem a little strange, but it should be because our sense of space is not only related to the sense of motion but also to the sense of touch. As for the dynamic qualities of space it is perhaps stranger still that architecture, which cannot but be static, should give us a visible apprehension of movement so different from all the other arts. It is true that this sense of dynamism is created by the fact that the spectator has to move in order to view a piece of architecture. Indeed, he has not only to approach it but also to move in it and around it to get a feel of what he sees; there can be little doubt that the work itself tries to give a sense of space both at rest and in motion. The double movement both of the spectator and the architecture creates a dynamic apprehension of space that is hardly available in any other art form, for in virtually all of them the spectator either sits and watches or stands, as before a painting or a piece of sculpture, and if he moves it is only to stand before some other piece of painting or sculpture. It is of course true that before some paintings or pieces of sculpture, particularly if they happen to be large, the spectator does tend to

move nearer to the work in question in order to get a closer perspective or even to see it from another point of view, but this does not create a dynamic apprehension of the object. The only other example of a created work of art where the spectator has literally to move in order to apprehend its beauty is a man-made garden, though very few gardens have really been created with this in mind. The only one that I can think of is the Japanese garden where many consciously created effects are related to the fact that the person who enters a garden has to move from one part of it to another, and hence the garden has to be so created that this movement should give rise to a change of mood, including the element of surprise which the change in movement suddenly brings to view. However, it is difficult to say that the sense of dynamism in space is actually embodied in these gardens as it usually is in architecture. Perhaps the imagination that created these gardens did not conceive of them as pieces of architecture, or share with them this particular quality that might have been incorporated had the analogy been perceived. This is surprising because the Japanese did conceive of the garden in the analogue of a painting in which the visitor does not move or wander around but sits before it and views the whole as a spatial composition. The third dimension actually exists and is not, as in a painting, created by certain tricks or perspective, and yet, it is difficult to say whether the actuality of the presence of the third dimension in a Japanese garden which is built as an analogue to painting gives it any added quality as it obviously does in architecture. There are, of course, actual examples of architecture that are themselves built on the analogy of paintings, in that they have to be apprehended as wholes from a certain distance silhouetted against the space behind and around them. However, they do not invite one to move into them or even around them, though one may do so if one likes but then the joy of the aesthetic apprehension ceases to be architectural and be-

comes something else. In many of the great masterpieces of Mughal architecture, particularly those built by Shah Jahan, the very entrance point provides a frame or picture of the building as hanging in space, to be seen and apprehended at a glance in its complete totality. The Taj Mahal provides the perfect example of this, though the Jama Masjid also has this remarkable quality particularly if one knows the vantage point from which it was meant to be viewed. This is the angle at which the emperor used to take a sudden turn when he visited the mosque, though now it is cluttered up with shops and buildings which, at least partially, obstruct the view. Though there are architectural buildings that have a painterly quality they have an in-built possibility of motion and the best of them combine this in a beautiful fashion where one complements the other.

Painting is of course the other art that explores space and its interrelationships but, as it also uses colours, the feelings that it arouses are a result of these two different dimensions, barely separable in actuality, though some artists may rely more on one than the other. However, besides space and colour, the painter is always susceptible to the temptation of bringing human beings into the picture and thus creating a literary analogue of a dramatic situation or of human beings and their interrelationships which the space and colour relationships may reinforce or, at times, may go counter to and thus create a mixed melange of response in terms of feelings and emotions. Normally, the literary quality of a painting interferes with its pure aesthetic quality and hence most illustrative paintings suffer from this curious conflict that pulls the spectator in two different directions. Yet, so far as the reconstruction of an aspect of a civilization is concerned, this is not exactly a defect but rather a virtue for what the historian is ultimately interested in is the way human relations, and the feelings and emotions pervading them, were conceived in the past and actually obtained. In this, the intrusion of

the literary element in painting is a help rather than a hindrance as it visualizes these emotions and relations that are only described in literature. It also provides a clue to the way people dressed and lived in those times.

The problem of the dynamics of space is of course not confined to architecture and painting alone. It permeates all the other arts, particularly dance and drama. Yet here it is entwined with the dynamics of time from which it is difficult to disentangle it. The dancer not only moves in space but can also make it visible if he/she chooses to do so. But unless there is a deliberate attempt in this direction, it normally plays only a subservient role and what engages the attention is the temporal rhythm of movement and not the space in which it is being enacted. Pure dance is perhaps even rarer than pure painting, for the dancer's eternal temptation is to portray feelings and emotions through gestures that either directly mirror the physical aspects of feelings and emotions when they actually occur in human beings or indirectly relate to situations that are themselves imitated through the language of gesture appropriate to them. Indeed, dance is always on the verge of becoming a dramatic performance in a pure language of gesture where nothing is spoken but everything enacted through the very movements of the body. The drama brings into bold relief what paintings, at least of a certain kind, and dance attempt to do, but here the human element completely takes over and it is human beings in inter-relationships, with all their feelings and emotions, that occupy centre stage. Yet, the dynamics of space and time are not only absent but provide the very stuff of the action that constitutes the heart of drama. These are not, of course, the unity of space and time of which Aristotle talked and which governed European plays for a long time. Rather, the issue relates to how space and time are apprehended in relation to the dynamic development of action in drama.

The dynamic movement of time comes of course into its own in music, but it is difficult to say whether music can also be said to occupy space or is concerned with spatiality at all in any significant sense of the term. Architecture of course does not seem to encompass any temporal element, yet, it can have a dynamic quality that makes space itself vibrant and alive even though it may be difficult to call it temporal. Architecture as we have noted, is apprehended through the actual motion of the spectator and hence there is a sense of temporality projected on to it. Besides, as we have already noted, there is the immanent dynamism of space at least in some examples of architecture. But even such virtual elements of space that may be regarded as analogous to those that are present as time in architecture seem to be totally absent in the case of music. Still, for all practical purposes, architecture and music may be regarded as the purest imaginative creations of man with regard to space and time. Music has again the temptation of relying on verbal material that evokes, through its association, meanings that are surcharged with feelings and emotions. In this it resembles painting and dance which continuously stray from their purity, being inveigled by elements that are essentially alien to them but which are usually thought to reinforce the feelings and emotions aroused by them. Yet, as in the case of painting, these are more helpful to the historian in his reconstruction than the purer art forms in these domains. Indeed, ultimately, these are all parasitic on literature which may be considered to be the primary form taken by the creative imagination of man in most civilizations, but as there are non-literate cultures and non-literate phases in all civilizations, the imaginative creation embodied in these domains need also be taken into account when considering what moved man in those ages. Architecture and pottery thus occupy a pre-eminent place in this reconstruction as these survive from all times even when other art forms in which the human imagination embodied itself have perished. The

embellishment of architecture with sculptures and scenes from human life depicted in friezes, however, shows how difficult it is to escape from the central interest of man in human situations in depicting feelings and emotions and in responding to the pure forms whether spatial or temporal, that constitute the basic underlying structures and provide aesthetic meaning to all creations of the imagination. Even Islamic architecture, where neither sculptures nor friezes nor murals are found, cannot resist the temptation of embellishing it with floral designs and calligraphic ornamentation which themselves, though of the utmost beauty, can hardly be said to enhance the purity of spatial form which the architecture embodies in itself. Just as in a great Indian temple where the viewer does not normally look too long at the architectural masterpiece that stands before him but rushes from one breathtaking piece of sculpture to another, so does he, amongst masterpieces of Mughal architecture, become lost in wonder at the beauty of the exquisite floral designs. The absence of sculpture and painting in Islamic architecture is surprising in more ways than one, for it is not the case that there were no portraits and paintings or that manuscripts were not illustrated, or even that intricate scenes depicting human events full of life and excitement were not found in abundance in Islamic art all over the world. Why then should it have been absent from architecture alone? It is difficult to give a straight answer to the question, but it could be that the Islamic architect had a greater sensitivity to the purity of architectural form than architects in any other tradition of architecture. This of course must have been helped by the prohibition of representation; yet, as the example of painting and illustration of manuscripts shows, the paradox and the enigma remains unresolved.

The imaginary creations of man, along with the cognitive enterprise in various fields of knowledge that engaged him and the clues they provide, has to be supplemented by two other dimensions of his seeking in order to get a more inte-

grated picture of the history of any civilization. These may be called the transcendental seeking of man, on the one hand, and the transformational seeking of actuality as he finds it, on the other. Some of this transformational seeking is concretely visible in architecture and some in the designs of formal landscape gardens. Both are concrete transformations which stand there to be apprehended as real by all the senses that man has at his command. The other arts, oddly enough, have the quality of unfulfilled actualization, for even when they successfully embody what was imagined, it still remains in the world of possibility demanding or craving to be actualized. The transformational activity of man takes off therefore both from his cognitive enterprises and his imaginative enterprises and seeks to change the actual fabric of living itself. This is not only far more difficult but impossible in principle since time cannot be frozen or stopped as it is in all creations of the imagination and in what man achieves in his cognitive enterprises. The paradox of the atemporality of that which is achieved in an imaginative creation or in a cognitive enterprise is clearly evidenced by the fact that it itself has a location in time, and is both preceded and succeeded by other such creations. The non-temporal character of these creations, even when time is an integral part of them, as in music or drama, is questioned by the fact that not only did they emerge at a certain time but that they are succeeded by others of their kind making the same claim to atemporality. There is of course a profound difference between products of the cognitive enterprise and those that are the results of the creative seeking of man in the realm of imagination for the former always lays claim to truth while the latter normally do not do so. The atemporal claim to truth is thus radically different from the atemporal claim made by an imaginative creation of man, even though both come into being at a certain moment in time and are thus dated in their birth. Also, even though both are in a certain sense human creations, those in the cognitive realm negate the earlier ones in the sense that

they deny the truth claimed by them when they were built. The imaginative creations of man do not, at least explicitly, deny the earlier creations in any meaningful sense of the term. Rather, they add to them and show a richer diversity, and this is anathema in the cognitive realm. The cognitive enterprise thus shows a continuity of development where, in most cases, the latter supersedes the former and renders it only of historical interest. Imaginative creations are never superseded and it is seldom that the later is necessarily the better. Rather, the great creations of the past not only stand alongside those that are created later, but also, in some sense, provide a standard or a norm against which the later creations tend to be judged. It is of course not true that imagination plays no part in the cognitive enterprise of man, but its role is not only secondary but the constraints under which it operates are also of a totally different kind. Ultimately, the constraints on the imagination in the cognitive realm is provided by the reality itself which is sought to be known, while the constraints on imaginative creation primarily emanate from the specific characteristics of the medium in which it seeks to embody itself.

But, as every one knows, man is not satisfied by just knowing or imagining; he also wants to transform the actual in the direction of the desirable. In this enterprise of transformation, both imagination and knowledge play a crucial role. Normally what is conceived to be desirable is provided by the imaginative creations of a culture. Knowledge, on the other hand, provides the instrumentalities, the transformation of the actual, especially when it happens to be of the causal kind. The constraint on the transformational enterprise is thus twofold; that is, it presupposes both knowledge and imaginative creation to be 'given' to a certain extent. The deeper constraint on the transformational activity of man derives from the fact that there are other human beings in the world who are also free agents like him and whose cooperation is necessary for the transformation that is sought. The freedom of the other is thus the basic constraint

which the transformational activity of man encounters and poses the fundamental dilemma of all human action, seeking as it does to limit or deny the freedom of the other in order that he or she may become instrumental in the achievement of what is considered to be desirable. Yet, this instrumental use of the other is felt to be immoral as it denies the subjectivity of the other and reduces it to the status of an object. Moreover, it also makes it increasingly difficult to have those kinds of meaningful relations with another which can only be actualized in terms of a relationship between beings who are free. Love and friendship are the classic examples of such relationships, and it is well known that persons who are primarily engaged in the transformational activity find it difficult to establish these relationships or enjoy them for long.

The triple constraint on the transformational activity of man encounters another constraint of a different kind which arises from the fact that large-scale, long-term transformational activity requires impersonal institutions which become bureaucratic and whose norms of conduct tend to differ from those that apply to action by individuals in their personal capacity. The term 'bureaucratization' designates this whole complex and although Weber argued that it was some sort of an achievement of western rationality peculiar to modern European civilization, the fact is that no society can perpetuate itself and engage in any of the great enterprises of man over a long period of time without some such institutions. The realms of politics, law, and economy are paradigmatic examples of such institutionalization; but in almost every enduring realm of human activity, such institutions or their analogue are bound to take root, for without them no innovation can be routinized and made a stable part of culture or be passed from one generation to the next.

Besides the cognitive, the imaginative, and the transformational activity in which man engages, there is what may

be called, the transcendental enterprise of man. This deals with the basic issue of finitude and temporality, and consists in the attempt to overcome them in some way or other. The sense of mortality and unfreedom and of being involved in space and time leads man to try to be free of them, even though knowing that while an individual lives he cannot attain such freedom. There is both a haunting sense of meaningfulness and futility arising from the biological cycle of a self-conscious being who sees persons younger than himself undergoing all that he had endured without knowing what awaits him at the next turn of the cycle. The transcendental seeking may arise from these or any other factors, but basically it is the result of that self-consciousness which man inalienably possesses and which make everything he does or feels or knows an 'object' to himself, thus giving rise to a continual feeling of something that transcends that objectivity. The transcendental enterprise concerns the basic structural situation of man in terms of temporality, mortality, desire, bondage, freedom, and knowledge. No civilization can therefore ever be bereft of this enterprise of man and hence any understanding of civilization will have to take into account not only its enterprises in the cognitive, imaginative, and transformational domains, but also of the way it has pursued the transcendental enterprise over the millennia for which the record of that civilization exists.

All of these enterprises have large internal differentiations within themselves and there is always a problem of the interrelationships between them and between these different pursuits. Ultimately, there is a problem of the relationship between the realms of knowledge and those of emotions and feelings, and that of action and of that quest which seeks to tangentially transcend all seeking itself. The realm of freedom underlies them all and is both a precondition for seeking in any domain as well as the goal of all seeking whatsoever. However, the multiple interrelationships between freedom in all these domains and the tension between transcen-

ental and empirical freedom, and the problems that these pose for a civilizations have so far been little explored by the historians of civilization. The problem of the sub-domains within each of these enterprises is complex and difficult both in terms of the interrelationships between them and the relationship that they have to the sub-domains in other enterprises as well as to those enterprises as a whole. Also, though the sub-domains in the enterprises of knowledge, imaginative creation, and transformation of the actual are generally known, those in the transcendental pursuits of man have seldom been noticed. Normally, even when the civilizational dimension of the transcendental enterprise of man is recognized, it is treated all of a piece, as if there were no sub-domains within it. However, in reality, this enterprise too has an inner differentiation, even if these are not as many as in the other enterprises of man. *Prima facie*, the transcendental enterprise seems to differentiate itself by being focused on knowledge, feelings or will, the three fundamental aspects in which human self-consciousness seeks to problematically deal with itself. It would therefore be interesting to learn which aspect of the transcendental enterprise has been predominantly pursued in a civilization and what its major achievements in this have been. It would also be interesting to learn how this tangential pursuit of man has influenced, and has in its turn been influenced by his other pursuits and the specific way they have developed in a civilization.

The biological underpinning of all these pursuits of man, and the generational cycles in which it is inevitably embedded, provides a fundamental time-frame for the study of civilizations. Within this, the creative achievements in all the four fundamental dimensions of man's pursuits as well as all their specific sub-domains needs to be mapped and plotted for an understanding of any civilization. The first requirement for such an understanding would be to prepare a hundred year index of creativity in all these do-

mains so as to know at a glance what worth-while achievements were made in each of these dimensions and what pattern, if any, emerges from such an apprehension. The pattern shall be both simultaneous and successive, that is, within the same time span it may encompass all that has been achieved by a civilization in all these dimensions as well as the successive unfoldment of its creativity over successive generations in all these domains. There is also a problem of the time lag in the spread of an innovation and the awareness of it, enabling it to bring about a significant change in the thinking and perception of the people concerned. Furthermore, an innovation in one field takes time to have an impact on other fields, and there is always a difference in this regard between fields that may be considered as closely related and those that are distant and far off. There is also the difficulty of the relative valuational ranking in the various fields of creativity in a culture, along with the fact that creativity and innovation does not occur simultaneously in all fields at the same time. The history of any civilization has thus to make a special effort to identify the fields in which creativity and innovation are occurring and what delayed effects, if any, these have on other fields. Similarly, it is equally vital to trace the shifts in fields where creative innovation occurs in the course of a civilization and also the sudden spurts in creativity, followed by long periods of assimilation and conservation of those innovations, of their development in horizontal and extensional terms.

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The Plurality of Civilizations and the Question of Identity

Civilizations are the most enduring products of human creativity and thus need to be understood quite differently from all the other specific creations of man belonging to some one area or field of interest or concern using quite different methodologies. The long development in the enterprise of understanding the various domains that man has created and within which he has sought to achieve a 'fit' or congruence between the object studied and the methodology adopted for its understanding, has itself a history of trial and error. This has led to a relatively more adequate relationship between the two, giving us a 'truer' knowledge of the object than before. But as everyone knows, the enterprise has not been equally successful in all fields, and its relatively greater success in one domain has usually given rise to the temptation to extend that methodology to other domains, sometimes, even treating it as the only valid means of 'knowledge' or 'understanding' of any phenomenon whatsoever.

Self-conscious reflection on this phenomenon has led to what is usually known as the problem of knowledge or 'epistemology' in the western tradition of thinking on this issue. In the Indian context, it has been termed the *pramāṇa śāstra* and, besides the problem of how many *pramāṇas* are to be minimally accepted for understanding the human enterprise of knowing. It has also raised the interesting