TOWARDS A THEORY OF STRUCTURAL AND TRANSCENDENTAL ILLUSIONS

Introduction

Reflective Self-awareness which is only another name for philosophy seems to question everything except itself. Yet, questioning or doubting is what philosophy essentially consists in and if, reflexively, it does not question itself how can is be regarded as an 'honest' exercise of reason with 'reasoning' itself. But how far can the reflexive activity of self-reflection be carried without striking against the boundaries which seem to repel any effort to go beyond, even though there is a vague, tantalising awareness that there *is* a 'Beyond' which lies outside the grasp of reason which alone man appears to possess as the faculty for knowing what is 'true' and determining what is real. The so-called 'infinite regress' does not seem infinite enough as it stops, or is stopped, very soon at the level of existential self-consciousness where alone philosophy or rather the activity of philosophising has its being.

The activity and the source of the activity all lie there, but not so the structures that are built that go by the name of philosophical systems which are associated with the name of thinkers and traditions and are taught and discussed and debated by successive generations over millennia since man achieved self-consciousness in India or China or Greece whose exact date can hardly be fixed. But, however different these imposing structures of philosophical thought may be, they yet share a common belief that

by a pure exercise of reason they can know what is 'real' or, even in some cases, that it can never be known in principle. The belief in both its forms is strange as it rests on a claim to 'finality' and 'completeness' which the least little reflection on what the human situation consists in would have been sufficient to dispel. The paradoxical contradiction involved in the arrogance of reason is matched only by the still greater arrogance of faith found in all the spiritual and religious traditions of the world with which philosophy has been intimately entwined during the course of most of its history.

Such a widespread illusion shared both by reason and faith in almost all of their forms, calls for an investigation as it seems not only to define the human situation but be co-terminus with its history. The present work attempts to do just this. It suggests that the roots of the illusion lie in the nature of human consciousness itself which is not only conscious, but also self-conscious in a way whose structure has not yet been grasped and in which perhaps lies the immanent and transcendent source of this illusion.

The investigation takes its clue from the pioneering work of Kant who, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, tried to uncover the source of the antinomies in which Reason has been involved since the beginning of its reflection on itself. The important discovery which he made was that the antinomies were a result of accepting something as 'given' when it was really a presupposed precondition of that which appeared as 'given' in experience. Kant demonstrated

this in detail in respect of space, time and causality through a method which he called 'transcendental' and which he clearly distinguished from that which is called 'logical', following Aristotle. The transcendental critique which uncovered the roots of the antinomies was, for some reason, not extended to other constitutive preconditions of experience, nor was any attempt made to search for the foundational structure of consciousness and its activity that resulted both in the generation of the illusion and also in getting one to discover the 'illusoriness' of the illusion. Kant did not raise the question "how was the transcendental critique of reason possible, if the structure of reason was such as was revealed by his analysis?" Had he done so, he might have struck at that unyielding hard core of consciousness which seems to simultaneously create the illusions and if one so wants, 'frees' one from them also.

Kant did struggle with this problem in his *Transcendental Deduction of the Categories* where he formulated his key notion of the transcendental unity of apperception. But as the question itself was not formulated in a focal manner and as the whole discussion was in the context of 'knowledge' alone he failed to see even the contour of the problem he was trying to solve. Surprisingly, the idea of 'freedom' finds no place in the context of the discussion of the 'unifying' activity of consciousness in 'knowing'. Instead it is seen as an 'object' in the *Transcendental Dialectic* and discussed as such. It comes into its own and becomes pivotal only in the

second *Critique*, but as it is seen there only in the context of morality, its relation to the nature and structure of consciousness does not get investigated. In fact, the three *Critiques* needed a completion in an over-arching reflection articulating the nature and structure of consciousness which is revealed therein. The protestations regarding the unity of Reason in its diverse employments seem only an empty claim as the promise is never fulfilled. How do the three *Critiques* affect and modify one another is, for example, an unanswered question in Kantian scholarship.

The present work shifts the attention from reason to consciousness and self-consciousness, and tries to explore the roots of those illusions which arise in the realms of knowing, feeling and willing because of the very structure of consciousness and self-consciousness. The method of transcendental criticism is taken from Kant and, through a transcendental critique, an attempt is made to make man aware of the "transcendental illusions" to which one is inevitably subject just become one happens to be a self-conscious human being. An attempt is made to distinguish between illusions that arise because of the structure of consciousness and those that arises because of the transcendentality of self-consciousness. The former are called "structural illusions" while the latter are termed "transcendental".

The realisation of the 'illusoriness' of these illusions does not annul the occurrence or appearance of these illusions, a point argued a long time ago in an article entitled "*Two Types of*

Appearance and Two Types of Reality"[1] where the example of structural illusions are taken from the field of visual perception that are determined by the laws of optics on the one hand and the structure of the physiological sense-organs, on the other. As for consciousness, or rather human consciousness, there has hardly been any attempt at determining its structural features, in case there are any. A preliminary attempt was made in this direction in an article entitled "*Invariants of the Human Situation—Valuations and Limitations*"[2] also published a longtime ago. The ideas contained in these two papers have been explored and elaborated further in this work.

As for transcendental illusion, an idea bequeathed to philosophy by Kant, it would be well to remember that the 'appearance' of 'givenness' of space and time is in no way affected by his Critique which shows that they are not 'given' but are transcendentally presupposed by what appears as 'given' in experience. The same continues to be true of the categories he so elaborately examines in the *Transcendental Analytic* portion of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, though not perhaps in the same way.

Yet, in spite of this, there *is* a difference *after* the 'illusoriness' of the illusion has been theoretically exposed, and understood and accepted as such. The history of philosophy may perhaps be seen in some such way, and it will be difficult to deny that great thinkers have not had any effect on the *way* I experience things and my *attitude* to it. The awareness that something is an 'illusion'

not only 'frees' me to some extent from it, but also allows me to 'play' with it, if I so desire. It is only when I know or even suspect that something is a *māyā* that I can be relatively detached from it and participate in a different way which, in the Indian tradition, has been called *līlā*.

The work has been subject to long cogitation, reflection and meditation over years and the ideas in it have been discussed with friends and presented to groups in Lucknow and Calcutta and commented upon there. Finally, on January 15, 1997, the ideas began to take a concrete shape, perhaps because of Francine's feeling that what was being thought and intermittently talked about was something fundamental and important and her 'readiness' to write the text as 'orally' dictated by me. The 'experiment' continued till April 19, 1998, the last date in the manuscript which she wrote in her own handwriting, and some of which she typed also.

The oral transmission could not be continued because of many reasons, including her increasing illness which resulted in her death on 8th February, 1999. The manuscript ends with the incomplete sentence "The relapse into self-centricity is inevitable and thus we have the trāsi-comic situation where...(p. 152).

The remaining text was dictated to Rachna who had been helping me with the work on the Volume entitled "*Developments in Classical Indian Thought from Eighteenth Century Onwards*" under

the Project on History of Science, Philosophy and Culture of India, along with Rashmi Patni and others.

The reflective-cum-meditative thinking that is involved in oral 'dictation' to another *person* is both 'existential' and 'ratiocinative' at the same time as the two divergent streams of 'lived thought' and 'thought is *only* thought', centered as the latter is in logic alone, converge and intermingle in a manner that is difficult to separate as will be evident in these pages. To a certain extent, this is a result of the theme dealt with herein. But the 'method' itself does something, as has slowly dawned on me since it was started long ago with the writing of "*Indian Philosophy: A New Approach*" in which, besides Francine so many others took part. The work on the Project Volume mentioned earlier and the one on *Nyāya* which both had the support of Rashmi and Rachna over the years, has led to an increasing involvement and reflection where one wonders how far the work is affected by the personality of the other. Perhaps, it is a result of all the three—the theme, the person or persons to whom, and with whom, the oral transaction has taken place and, of course, the thinker who tries to give shape and form to what he vaguely apprehends. The 'responsibility', as always, is his and will always be so whatever those who deny the 'authorship' of the 'author' may say in this regard.

Only one thing more: the work is tentative, explorative, as the title itself declares. It has to be carried further by those who find

anything in it by modifying, criticising, amending, developing in direction and ways they may like.

References

1. Two Types of Appearance and Two Types of Reality-Revue International de Philosophie, Belgium (October, 1957), No. 37.

2. Invariants of the Human Situation-Valuations and Limitations, Prabubdha Bharat, April, 1956.

Both the Articles are available in The Art of Conceptual-Explorations in a Conceptual Maze over Three Decades published 1989, Munshiram Manohar Lal Pvt. Ltd, Delhi.

Towards a Theory of Structural and Transcendental Illusions

Man is perhaps the only self-conscious being who not only thinks about himself and his situation in the world, but also questions it in terms of vaguely apprehended ideals regarding what he/she ought to be. As the world in which he finds himself consists not only of inanimate objects, but of other living beings such as plants, animals and human beings like himself; the relationships with these also assumes a dimension which continuously challenges him to think as to how they could be better than what they actually are. In a deeper sense, then, the dissatisfaction with his own situation is essentially tied up with the relationship which he has to the world which is comprised of all these. However, as this relationship itself is a function of what the others do or how the others behave, his situation does not depend only on himself but also on others. The "others", however, are "subjects" in their own turn, centres of self-consciousness to whom he is as much an "object" as any other. This creates a situation where each self-conscious being thinks and feels himself to be a centre of the world in relation to whom all others are basically peripheral. He is the sun around which the planets revolve, even though as we know well, the sun itself revolves around something else about which it knows little, except that it is vaguely aware of an attraction towards something about which it hardly "knows" anything.

The self-consciousness itself in embedded in a body about which it knows little, except that it can induce changes in itself by doing something to the body or letting something be done to it. Everyone knows that consciousness can easily be affected by taking different kinds of intoxicants or even such simple well-known things as tea or coffee. But, as everyone also knows, consciousness can induce changes in itself by imagining things or attending to different aspects of its environment or by engaging in activities of a different kind or by interaction with symbolic creations which it itself has brought into being. Most of these ways of affecting changes in consciousness are relatively independent of the body, though it certainly is involved in them in a minimal manner. Also, many of these cannot be understood in causal terms alone, even though some element of direct or indirect causality may be present there. Changes which are occasioned by the apprehension of meanings are difficult to explain in causal terms as "meanings" are not the sort of "things", whether physical or physiological, which are supposed to function as "causes". At a still deeper level, one may withdraw one's consciousness from all objects, or at least try to do so, and still one's mind by emptying it of all content and letting it actively rest on itself. "Meditation" is the usual name given for such a practice, but meditation itself can be of many kinds. It may be a withdrawal of consciousness into itself, or it may be an "opening" to levels beyond itself by shutting of the intruding presence of sensations from the external world. But even in the meditative practices, it is believed that certain forms of

bodily postures are conducive to the attainment of those states of consciousness just as the chanting of certain syllables or *mantras* or names of gods and goddesses may help one in making the mind still and let forces about which one knows very little enter the arena of one's consciousness and transform it in a way that one feels to be profoundly significant.

Yet, in all these diverse kinds of activities or modalities through which consciousness in a self-conscious human being tries to change itself from a state which if finds unacceptable on some account or other, the basic fact remains that it is the capacity for attending and withdrawing that is the foundation for all that the consciousness does in its attempts to change itself from one state into another.

This capacity of the consciousness to move out of itself and to move back to itself is perhaps the most inexplainable fact that self-consciousness encounters when it reflects on itself. This capacity is the foundation of that feeling of freedom which self-consciousness invariably finds in itself. On the other hand, there is also the feeling of constraint or determination by something outside itself, particularly when it finds that this dual movement is not a free act of itself, but is determined or influenced by factors in the outside or the inner world over which it has little control. This simultaneous awareness of freedom and constraint defines the structure of self-consciousness as it is existentially felt and lived through in human experience. One does not know what impels one

to desire or to "choose" certain objects, or certain types of objects, for attention. Nor does one know why one feels impelled to imagine certain kinds of situations again and again just as one engages in certain kinds of activities time and again, not being able to withdraw oneself from them even if one wants to do so. The obsessive compulsions of action and imagination are supposed to be the result of unconscious or semi-conscious desires, or even by the habits one had acquired long ago, a phenomenon designated by the term "*samskara*" in the Indian tradition. But whatever the cause, the fact remains that one feels unfree, though one never feels that one has lost the foundational freedom to do something about the situation. The play of freedom and constraint which defines, in a certain sense, the inner experience of "self" in self-consciousness seems to be limited in another dimension about which very little seems to have been thought until now. Consciousness is somehow confined to the present and is "filled" by it in a way that is truly amazing. It is, of course, true that both memory and imagination play a certain role and are always available there to withdraw into if one desires to do so. But the present has always an over-powering reality and is always changing so that the pleasure or the pain, or the significance and the insignificance of that which was present just a moment ago, ceases to matter as one moves to a new state of consciousness which if filled by the new moment which has presented itself to consciousness. This continuous succession where the past continuously gives way to the present which obliterates it in a

radical manner is one of the strangest things in the 'lived' life of consciousness. It is a Buddhistic or a Humean world and one not only wonders how the years have gone by but also how months or days or hours or even minutes and seconds have gone by where each was full of pulsating life with its own pleasures and pain, moments of delight, insights and other such things which make one feel that life is worth living. There are, of course, moments of emptiness and despair and insignificance, but the deeper truth about all these is that each of them, whatever he its character, passes away. And, this will be so whether one lives a hundred years or a thousand years, for the structure of human self-consciousness has determined that it shall be so.

The flow of time in which consciousness is involved has an incessant successiveness which may have led Kant to say that time is the form of inner sensibility and as all experience, whether inner or outer, has to be apprehended in and through consciousness, everything has to be in time. Yet, as Kant himself argued, self-consciousness has the power to apprehend not only the transcendental character of this temporality, but also to discover its inner a priori character which, according to him, gave rise to the science of arithmetic. The fact that the truths of arithmetic were both necessary and yet applicable to all experience was, for him, grounded in this transcendentally a priori character of time which was the ground of one of the synthetic elements in all knowledge. The other element which Kant also discovered as the

ground of the synthetic a priori was, according to him, space which was the transcendental from of outer sensibility. This, as is well known, gave rise to the science of geometry which again was true of all experience in so far as it concerned outward reality. The distinction between the "inner" and the "outer" which Kant drew seems a little unhappy as, at the epistemological level, the distinction may perhaps only he made in terms of consciousness and its content and not, as Kant thought, in terms of what is outside the body or external to it. The western philosophical tradition has, of course, maintained the distinction between mind and matter, at least since Descartes, and considered extension or spatialty as the chief characteristic of the latter, while the former, that is mind, was regarded as distinguished by the essential activity of thinking which necessarily involved an element of temporality in it. But this division between mind and matter or between mind and body is, as the Indian philosophical analysis showed long ago, too superficial, for mind is as much the object of consciousness as the body is. In fact, to consciousness every thing is "external" and the so-called distinction between the mental and the material or the "inner" and the "outer" falls within it. But as consciousness can itself become an "object" in self-consciousness, the distinction is repeated once again and one is faced with the epistemological dilemma that whatever one is "conscious" of cannot but be an "object" and, thus, radically distinct from that which the subject is. The subject, thus, can never be "known", for to "know" it would be to know something which is an "object" and

thus is radically different from what the "subject" is supposed to be. This is the well known direction that Samkhyan analysis took in the Indian tradition. Kant is vaguely aware of it in his distinction between the transcendental and the empirical ego where the empirical self is as much "determined" by the categories of understanding as anything else in the so-called "outer" world, for it is as much an "object" as they are. But, for Kant, the transcendental ego consists of, and perhaps is constituted by, the transcendental forms of sensibility, the transcendental categories of understanding and the transcendent. Ideas of Reason as they "determine" the constitution of anything that is known as "object", including the empirical self. The self-in-itself can only be thought of as completely transcendent about which nothing can be said. It is not quite clear as to what status Kant will give to the notion of the categorical imperative which is the form of the good will in "willing" or the notion of "purposeless purpose" which seems to be the formal counterpart in the realm of feeling. In case these two belong to the transcendental ego, then the transcendent self will be completely bereft of all possibility of even being thought of as the ground of the transcendental self consisting of and constituted by these three aspects of knowing, feeling and willing which self-conscious reflection finds the "self" to consist of. On the other hand, if the "good will" which in Kant is equivalent to "freedom" is supposed to belong to the transcendent self, then the latter will be existentially known in the act of willing as its subject or ground, but not as an object of knowledge in the usual sense of the term.

The "purposiveness without a purpose" might then be a counterpart of the "good will" and thus belong to the transcendent self and existentially felt in the act of moral willing as issuing from freedom which will then be considered as the essence or the innermost reality of the transcendent self. All this, however, is merely speculative as the relation between the three *Critiques* is not clear. Nor is the relation between the transcendent self and the transcendental ego and the empirical self clear in the Kantian framework. Interestingly, Kant does not seem to have explored the idea of the transcendent object which lies beyond all determinations in terms of either the forms of sensibility or the categories of understanding or even the notion of purposiveness without a purpose. Had Kant done so, he might have faced the question of the relationship between the transcendent self or subject and the transcendent object, and might have reached conclusion that they were identical as there could be no basis for distinguishing between them. This is the direction that Advaitic thought took in India where the transcendent self was called the "*atman*" and the transcendent object, the "*Brahman*". Interestingly, while between the transcendent subject and the empirical ego there emerges the notion of a transcendental self, there is no parallel to it on the objective side as there we have only the empirical world and the transcendent object which lies behind it. In fact, the ground for the plurality of the objective world lies on the one hand in space which is the form of outer sensibility and time, which in Kant, is the transcendental form of inner sensibility.

Thus the ground for plurality and difference lies ultimately in the transcendental forms of sensibility themselves. However, the distinction between the inner and the outer which Kant introduces in his notion of sensibility does not seem to have any transcendental foundation for its assertion. It, of course, has a grounding in empirical experience, but then it would be like all other differentiations which are also found there and have no such over-riding importance as Kant seems to have given it. Moreover, space and time do not only differentiate and divide, but also provide some sort of a unity to things which invariably have an spatio-temporal aspect to them. Kant does not seem to have seen this aspect of space and time as he seems to think that the unifying of a manifold is only achieved through the categories of understanding and, ultimately, through the Ideas of Reason. The unifying activity thus belongs only to understanding and reason for, as far as sensibility is concerned, it is supposed to be purely passive in Kant's system. On the other hand, if space and time which are the a priori forms of sensibility are supposed to perform a unifying function also, then sensibility itself will have to have a component of "activity" which will be analogous to that which understanding and reason are supposed to play in Kant's system. The dichotomy between "activity" and "passivity" which pervades Kant's system, however, raises the question as to whose activity it is. Kant deals with action only in the moral context, but if knowledge itself involves "activity", then the active function of consciousness will underlie both knowledge and moral action and

thus become more basic and fundamental to both of them. It has, of course, been said that the theoretical and the practical reason are not two different kinds of reason, but rather the same faculty exercising two different functions. However, the contention regarding the unity of reason and the diversity of its functions does not explain as to how this differentiation of functions occurs or how the functioning itself gets differentiated. Moreover, there is the added problem in Kant as to the function which reason exercises in the context of what he has discussed in the third *Critique*. If it be accepted that reason does not have only a theoretical and a practical dimension, but also a third dimension which it exercises in the context of artistic activity which neither is practical nor theoretical, then Reason will have to be differentiated in functioning in these three domains, and the question of the relationship between these three forms of its functioning will arise.

Kant, as far as I know, has only considered the problem of unity in the context of knowledge and not in the context of the functioning of reason in these various domains which he has elaborated in his three *Critiques*.

However, the notion of the active exercise of Reason and the intrinsic differentiation within its "functioning" also involves necessarily the idea that the function may not be exercised unless it be assumed that Reason is constituted by the functions that it performs. But, in that case, Reason would always necessarily have to function in one form or another, for it cannot, by definition, exist

without functioning. However, even in this case, there will be the problem of the ground for the choice between one way of functioning rather than another, and in order that the act of choice may be effectively performed, one would have to postulate that Reason "withdraws" from one mode of its functioning to engage in another. Such a conclusion can only be avoided if one postulates that there is only one way of the functioning of Reason and that it has only distinguishable, but not separable, aspects which one considers to be different only for analytical purposes. On such a view, Reason would simultaneously have a theoretical, a practical and a "purposiveness without purpose" aspect, all inextricably mixed together. It is difficult to say whether Kant would subscribe to any such view. But even if this were conceded, the idea of Reason ceasing to exercise its function cannot be denied as not only can these functions be exercised ill or well or, in such a way that one aspect or modality may prevail over others, but also because one may cease to reason at all as one does, not only while sleeping or dreaming but also in wakeful life. One may, of course, find it difficult to think of Reason ceasing to exercise its function in "waking" life, particularly when one remembers that for Kant, even in perception, the a priori forms of sensibility are actively involved and that it is they which give actuality to human perception which, without it, would only be an inchoate mass of what William James called "a blooming, buzzing confusion." Kant, of course, has not distinguished between sensation and perception or between perceptions which primarily belong to one sense rather than

another. Had he done so, he would have faced the problem of distinguishing between the different a priori forms of spatialty belonging to each of the five senses; for, surely the space of sound is different from the visual space that we see and, the tactile space seems so very different not only from both of them, but also from the one that belongs to smell and taste. The problem, in fact, does not stop here, for we have what Susanne Langer has called "virtual" space and time in the arts. Surely, the space in painting is not the same as the space we ordinarily apprehend in visual perception. Similarly, the time that we apprehend in music, dance or drama is not the time that we ordinarily apprehend otherwise. The issue of the relationship between these "virtual" spaces and times to the space and time of what Kant called "sensibility" is not clear. Yet, they are as "real" as the ones we apprehend in ordinary perception. The problem, in fact, is further complicated by the fact that we do not have only "virtual" spaces and times, but also what many sociologists and cultural anthropologists have called "socio-cultural space and time". This space and time is different from the astronomical space and time with which physicist are concerned and, in fact, is a superimposition on it by a society and culture for its own purposes. Thus, the cycle of festivals is not exactly a cycle in astronomial time, nor are the sacred places located in terrestrial space. The very idea of sacred "spaces" and "times" which are regarded by a particular community as very special to it, are located in terrestrial space and time. Yet, they are even more "real" than the so-called space and time with which Kant was concerned.

In fact, it seems that all forms of human activity have their own peculiar "spaces" and "times" as a reflection on legal procedures would reveal. There are such notions as cases which are "time-barred", an idea which literally does not make any sense, and yet is "effective" in a sense where everything matters, for if a case is not filed within a certain time, then nothing can be done about it.

One could go on multiplying such instances and pointing out the varieties of "space" and "times" which are not covered by Kant's consideration of such phenomena. Nor has Kant considered the question as to how space and time become apprehensible, for unless they are framed in a certain way, one can hardly become aware of them. Space can only be made visible by restricting it in a certain way so that what is so restricted or organised becomes separated from the background to become visible to our sensibility. Architecture is the classic example of making space visible through limiting it by diverse means. The other art forms also do so in their own way, though one has not paid attention to the different modalities through which diverse art forms try to make space visible and significant. It is the same with time. Again, the art forms do it in diverse ways. But the apprehension of time requires the apprehension of movement, for if there were no movement, there would be no time. Motion or movement, however, involves both space and time and it will be interesting to explore how the two are interrelated in the modalities which try to make them visible or apprehensible to our sensibility. Perhaps, the arts, or

even life forms, could be distinguished by the way they emphasize the apprehension of one over the other.

The field is vast and needs to be explored further. But what interests us here is the relation of all these to the basic point that Kant was trying to make in connection with space and time when he described them as a priori forms of sensibility. Kant's contention seems to be that normally in whatever form we apprehend them, we see them as "given", or as "objects" like other specific things that we perceive through the senses. It is not quite clear in Kant's presentation as to whether we perceive them as qualities of the objects or as "substances" which have qualities of their own. We do talk of spatial and temporal qualities, but we also talk of properties of space and time and hence there is always a dilemma as to whether to conceive of them as substances or as qualities. But whether they be regarded as substances or qualities, they are always treated as "given" and it is this aspect of their "givenness" which creates, according to Kant, the antinomies which they give rise to. Kant's critique exposes the illusory quality of their "givenness" and suggests that it is this illusory apprehension which gives rise to the antinomies when it is taken as real. It is the transcendental critique which exposes the illusoriness of their "given" quality and suggests that instead of being "given", they are the a priori conditions of any "givenness" at the level of sensibility. This, as is well known, has become the paradigm of what may be regarded as "transcendental" within the

Kantian framework. The "transcendental" is that which when treated as "given" cannot but give rise to antinomies in thought which are insoluble in principle. The solution to the antinomies, according to Kant, lies not in thinking further and attempting to resolve them through some new strategy of thought, but to realize that what is being treated as "given" is not really so. Instead, it is a condition of the "given" being given, that is, a transcendental form of whatever presents itself to sensibility as "object". The solution, then, lies in knowing that something which was essentially transcendental in character was being treated as phenomenally given and hence creating insoluble problems for thought. Most of the traditional philosophical problems in the history of thought had, according to Kant, arisen because of the failure to realize this distinction and hence, the history of philosophy has alternated between asserting one part of the antinomy or the other. Once one realized the foundational mistake, the eternal "either/or" of philosophical thought ceased and the philosophical puzzles created by the illusion vanished forever. But Kant does not seem to have raised the question as to what exactly this "vanishing" means. Does it mean that one will not "see" space and time has infinitely extended, or does it mean that one would not think them to be so and thus would not fall into the insoluble theoretical problems that inevitably arise if one were to regard them as such? If one adopts the first alternative, then the very perception of space and time will be drastically affected and the person who has realized that they are not "given" would "see" them differently from the way they are

perceived by one who has not realized that they are not objectively "given", but are only *a priori* forms of the "given". If, on the other hand, one opts for the second alternative then no difference will be made in one's perception as it will continue to be the same even after the mistake has been realized. The difference would in such a situation only consist in a theoretical correction resulting in a theoretical knowledge that what "appears" to be so, is not really so.

The situation is analogous to the one encountered in respect of structural illusions of the senses; for example, when one sees a stick bent under water and then realizes that it is really not so, one does not cease to see it as bent. Or, when one sees the sun as moving and then realizes, because of some theoretical reasons, that it is the earth which is moving and not the sun, it does not result in any change in one's perception of the sun as "moving". One may multiply such examples, but the point of them all is that the correction of what is regarded as "illusory" is only a theoretical one and does not in any way affect the way one experiences reality.

The difference between the man of knowledge and one who is ignorant does not lie in what they perceive or experience, but consists in the way they theoretically correct or do not correct the situation as it is apprehend by them both.

Kant's example of space and time suffers from another defect, for it is not clear whether the unendingness of space and time are an essential characteristic of the way they are perceptually

apprehended, or it is the result of the way we count, as there is never any limit beyond which one cannot count any further. It is, of course, true that even in perceptual apprehension we seem to feel that there is always a space beyond the space that we see, and a time "before" and "after" the "present" we live in. But this, by itself, does not lead to any paradoxicality unless we start "thinking" about it. It is, therefore, "thought" which raises the problem, and not the structure of perceptual apprehension which conditions the way we perceive objects. It is true that space and time have a sensuousness about them which "thought" generally lacks, though it is not clear whether at least some categories of thought such as substance, quality and causality do not have a sensuous component in them. Yet, the abstraction involved in the concepts of space and time does not contain the same sensuousness as is found when they are perceived as a part of our ordinary perceptual apprehension. In fact, as we pointed out earlier, each sense seems to have a space of its own and thus the construction of the abstract idea of space from those different sensuous spaces will already involve a task of active unifying of the disparate "spaces" belonging to the different senses. Russell tried to show this in his book *Our Knowledge of the External World* where he tried to give a concrete content to his idea of "logical construction" through which he had tried to make sense of the world when, according to him, what was "given" was barely the sense-data derived from the different senses. As for time, it is difficult to say that each of the senses has a temporality of its own.

Some have argued that the sense of temporality is embedded even deeper in the biological and chemical rhythms of the body, while others have seen it in the movement of the mind which continuously "thinks" one thing or another. But whatever the sensuous source of the sense of time, it is difficult to find unidirectionality which is such an essential characteristic of the thought of time. There is of course a directionality in the ageing process, but it is difficult to say that this directionality is felt in the biological rhythm of the body. As for the psychological apprehension of time, the mental processes do not show any directionality; rather they appear continuously moving backward in memory and forward in imagination.

It is usually said that the unidirectionality of time arises from the Second Law of Thermodynamics which says that temperature flows from higher levels to lower levels and that all motion ultimately tends to a position of an equilibrium where all energy will become quiescent and relapse into mere potentiality till something disturbs the equilibrium once again.

Whatever be the truth in this assertion, it is not clear if the physical processes mentioned in the Second Law of Thermo dynamics are apprehended in consciousness, giving rise to the experiential sense of the unidirectionality of time. Also, if some theories in modern physics are to be believed, they seem to assert that particles go back in time, and if they do so, it is difficult to understand how "time" can be unidirectional for them. Moreover,

as far as self-consciousness is concerned, "time" seems to consist in a sense of something which is ever present and it is only through an act of recollection or memory that one becomes aware of that which is past, while the sense of future seems to be involved more in "willed" action than in something that is present existentially to cognitive consciousness.

Kant does not seem to have considered all these aspects of the question as he was more interested in finding the roots of the a priori necessity of geometry and arithmetic and account for the fact that yet they were true of all sensory experience in the sense that they applied to it and held true of it inevitably and inexorably. Kant also did not consider the question of "illusions" relating to space and time as he was only interested in finding the roots of the antinomies they give rise to when they are considered as "given", rather than as transcendently presupposed by all, that is, or can be, sensuously apprehended. However, one may possibly discover a difference between what may be called a "transcendental illusion" and a "structural illusion" if one reflects on Kant's treatment of the transcendental nature of space and time and the antinomies that arise when this is forgotten and space and time are treated as objectively given. The criterion of a transcendental illusion would, then, be that it arises from the fact that something which is transcendentally presupposed is treated as phenomenally given, and that this gives rise to insoluble antinomies for thought which get dissolved or resolved when the mistake is realized. A

"structural illusion", on the other hand, arises when the structure of the cognizing mechanism itself creates the illusion whose "illusoriness" is realized because of the incoherence which such an apprehension produces in respect of the object which appears to be different under other conditions. The well-known example of the stick which is perceived to be bent under water illustrates this kind of illusion almost perfectly. The stick "appears" as bent to all observers, but because it "appears" straight when taken out of water, one realizes the illusoriness of the earlier perception, as one finds no reason why the stick should have become straight, in case it was earlier really bent. One may, of course, raise the question as to why one does not regard the apprehension of the stick as being straight outside water to be illusory, for if one dips it in water once again, it appears as bent once more.

The answer perhaps lies in the fact that generally we apprehend sticks outside water and not inside it. If, for some reason, we lived in a world where we were dealing with sticks under water most of the time, it is extremely probable that we would have opted for the view that sticks are really bent and that their appearance as being straight outside water was illusory. Normally, one does not entertain the hypothesis that a stick becomes bent when put into water and that is regains its "straightness" when it is taken out. The reason why this is not generally done seems primarily because of theoretical reasons of economy in the formation of hypotheses to account for

discrepancies in our experience. The theoretical reasons, thus, play an important part in the discovery of the illusoriness of structural illusions as well as in our deciding what shall be regarded as illusory and what as real. Besides this, there is always the causal dimension which determines to a large extent as to what should be regarded as illusory and what as real.

The "real" is that which, if it is regarded as such, can be causally effective and as such help us in the achievement of the ends of our action. There are occasions and contexts when we use the "illusory" to create "real" effects. This generally happens in artistic productions where we try to produce 'effects" through a manipulation of the "appearances", and if the appearances happen to be illusory, it does not matter, for what we are interested in is the "appearance" and not the "reality". Painting and theatre are the classical examples where this is always accepted, but even in architecture it is well known that the seemingly straight pillars are not "really" straight, as the appearance of their straightness has been achieved by making them really vary in size.

Kant, in fact, has used the category of causality in his discussion of the antinomies, which legitimately he could not have done as he was supposed to be dealing there only with the a priori forms of sensibility, that is, space and time, "Causality" obviously was not a form of sensibility for him, but rather a category of the understanding. It is not quite clear why Kant preferred to consider it as a category of "understanding" and not of "willing". Normally,

we are aware of causality when we will something and all voluntary activity of the human mind involves an effort to bring something into being or to initiate some activity in which it generally succeeds. It is this feeling of being an "agent" which simultaneously gives us the notions of "freedom' and "causality" which thus provide the "forms" of human volitional action. It is, of course, true that we use the category of causality for "understanding" phenomena also, as to "understand" a phenomenon is always to know how it came into being, and the answer to this question is generally given in terms of "causality", though it need not necessarily be so. The answer can, as in the case of human actions, may also be given in terms of purposes, or even the ideals and values which men pursue. Such an understanding of human action is generally considered as teleological and the notion of "teleological causality" is sometimes introduced to demarcate such an understanding from the usual causal understanding which tries to explain phenomena in terms of prior conditions which are supposed to have brought them into being.

Kant has used the notion of causality alongwith those of space and time in his treatment of the antinomies, and has suggested that the whole debate regarding the first cause arises because one does not see that "causality" is a category of the understanding and not something "given" in the phenomena themselves. In fact, if time itself is an a priori form of sensibility,

then, succession which is necessarily involved in the notion of causality would itself be because of temporality being transcendentally presupposed and not "given" in experience. The point is that if temporal relations are not a constituent part of the phenomena "given" to consciousness, then the question of causality cannot even arise. Perhaps, Kant wanted to distinguish between the notions of necessity and universality which are supposed to be involved in the notion of causality from mere "succession" which alone will be given if temporality alone is taken into consideration. Hume had accepted the notion of succession as being given in sense experience and had already denied that experience involved any notions of universal and necessary relationships between phenomena. This, as is well known, led him to deny "causality" and thus question the very foundations of knowledge, leading to sceptical conclusions regarding the possibility of knowledge. Kant's answer to Hume was to point out that neither succession nor universality and necessity are "given" in experience. Rather, they are the necessary pre-conditions of "experience" along with the possibility of its becoming an object of human knowledge. However, the proof that "causality" was a pre-condition of any human knowing was based on the fact that in case it was treated as "given", it would lead to antinomies in thought. But, Kant did not seem to have noticed that the so-called antinomies were introduced not by any peculiar specificity in the notion of causality. Rather, they emanated from the same

"unendingness" which was also involved in the notions of space and time.

No special antinomies arise from the notions of universality and necessity which are supposed to be involved in the notion of causality. It is also not clear why these two notions should form a necessary component of our idea of causality unless we see it in the context of the achievement of human purposes where we would like to be fairly certain that if we produce the causal conditions, the desired effect will necessarily follow. However, as everyone knows, human action is also based on the awareness that what one wills and does is only one of he conditions in the production of the desired phenomenon and that other unknown factors have to be there in order that what is desired may actually obtain. The notion of "chance" or "other conditions remaining the same", or "God willing" point in this direction. In fact, if one seriously accepts the reality of other human agents who also are free and pursue their own purposes, then one cannot but realize that what they do is also a necessary condition for the realization of one's own purposes. Normally, the discussion about causality is confined to our dealings with inanimate nature where "free" agency is denied, by definition, to that with which we deal. The extension of such a view of causality to the living world including all human beings tries to deny any relevant difference between these worlds and reduces other living beings, including humankind, to being particles of inanimate matter, reserving to oneself alone the

freedom without which the very idea of moral action will be untenable. But the moment one grants "freedom" to other human beings and even to some other living beings one's action gets an in-built element of uncertainty derived from other's "freedom", as it is involved in the very notion of their freedom that they may behave in unpredictable ways and thus affect the result of one's action. The indeterminacy introduced by the postulation of a plurality of free agents is generally sought to be mitigated by postulating some sort of a universal moral order which each free agent observes and thus introduces a new kind of "predictability" derived not from the causal order of the inanimate universe but the moral law which each one obeys because he or she is a moral being. However, since the moral law, at least in Kant, has a purely formal character and does not have any specific content to it, it cannot give "predictability' in the realm of human action where other free agents are necessarily involved. The Kantian framework thus cannot, in principle, provide for any principle of order in the world of human action if it accepts the free agency of other human beings in its system. But even in those systems which provide some sort of context to morality, "predictability" of the result of action in the human realm cannot be ensured as the moral world is generally confined to persons who believe in or subscribe to the contents of morality provided for by the system and, at a deeper level, because the very notion of a "free" agent involves that one may behave in opposition to what one in required to do by the morality demanded in the system.

The application of the notion of "causality" to the realm of human action, thus, shows its essential limitation and brings out the unstated presuppositions that its application always has. It assumes that there is no "freedom" in the realm to which it applies and that the failure of the events to occur in the way they are required by the causal law is ultimately a sign that our formulation of the causal law was wrong and that it requires a re-formulation. The brining in of the notions of "indeterminacy" in the behaviour of inanimate matter at the quantum level does not in any way change the situation as human behaviour mostly occurs at the macro level, and as even the knowledge of this "indeterminacy" has been used to control phenomena even at the micro level in such a way as to produce desired results. The whole development of atomic technology is a standing confirmation of the fact that Heisenberg's famous principle of "indeterminacy" has not stood either in the way of understanding sub-atomic phenomena, or of controlling them for the achievement of ends desired by man. Moreover, the well-known controversy between Einstein and others on this question shows that the issue was really undecided, even though most of the practicing physicists have opted for the Heisenberg alternative for pragmatic reasons. In fact, human beings have always taken the "uncertainty" involved in action into account and provided for it in various ways by taking out insurance or praying to gods or invoking transcendental forces, or taking recourse to any other means available to them. The trouble with the western discussion of "causality" seems to be that it has unnecessarily brought in the

notions of universality and necessity into the picture. More in ordinary life beings in these notions in the sense in which philosophers have used then in the context of their discussions on the subject. Normally, the notions of universality and necessity have a fairly well-defined meaning in the context of mathematics, but to transpose them into the empirical realm and then complain that one cannot find the ground of any such necessity in them and thus raise the problem of scepticism in regard to all empirical knowledge, is very strange indeed. The discussion has been complicated further by defining knowledge as that which is "true" and defining truth in terms of universality and necessity, the paradigmatic examples of which are found in mathematics, and never in the empirical realm. The Humean scepticism is only the creation of certain definitions and Kant, instead of questioning the definitions, tried to formally save the situation by treating "causality" as a category of understanding and not as something given in knowledge. For Kant, thus, the whole mistake had arisen once again from considering something as "given" which was essentially transcendental in character. But it is again not clear what exactly the problem is at the empirical level of experience, just as it was not clear as to what exactly the problem was at the level of perception in regard to space and time. It seems to be a characteristic of transcendental mistakes that arise at the level of thought rather than at the level of experience, that they arise because one forgets that what is transcendentally presupposed is not actually "given", even though if appears to be so.

Causality, then, introduces another dimension to the problem of transcendental illusions, for here it is something that is necessary for thought that introduces the problem for thought when its essential nature is not understood. In other words, the whole problem arises because thought has not understood itself and treats that which is a part of its own structure as belonging not to itself but to that which it thinks about. Here perhaps is one of the greatest insights that Kant has given to mankind. But he does not seem to have distinguished between 'thinking" and "thought" which is a product of the activity of thinking. "Thinking" is ultimately a process or an activity and "thought" is its product. Yet, the moment one accepts this distinction, one would see that the so-called categorical structures involved in the activity of thinking can only be seen as "given" in thought when one tries to understand it. Once this is accepted, one will have to distinguish between the understanding of "thought" which is a product of thinking and the understanding of that which the thought is about. This itself may be of very different types, such as the understanding of inanimate nature or the world that is alive, and yet which is distinguished between the world of plants, animals and human beings. Not only this, human beings create other things besides "thought", the understanding of which requires an activity which *prima facie* seems to be very different from the understanding of that which is not the result of human activity. Normally, this distinction is supposed to be captured by making a radical distinction between the natural sciences and the human

sciences, but the whole realm of knowledge which is designated by the term "social sciences" points to a realm which is neither purely natural nor purely cultural as the "humanities" are supposed to be. "Thought", of course, is a human creation, the result of a distinctively human activity, but it is distinctly different from other creations of man such as are embodied in what are usually known as artistic creations. Thought is embodied in language, but so is literature, and yet the understanding of literature is not the same as the understanding of thought. As almost all of these realms are the result of human activity, there arises the problem as to whether there are different modes of human activity which result in these different types of products, and whether each of these modes has transcendental forms of itself which also through a transcendental production define and delimit the modes of understanding of that which is the product or the result of that activity. However, as human activity always involves the twin categories of "freedom" and "causality", the specific modality of the activity would have to be further determined by a distinctive category which is other than these two which would generally be presupposed by all activity which is distinctly human.

The transcendental illusion, then, would be the result of a projection of not only the generalized category of causality to each of the products of the activity, but also of the specific category which differentiates the modality of the activity from all other exercises of itself. There seems, however, a radical distinction

between the category of freedom and the category of causality which are presupposed by all human action, as "freedom" is never projected onto the realm of the object which is created by the activity. It always seems to be ascribed to the subject of the activity itself. It is true that we tend to treat other human beings and even higher animals as "free" in some sense or other. But "freedom" here is more a postulated rather than an immediately "intuited" fact of experience. Yet, though freedom always belongs to the subject, there remains the question as to whether freedom itself will have be conceived differently in relation to the various modalities of its exercise, just as we have seen in the case of "causality". But if this be the case, then we shall have to distinguish not only between different kinds of causality, but also different kinds of freedom as distinguished by the different modalities which human activity undergoes. However, as freedom always would be said to belong to the subject, it will imply that the subject itself has different modes of freedom ascribed to it. The determination of these different types of "freedom" and "causality" would then be a prerequisite of understanding the various projections of these on to the "object" and the "subject", respectively. Yet, as both freedom and causality are supposed to be involved, almost by definition, in all human activity, one will have to first determine the modalities that this activity can undertake, so that one may meaningfully differentiate between the different kinds of "freedom" and "causality" which one projects on the subject and the object of experience. Kant has not raised this question and hence has not attempted any

transcendental deduction of the possible forms that freedom and causality can take in a system. The notion of transcendental deduction, of course, is itself suspect, as in spite of Kant's Herculean effort to attempt it in respect to the various dimensions of his analysis it appears to be mostly forced and arbitrary. In any case, the attempt to delimit the types in which all possible human activity can be classified appears to be a vain endeavour, for if one does so, one will always have to squeeze and fit any new activity that one may come across into the pre-given slots which one has already decided upon.

Kant seems to have distinguished between two types of action which may broadly he considered as moral and non-moral and, strangely, he confines the idea of freedom only to the realm of moral action. Freedom, in fact, is identical with the notion of moral willing or what he has called, the "good will", and has nothing to do with what we generally understand as voluntary action. But if human action has to be distinguished from reflexive and instinctive action and if man has to be regarded as "responsible" for what he does, then he would also have to be granted "freedom" whenever he acts voluntarily. The notion of freedom itself would then have to be distinguished as in one sense it will belong to all human action to the extent it is regarded as human, that is, voluntary and purposive in nature. On the other hand, one would also have to understand freedom when it is exercised in accordance with the sense of what Kant has called the "good will"

or the categorical imperative, or what may be regarded as the sense of "right" in general. The point is that the idea of freedom which is necessarily presupposed by human action will itself undergo radical transformations as the human activity itself gets exercised under different modalities. Creative action, for example, evidenced in the production of a work of art would require a notion of freedom different from the one that one needs in the context of moral action or actions which are undertaken for the realization of a purpose. Moral action is not exactly teleological as Kant so well understood, but the latter requires freedom as much as the former, a point which Kant seems to have missed. Similarly, the writing of a poem or the creation of any work of art presupposes "freedom", though not exactly in the same sense as in the realm of moral and teleological action. Besides these, there are other realms where the notion of "action" itself gets subtly transformed as, for example, in ritual action or in meditation. In the former, though ostensibly there is the performance of an action, it is usually not done for the achievement of any purpose external to itself. Nor is there any moral end involved in it; it is, in its purest form, done for its own sake. In the latter, that is, meditation "action", if any, is purely mental and that too primarily consists in stilling all mental activity. The 'action' component is thus reduced to the minimum and yet something is done, some effort made, some bodily posture attempted so that the mental state itself can be induced. Yet, though all this is done, it can hardly be considered to be "causal" in the usual sense of the term. And whatever is done, is done to

achieve "freedom" rather than anything else. The world of sports is another example where action takes a very different direction. Games themselves are constituted by rules and if one agrees to play the game, one also agrees to accept the rules of the game. The rules of the game also indicate what "winning" and "losing" means. Freedom, then, consists of choosing to play or not to play the game, or, in case one wants to play, then which game to play. There are games of all sorts and there is even a game such as "patience" which one plays alone. In all these, there is both causality and freedom and yet it is of a very different sort than the ones we have encountered in other realms.

These do not, of course, exhaust all the different types of action in which one engages. There is such a thing as, for example, gossiping or going for a stroll or looking at a beautiful sunset or simply going to meet a friend. One can multiply examples if one so desires, but the point remains that while the notions of freedom and causality are simultaneously involved in all "action", they do not occur in the same way or at the same level as has generally been supposed until now in all the philosophical thought that has been done on the subject. But, when Kant argued that causality is a category of understanding, he seems to have confined the term "cause" only to a particular modality of itself, just as he seems to have confined the notion of freedom to that which occurs in the moral realm. Yet, if the general idea that Kant formulated in terms of the necessity of the idea of causality for understanding any

phenomenon and mistakenly projecting it as belonging intrinsically and immanently to the domain which is sought to be understood is correct, then the sane will have to be accepted for the idea of freedom also. "Freedom", it may be said, is required as a category only for ascribing "agency" and "accountability" to human beings for what they do. But while this may be true, it is also needed for "understanding" human action as unless it is presupposed, the notions of agency and accountability cannot meaningfully be applied to human beings who perform the action. There are, of course, legal contexts in which such notions are applied to institutions even if it is established that they could not have been aware of the consequences of their actions. But this is only an extension of the idea necessitated by certain situations and justified for the achievement of certain purposes. There can, in any case, be little doubt that the idea of freedom is as much required for "understanding" human action as the category of causality is considered necessary for its understanding. It is true that causality as a category is applied to any realm whatsoever if we want to understand it while the idea of "freedom" is required only for understanding human action. The first, thus, covers not only a far under realm, but also seems more intrinsically involved in the very notion of "understanding" than the idea of freedom. Perhaps this is what Kant meant when he called causality "a category of the understanding" and excluded freedom from that status. Yet, however correct this may be, it would still raise the problem regarding categories of understanding which belong only to a

particular domain as without their employment, that specific realm cannot be "understood" at all. Kant does not seem to have raised this question as perhaps he was only interested in those categories which belonged to understanding qua understanding, and not to the understanding of any particular domain in its specificity.

The use of "freedom" as a category of understanding in respect to human action raises, however, questions of a far wider nature than the fact that the employment of this category is confined only to the understanding of a particular realm, and not to all realms, whatever be their nature. First, the category is always ascribed or predicated to the subject of action and not to the object. There are, of course, situations where the "object" of action is some other person who is also considered to be a "free" agent and this is usually the ground for holding him/her responsible for what s/he does or does not do. In all such cases, the imputation of freedom to the other is of a different order than its ascription to oneself, even though it is very difficult to indicate or understand the nature of this difference. Ultimately, the difference is between the self and the "other", and the way one experiences oneself and one experiences the other in its "otherness". But, even in the case of the "other", the ascription of freedom is radically different from the ascription of all other proportion to it which normally are ascribed to it in its nature as "object". This may not seem to be quite true as there are qualities such as "honesty" which are also ascribed to the other in her/his

possession of "subjectivity". Nevertheless, even these predicates may be seen as relating directly or indirectly to the modality in which freedom is exercised by the person concerned.

This raises another issue relating to the exercise of freedom and the modes that it may assume. Kant does not seem to have concerned himself with the problem of the transcendental forms of freedom, even as he did not concern himself with the problem of freedom outside the realm of moral action. But if freedom can have modalities of itself and if it assumes different forms in different realms, then a distinction will have to be made not only between the form that freedom assumes in different realms, but also in the modalities of its exercise within these realms. This obviously is an immense undertaking as it would involve not only a mapping of all the realms in which freedom is presupposed by the fact of its exercise within those realms, but also the transcendental modalities which it can possibly take in its exercise in those realms. Such a mapping of the realms and the modalities would involve an exhaustive enumeration of all the dimensions that a human being has, or may have. But as it is almost impossible to have such an enumeration, the exercise is bound to be limited to those that we know and which humanity has experienced up to now. There is an intrinsic indeterminacy in the human situation which emanates from the ontological foundation of freedom in which he has his being and of which he is vaguely aware. This foundational "freedom", however, is limited by so many adjuncts

which both give it a concrete shape and challenge it to exercise its creativity in terms of the material and the constraints they provide. The most fundamental constraint that is provided arises from the existence of other centres of freedom which have the same constraints and the same possibilities, the most dramatic of which is the interplay between these centres of freedom themselves.

Freedom at any level, however, as we have already said, is ascribed to the subject or the self which is treated as substantive in character and "understood" as possessing this freedom. In the Kantian perspective, this should be a contradiction in terms as nothing can be "understood" in terms of "freedom" in it. But, this is a limitation in Kant's thought as he considers "substance" as a category of the understanding and in fact treats the substantive notion of self as arising from it. Thus for Kant the idea of a substantive self is merely the result of the imposition of the category of substance on it without realising that the notion arises from the transcendental structure of understanding and does not belong to any object whatsoever. Kant treats this problem in the section known as paralogisms of reason where he tries to show that the idea of a substantive, enduring soul arises mistakenly because of this, for as soon as we try to understand ourselves, we cannot but think in this way. The necessity of thought becomes the necessity of "being" as the two are not distinguished by ordinary, non-critical thought which is not aware of the transcendental element involved in it. But Kant appears to have forgotten that the

category of substance is equally applicable to all objects and that, not only the self, but everything that one experiences or knows is treated as substantive in character. Even phenomena that appear to us as continuously "changing" are given a substantive character as the case of a river which flows, or a flame which burns. The point is that there is no uniqueness in the treatment of self as substantive as to "know" anything, according to Kant, is to know it as a substance.

The Buddhists had seen this long ago and had denied substantiality not only to the self, but to all objects whatever. However, they, like the British empiricists, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, thought that what we apprehend is only qualities and that the idea of their inhering in any substance is a superimposition of the mind on our experience. But, unlike them, they tried to develop psychological techniques to make this insight existentially experiential so that one not only experienced the self as a continuous flow of ideas without any underlying substantial identity, but experienced all other objects in the same manner. Yet, neither Kant nor the British empiricists nor the Buddhists seem to have realized that the distinction between substance and quality is only relative and that what appears as a quality can also function as a substance which, in its own turn, has properties. One may make a distinction between substance and properties on the basis that a substance can have properties of many kinds, while a property normally belongs only to one kind, especially when it

belongs to the realm of the senses. Firstly, this can only be true in the case of simple qualities, but not of qualities that are complex in character. Secondly, even the simple qualities cannot remain simple when they become symbolic as they always do in the case of human experience. The point is that nothing remains isolated in human experience and hence always points beyond itself, and get related to other aspects of experience either directly or indirectly. This becomes even truer in the case of "meanings" which refuse to remain single in spite of all the attempts of theoreticians to give exact definitions of words and confine each word to one meaning alone. The attempt to build ideal language where one word, one meaning, or rather one sign, one meaning is sought to be realized, has proved sterile as very soon the signs begin to have multiple meanings in spite of the stipulation of the author.

The Nyaya theoreticians tried to stipulate that properties shall not be allowed to have properties in their system. But this stipulation did not succeed as they were forced to ascribe meta properties such as *anuyogita* and *pratiyogita* to the subject and object of a relational sentence simply by virtue of the way the relation was related to its terms. It may be said that these meta-properties belonged to the terms of the relation which themselves were substantial in character, and hence their ascription does not violate the rule which they had formulated in this regard. But as the Nyaya holds that the universal of every property belongs to it and also holds that the universal is itself a property, it has also to

accept that the property which is designated by the universal term belongs to the property of which it is a universal. It is not clear, however, how the orthodox Naiyayika thinker deals with this situation.

In the Kantian framework, on the other hand, both substance and property are categories of the understanding under the heading of "relation" which itself is designated as "inherence" and _____ anything that we know has always to be understood in terms of this category which has both the relational terms, "substance" and "property" involved in it. But what to be counted as a "substance" or a "property" is determined by the fact whether it functions as a "subject" or a "predicate" in a categorical judgment. And so whatever is treated as a subject of predication has to be considered to be a substance, no matter whether it itself functions as a property or a substance in other contexts. In fact, if one takes the Kantian contention seriously, then, to consider something as either a property or a substance is a transcendental illusion, for there are no substances and qualities, but we consider them to be so because we ascribe what is transcendentally presupposed to that which is an object of experience. The situation here is the same as it was in the case of space and time and, in fact, it is bound to be so with all the other categories of understanding. Kant does not seem to have realized in is as he does not seem to have dealt in detail with the transcendental illusions created by each and all of the categories that he has so

carefully delineated in his system. Not only this, each of these categories would have both a generalized and a specific aspect related to each of the different domains of understanding, and the generalized transcendental illusion which each of the categories inevitably generates will have to be distinguished from the specific transcendental illusions which it creates for each of the specific domains in which it is applied.

Kant's treatment of the categories suffers from another defect as it does not seem to consider the relations between the categories and the problem that this creates for the understanding of the categories themselves. In fact, the problem of "understanding" the categories has hardly been seen either by Kant or subsequent thinkers as the categories provide the structure for understanding everything else and hence unless they are treated "reflexively", they cannot provide the ground for their own understanding. Even if the notion of reflexivity in the context of understanding is accepted, the problem would remain as to whether all the other categories are required to understand each of the categories or whether each of the categories need be understood only in its own terms. Kant did not raise this question as he picked up the categories from Aristotle's discussion of the nature of judgment and the analysis that he had made in the four dimensions which every judgment was supposed to have. The distinctions of quantity, quality, relation and modality thus provided the four aspects in which every judgment had to be determined. As each of these aspects

seems to have three forms of itself, the number of categories was seen to be twelve. However, the basic question with regard to the Kantian doctrine of categories is whether all of the twelve categories are involved in each and every judgment, or *only* one of the categories out of the three has to be present in a particular judgment in all the four aspects and which it must necessarily have in order to be a judgment. Thus, if something is a judgment then it must have a quality, a quantity, a relation and a modality, but which of the three aspects of each of these will it have will be a matter of choice. But, if this interpretation be accepted, then the choice between the three mutually exclusive aspects of each of the four classes of categories will have to depend upon either the intention of the speaker or the subject matter which the judgment is about. In either case, there will be no formal necessity and there will be the obvious intrusion of factors such as "intentionality" or "determination by objective considerations" which have no place in the Kantian system.

If, on the other hand, it be maintained that all of the twelve categories have to be simultaneously present in every judgment, then the problem will arise that the same judgment will have opposed characteristics such as being simultaneously affirmative and negative, or universal and particular, or possible and actual which will lead to difficulties of an even more fundamental sort.

There is another problem with respect to Kant's categories of understanding, as he seems to consider only the descriptive

judgment and not the other forms which a judgment may also take. It may, of course, he said that as only descriptive judgments may be true or false they alone give us knowledge, and Kant was interested only in delineating the categories which form the structure of what is considered as "knowing". But what is expressed through other kinds of judgements can also be an object of understanding and, in any case, they have to be "understood" as much as the descriptive judgment itself has to be. Kant does not appear to have distinguished between the understanding of experience through a judgment which involves the categories of understanding and the "understanding" of the judgment itself. While one may legitimately hold that experience can be "understood" only through the descriptive judgement and the categories involved in it, one cannot reasonably hold that only the descriptive judgment is understood and that other forms of judgment do not become the objects of understanding. In fact, the "understanding" of a judgement has to be distinguished from the understanding through the judgment of experience, a restriction which Kant does not seem to have drawn. An analogous distinction is drawn these days between "use" and "mention", but though there are similarities between the distinction that we are pointing out and this distinction, there are important differences between the two. The difference between the two senses of "understanding" relates to the understanding of language on the one hand and the understanding of experience on the other. Language is not understood as something sensuously given like other sensuous

objects, though it certainly is embedded in something which is sensuously apprehensible. Yet, as everybody knows, signs, even when sensuously different, may mean the same thing or, refer to the same object. The word as heard through the auditory sense is obviously different from the word as visually apprehended, or as apprehended through the tactile sense by a blind person, and yet all the three are supposed to stand for the same word. The "understanding" of signs is not exactly a sensuous apprehension, for if it were so, there would be no undeciphered languages. The problem of the "understanding" of "meanings" has not been raised by Kant, but without taking this dimension of understanding into consideration we cannot understand large parts of human experience which itself is constituted by the apprehension of meanings. Kant's understanding of the sensuously given is strangely confined to that and that alone which is untouched by the whole world of "meanings" which saturates human experience at every level. Perhaps he was influenced by Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities and believed that the sensuously given consisted only of the former. But as both Berkeley and Hume had shown that one could not legitimately accept the distinction which Locke had drawn and that all the qualities were in the mind and not independent of it, there was no need for him to do so. But even if one accepted the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, one could not confine the realm of "knowledge" to the former only, as sensuous experience primarily consisted of the latter and not of the former. It

is true that the Newtonian perception of what constituted "scientific" knowledge had confined it to primary qualities only, but Kant was trying to deal with the problem of knowledge in terms of the sensuously given and not in terms of only that part of the sensuously given which is designated by the term "primary qualities".

There is, however, another dimension to the problem which we have already indicated by referring to language where it is not what is sensuously given that is to be understood, but rather what it means or refers to. This dimension becomes even more complex in the case of all cultural objects and symbols to which men continuously respond as they constitute the world we primarily live in. Thus, it is not only the secondary qualities which constitute along with primary qualities the world which constitutes the "object" of our understanding, but along with these, there is the whole world of meanings and values which also demands understanding. Later thinkers drew the distinction between the natural sciences and cultural sciences to demarcate this distinction and suggested that the categories of understanding which were adequate to the former were not sufficient to understand the latter. But if "knowledge" itself can have diverse forms then what happens to the unity of knowledge, a question to which Kant had specifically addressed himself?

The understanding of cultural objects raises the question regarding the "understanding" of what man himself has created

and which, after creation, confronts him as "given" in the same sense as natural objects are given. Natural objects too get continuously transformed by man and as recent technology based on new scientific knowledge has shown, it can bring new "natural objects" into being. Even trans-uranic elements which are not found in nature have been created in the laboratory and given new names by man.

Kant, of course, could not have seen these possibilities in his own time, but even then the transformation of "nature" by man was visible all around. In fact, nature is a residual term which designates that which is not only independent of man but which was there even when man had not come into being, and thus is both ontologically and epistemologically prior to man. Hence, any attempt to determine the categories of "understanding" will have to take the diverse realms which need to be understood and the understanding of which demands categories relevant to that domain. It is true that there may be some generalized categories which are required for any "understanding" at all, but such a determination will be residual as it will not be easy to determine what the categories necessary for any understanding, are and those which are only required for the understanding of any particular domain. The problem has been masked by the fact that the understanding of inanimate matter and its behaviour has been taken as the basic paradigm for all understanding, and thus the categories that were relevant to the understanding of that domain

were regarded as the fundamental categories which constituted the very nature of "understanding". In the case of Kant, this may be understood as a result of the great success of Newtonian physics and the success achieved by the banishment of "final" causes from the understanding of inanimate nature. But it is not quite clear why this should have continued even until the present time when knowledge has proliferated to so many other fields besides those which are studied in the science known as physics. The only explanation which one can possibly find for this wide-spread belief is that all other phenomena are "determined" ultimately by the movements of material particles and their combinations in diverse forms. But this is only a matter of faith, and as everyone knows, faith can hardly be disputed for it is outside the domain of rational considerations. Yet, a little reflection would reveal that it is impossible to understand so many creations of man, directly or indirectly, in terms of the movement of elementary particles as the moment one tries to do this, one completely destroys the specificity of the realm itself, for there are no "meanings" or "significance" or "values" in the movement of material particles.

The only other possible claimant to provide the basic category for all understanding is the law of contradiction which perhaps articulates the most fundamental requirement of thought to find anything intelligible. Yet, though *prima facie* this seems to have a lot of justification, it is only so because of the fact that one has not seriously considered what exactly the law says. The law is usually

presented as "A cannot be both B and not B." In this formulation most probably A represents the subject and B the predicate and the contradiction is supposed to be between B and not B. In case this is accepted, the law will mean that a thing cannot possess two contradictory properties at the same place and at the same time. However, the spatio-temporal limitation will apply to only those properties and objects which an meaningfully be said to have spatio-temporal characteristics. In the case of those objects and properties which do not possess spatio-temporal characteristics, such a restriction will not be required. But then as the contradiction is supposed to be between predicates, their complete exclusion and opposition can only be the result either of definition or of experience. Where the predicates have essentially a spatio-temporal dimension, the exclusion is bound to be based on experience and thus always subject to revision in case the experience warrants or requires it to be made. On the other hand, if the exclusion is only based on definition, it is purely stipulative and the stipulation can be changed if the theoretical structure necessitates it. Not only this, the exclusion pre-supposes a clear-cut division by dichotomy so that in case anything has one characteristic, it cannot, by definition, have the other. It is either the one or the other, using the disjunction in the exclusive sense of the term. If, on the other hand, the division is not so clear-cut and the property designated by B forms a continuum, then the so-called not-B will designate only the extreme opposite pole where

the continuum is supposed to cease altogether and the presence of the property ceases absolutely.

Besides this, there is the added problem of the universal and the particular as the property which is supposed to characterize the object has a universal characteristic and is exemplified in a particular instance with innumerable variations that are not supposed to affect in any substantive way the presence of the universal in it. The negation, then, would only mean the absence of the least little bit of that universal element which is supposed to give the quality its essential character. Yet, even such an understanding would only apply to ultimately simple qualities which are not complex in character, and would certainly not apply to those complex wholes which are "organic" in character.

There is another formulation of the law which states that "p and not p cannot both be true at the same time." "p" here refers to sentences or propositions and the law in this formulation is supposed to assert that a sentence or proposition cannot be simultaneously both true and false. But it is seldom noticed that if such a formulation is accepted, then the law would become restricted only to those sentences which can meaningfully be characterized as "true" or "false". This, as is well known, is true only of declarative sentences and hence the law will apply if and only if the sentence happens to be declarative in character. This limitation has sought to be overcome by substituting the notion of "satisfaction" in place of truth, but that hardly improves the

situation, for there are sentences regarding which it would be difficult to say what can possibly "satisfy" them. Take, for example, an interrogative sentence which asks a question. What can satisfy the asking of a question except that a question has been asked, that is, by turning an interrogative sentence into a declarative one. On the other hand, if the range of possible answers are treated as "satisfying" the interrogative sentence, then there would hardly be a limit to the notion of "satisfaction" as this would only mean that there is no answer to the question. This itself may mean that no answer at present is known in respect to the question that has been asked or that the question in unanswerable in principle. In the case of the latter, the question is supposed to be a pseudo-question as it involves a hidden self-contradiction in it. On the former alternative, the question is treated as possibly answerable, but no known facts are supposed to decide as to which of the answers is even relatively correct. We are thus thrown back again into the distinction between the "possible" and the "impossible".

The extension of logic to non-declarative sentences may, on the other hand rely, as it has in the case of the logic of imperatives, on the principle of exclusion which applies to two injunctions which cannot simultaneously be carried out but this is analogous to the exclusion of predicates and truth values in the case of declarative sentences and suffers from the same problems that we had pointed out earlier. In fact, little attention has been paid to the variety of predicates and the problems they pose for the

interpretation of the law of contradiction in its terms. There are, for example, dispositional predicates which do not predicate any existing property of the object. But, rather to a capacity or potentiality in it to display that property under certain specifiable conditions. The problem relating to these predicates has been discussed in the context of counter factual conditionals, but though the discussion is analogous, it does not cover many of the problems that relate to such predicates. Many of such properties, especially when they are supposed to be manifested under ideal conditions which never obtain, create a problem regarding their being true or false. In fact, this aspect of the problem gradually merges into the problem created by those predicates which ostensibly refer to ideals, values, norms which even when not factually realized are supposed to be true or valid. All utopian statements are of this type and one does not know how they have to be rationally understood, particularly when they talk of the synthesis of opposed qualities.

The formal two-valued sentential logic, on the other hand, hides the problem by treating truth and falsity as completely exclusive dichotomous properties such that if one obtains, the other cannot. The problem remains the same if one extends the truth values to more than two and treat of what has been called n-valued truth functional logic. The problem is not with the number of truth values, but with the principle of absolute exclusion which postulates that if one holds, none of the others can be said to hold

of the same sentence at the same time. Not only this, it is conveniently forgotten that there is a complete asymmetry between a sentence which is universally quantified and one that is existentially quantified, for the former can, in principle, never be established as true while the latter can, in principle, never be falsified. This follows from the universal character implicit in the assertion as the former is supposed to involve an *infinite* conjunction of sentences, while the latter is regarded as consisting of an *infinite* disjunction of them. A conjunction is logically true, if and only if *all* of the sentences constituting the conjunction are true. But as the conjunction consists of an infinite number of sentences, it can never be *known* to be true, for if even one of the sentences forming the conjunction were found to be false, the whole sentence formed by the conjunction would be rendered false. Similarly, an existentially quantified sentence is supposed to be a disjunction of an infinite number of sentences where even if one sentence in the disjunction is true, the whole sentence formed by the disjunction becomes true. Thus, even if all the known instances were found to be false, one could not say that the sentence formed by the disjunction is false, for any other sentence out of the infinite number which are supposed to constitute the disjunction may be found to be true, thus rendering the whole disjunctive sentence true. The only way out of the logical difficulty is to treat the so-called infinity introduced in the definition of "all" and "some" as a spurious infinity and stipulate that the conjunction or disjunction consists only of a limited, finite number

of sentences. But such a limitation would not only destroy the usual interpretation of these quantifiers in modern logic, but also give rise to the problem of how to set a limit to the finite instances which will be taken to close the question of the truth or falsity of the sentences that will determine the truth or falsity of the conjunction or the disjunction.

There is, in fact, a further problem with respect to the notions of "truth" and "falsity" which has not been given much attention in philosophical discussions of modern logic. Truth and falsity are usually treated as semantic notions where it is the "fact" which is referred to by the sentence which determines the truth or falsity of the sentence concerned. But, as everyone knows, the whole question of "reference" is full of almost insoluble difficulties. Usually these are ignored by taking extremely simple instances where not much difficulty arises in finding what exactly is the referential fact which determines the truth or falsity of the sentence concerned, as in Tarski's famous example of "'snow is white' is true if, and only if, snow is white." But once the question of the semantic reference of more complicated sentences such as occur in sophisticated scientific theories is raised, the difficulty is seen by everyone. The complicated chain of inferences which lead to the sensuously apprehended "fact" along with the innumerable presuppositions involved at various theoretical levels make it almost impossible to treat the "fact" as a simple referent of the sentences describing the theory in question. Not only this, the

occurrence of the sensuous "fact" cannot logically be taken as establishing the truth of the theory concerned as it commits the fallacy of "affirming the consequent". This, as is well known, was pointed out by Papper in his criticism of the verification criterion of cognitive truth. But his alternative suggestion regarding the falsification criterion has met with insuperable difficulties and there has been no clear-cut solution to them until now.

Besides these, there is the added problem of understanding what exactly is meant by the term "false" which is usually interpreted in terms of the set-theory as forming a null-class. The null-class is generally understood as a class of which there is no member. It is something akin to zero in the number theory. But even if one accepts the idea of a class which has no members at all, the question remains as to whether this absence of membership is only a contingent fact or a necessary one. In case it is the former, the fact of its having no member may only be a function of our ignorance as it is almost impossible to determine whether no member of the class ever existed in the past or even exists in the present. Even if one were somehow to overcome this limitation of information with respect to the past and the present, there can in principle be no such limitation in respect to the future as there can be no ground for asserting that what has not been exemplified in the past or the present will not be exemplified in future. This of course, is the well-known problem of induction, but it remains relevant to the postulation of the null-class and the way

it has been treated for understanding the notion of "falsity" in modern logic. On the other hand, if the membership of the class is supposed to be impossible in principle, then it would once again raise the problem as to how one is to determine this "impossibility" except on the ground of its being self-contradictory. This, however, would only shift the problem to the understanding of self-contradiction which we discussed earlier. There are other problems relating to the mathematical notion of "zero" on the analogy of which the concept of a null-class has been created to understand the notion of falsity in logic, but these do not seem to have been taken into consideration by those who have made this identification in modern logic.

The structure of reason may, however, not be articulated in terms of the law of contradiction which has usually been supposed to be the corner stone of intelligibility of phenomena. Reason may itself be understood as dialectical in nature, as Hegel did. The specificity of the dialectic may, of course, he conceived differently from the way Hegel did it. But the generalized problem regarding the dialectical conception of reason will remain whether it is conceived in specifically Hegelian terms or not. The dialectical conception, however, itself depends on the law of contradiction and the belief that it does not do so, is mistaken. It only uses the contradiction in a dynamic way to move towards a situation where the contradiction is finally resolved and no more contradictions are allowed to arise in principle. If it were not so, then no need for

synthesis would be felt by the dialectician as he would have given up regarding contradiction as something to be got rid of, or removed through the synthesis. This also explains why all dialectical thinking assumes a final synthesis when no further contradictions would arise. This obviously is an acceptance of the untenability of contradiction and treats it as a mark of something which needs to be resolved or overcome.

But whether reason be conceived dialectically or otherwise, the situation remains that one inevitably presupposes that what is sought to be known must conform to the structure which reason is supposed to possess. Kant self-consciously tried to give up this presupposition through his well-known distinction between the phenomenon and the nounmenon but he also could not give up the notion that "all" that was to be known had to conform to what he considered to be the structure of understanding. The distinction between Kant and Hegel is supposed to lie in the fact that where the former held that the real cannot but be *thought* as rational, the latter was of the opinion that the real cannot but be rational. But the distinction ultimately is trivial, for the notion of the thing-in-itself in Kant is merely a residual notion and cannot play any significant role unless it be suggested that there is some other faculty besides reason which can "know" it in some other way than the way we usually understand it in terms of "understanding" or "reason". Kant seems to suggest this in his *Critique of Practical Reason* where the moral will appears to provide a clue to the reality

of freedom which appeared impossible for understanding. But Kant forgets that the distinction between the phenomenon and the noumenon is not because reason has a specific structure of its own and hence can only "know" in terms of that structure which he articulates in terms of the categories of the understanding. The distinction arises not because of the specificity of the structure of reason, but because of the structure of any faculty whatsoever which will deal with experience in any way. True, the structure will be different in the case of faculties other than reason, but in case there is a structure, the transcendental illusion will necessarily occur and one shall be deceived into thinking that what is presupposed because of the structure of the faculty concerned belongs to that which is experienced.

The deeper problem, however, is how one can ever know that what is transcendentally presupposed is not "really" given for in case it is transcendentally presupposed it shall always appear as given. There can simply be no way of becoming aware of the illusoriness of the given unless one has some faculty other than the one the structure of which is involved in the experience concerned. The point is that experience will always appear as "structured" and one can never, in principle, come to "know" that the structure does not belong to the experience but is the very precondition of its appearing as such. Kant did not realize this problem as he did not consider the question of the transcendental possibility of the exercise which he was undertaking in the three

Critiques. In other words, how could the transcendental critique be possible if Kant's analysis of the possibility of knowledge itself was accepted? Kant only asked: "how is knowledge possible?", but did not ask how this questioning itself could be raised and what the transcendental presuppositions were involved in the exercise of this activity itself. Hegel had raised the objection that to know that there are boundaries is itself a way to cross the boundaries, for if the boundaries were to be really there, one would not even be aware that they are there. But Hegel did not see that the awareness of there being a boundary is not exactly to "know" what is there beyond the boundary. One may be vaguely aware of a limitation, but not know how to overcome the limitation or what exactly would happen if the limitation were overcome.

Kant, it may he said, had made a distinction between "thinking" and "knowing" and had suggested that while we can "think" of the noumenon, we cannot "know" it. He also made a distinction between "understanding" and "reason" and had argued that while the former keeps itself limited to trying to "know" the phenomena, the latter tries to overcome the limitations and claims that it can "know" what things are in themselves. For him, all philosophy before him was the result of the exercise of this attempt on the part of human reason and thus resulted in the perennial antinomies which were the result of this transcendental illusion. The only remedy for this intrinsically futile exercise of philosophy was to realize the "illusoriness" of this activity and hence forward

to confine the activity of "knowing" to the field of phenomena only. This meant that the categories of the understanding would be applied only to the sensory domain and that any attempt to trespass beyond this would be self-consciously censored. This realization of the transcendental illusion and the resulting wisdom was, for him, a result of the transcendental critique which he thought he had developed for the first time in the history of philosophy.

Kant, however, not only forgot that the sensory experience itself, according to his own analysis, was constituted by the a priori forms of sensibility, that is, space and time which were discovered through a transcendental critique of that experience. There was no independent realm of sense experience which could be the object of the employment of the categories of the understanding. The attempt of Reason, therefore, to go beyond the limits of sensibility was an attempt to go beyond that which itself was constituted by the transcendental function of a priori forms of sensibility. Thus one transcendental faculty was trying to trespass beyond the limits set by the exercise of another transcendental faculty and there was nothing "wrong" as space and time were not a part of the "given" in Kant's system. Kant does not seem to have realized this as he, himself, appears to have succumbed to the illusion of the "givenness" of space and time which he had earlier exposed in his discussion of the Transcendental Aesthetic.

The plurality of the transcendental faculties has not been given the attention it deserves in any serious assessment of Kant's thought. There is, of course, the usual distinction between sense understanding and reason. But it has hurdle been noticed that each of these has a transcendental aspect which is revealed by a transcendental critique and which treats the products of the other faculty as somehow "given", even though what it gives is itself constituted by an element which is transcendentally involved in it. "Understanding", for example, assumes for its operations a spatio-temporal realm of sensuous experience which itself is constituted by the transcendental forms of space and time. Similarly, "Reason" assumes the whole realm of understanding which is constituted by the categories which are transcendental in character, for it operation. Kant, of course, has not considered the possibility of a faculty beyond reason, though he appears to have dealt with imagination, feelings and Will in different contexts. The relationships between the different faculties is itself a problem that has hardly been discussed in Kant's thinking. Nor has it been a matter of investigation as to why one should give primacy to one faculty over another.

This discussion of Kant's position primarily rests on the First Critique and the way Kant has articulated the notion of the transcendental a priori in it which gives rise to what we have called the "transcendental illusion". Besides the First Critique there are the Second and the Third Critiques which also have to be taken

into account. But even with respect to the First Critique it should be remembered that almost half of it is concerned with the Transcendental Dialectic, even though the history of philosophy has paid more attention to what Kant has said in the first two parts of the *Critique*, that is, the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Analytic.

Kant, however, in his Second Critique deals not with the pure form of willing or the categories presupposed by it and the illusions that they generate there because they are treated as "given", but with the question as to what constitutes the moral will. This most probably is because he was more interested in establishing the ontological truth of those ultimate ideas of reason which the first *Critique* had established as trespassing the boundaries wherein alone it could fruitfully and meaningfully operate. Kant's heart, however, lay not in keeping within the boundaries he had set for himself, but in finding some way out to regain and establish what the *Transcendental Critique* had declared to be impossible. This he found through an examination of the phenomenon of morality and through a transcendental reflection on its. For Kant morality was something totally different from prudential rationality as it was not concerned with the calculation of means and ends or with the achievement of any particular end, but in apprehending the unconditional "ought" and fulfilling it. Yet, it remains unintelligible as to how Kant could derive the ideas of God and immortality on the basis of a critical reflection on the phenomenon of morality in

terms of the awareness of an unconditional "ought", for the unconditionality of the "ought" makes it totally unrelated to anything else in the Kantian analysis. To bring in the notion of God for ensuring a relation between morality and happiness seems as arbitrary as the idea that immortality alone can ensure the possibility of that perfection which man longs for. The seeking for ideal values has no independent place in Kant's reflection on morality, just as to bring in God to ensure happiness is basically a capitulation to the hedonistic contention that what man ultimately seeks is happiness. In fact, in his discussion of prudential morality or what he has called the "Empirical Practical Reason", he concedes this as it is only in the realm of what Kant has called "Pure Practical Reason" that no reference to considerations of happiness ever occurs. Not only this, the need for immorality in the context of the seeking for perfection would make sense only if one were to accept the idea of re-birth as it is only through a succession of embodied being that one may hope for the gradual asymptotic realization of the ideal ends which can never be completely realized in time. But if one accepts the idea of rebirth, then one has to postulate the idea of a past life also, as without it, the idea of an absolute beginning of one's being at the point of biological birth would make no sense. Similarly, the idea of a *future* happiness that would somehow balance the present imbalance between virtue and happiness makes no sense either, as the future happiness cannot compensate for the present "undeserved" pain or

suffering and, if God could ensure the retrieval of the balance later, he could surely do so now.

Kant does not seem to have taken these objections into consideration. Nor did he seem aware of the powerful Indian thought on the subject which postulated a past life to account for the seemingly undeserved pain and suffering in the present life and to think of a succession of unending lives later in order to achieve the possibility of that perfection which comes only after the realization of the ultimate truth, and with the realization of which the whole cycle ceases as one has finally attained that which was to be achieved. This perhaps is the real meaning of *moksa* and not as it usually is construed to mean release from suffering or bondage.

The idea of freedom however seems radically distinct from that of God and Immortality, even though Kant seems to treat them on a par. Freedom is presupposed by morality in an essential sense, but, as was pointed out earlier, it is equally presupposed by all voluntary action, whether it belongs to what Kant has called the realm of Empirical Practical Reason or Pure Practical Reason. It is Practical Reason which postulates the idea of freedom, and not whether this Practical Reason is empirical or pure. In fact, even the exercise of Reason in its theoretical activity of "knowing" involves an activity of choosing and imagining alternatives for understanding the phenomena that one encounters. Kant did not seem to have taken into consideration this "active" element involved in the

process of "knowing". Not only this, he does not seem to have realized that the abstract generalized formal categories undergo a continuous transformation depending upon the realm which is sought to be understood and the field to which they are applied. Also, there seems to be a radical difference between Kant's treatment of Pure Theoretical Reason and what may be called Pure Practical Reason on the analogy of what Kant called Empirical Practical Reason, as while he thought that Pure Theoretical Reason was transgressing the limits in which alone it could be fruitfully applied and thus giving rise to the illusion of the "knowledge" of what he called Ideas of Reason, the Pure Practical Reason was supposed by him to grasp the true nature of self in the sphere of moral action and their coinciding with the ultimate ontological reality of freedom. This obviously was totally opposed to the insight of the Critique of Pure Reason. Had he followed his own insight which he had gained from the earlier *Critique*, he would have seen that morality consisted in the a priori form of action which is essentially concerned with the realm of desires and relations with other beings which it presupposes. Had Kant's thought taken this direction, he would have seen that the unconditional "ought" obtains differently in respect to our relationship with other human beings, to our own selves and to nature along with the awareness of the transcendent which he called the "thing-in-itself" in his system. The use of the word "thing" is unfortunate as what he actually meant was reality-in-itself or what Heidegger later called "Being-as-such". This is a translation of "sein", but the idea has

been well known since the very beginning of philosophy, and however vague the awareness, man has always tried to establish some sort of a relationship with it not only in terms of "knowing" but rather with his whole being and all the faculties that are involved therein. Similarly, Kant has not seen the radical differentiation within the realms of desires which are the subject matter of morality.

The structure and inner differentiation of "ought" does not seem to have been given much attention in philosophical thought. Normally, it has been identified with morality, and at least since Kant it has been completely seen in terms of the categorical imperative. But the awareness of "ought" is much wider than that which is encountered in the realm of morals which, strictly speaking, is concerned only with the realm of human beings or, what may be called living beings who are regarded as capable of feeling pleasure and pain. But this is not the only domain in respect of which the feeling of obligation or "ought" arises. One feels, for example, a sense of obligation to pursue any ideal or norm which one apprehends as "value". This is obvious in the realm of knowledge or the seeking for what is true or veridical. The same is true with respect to one's own self and the states of consciousness that one normally enjoys or suffers from. One would, for example, like to be honest or joyous or not full of envy or jealousy or hatred, or not being perturbed by things that are beyond one's control. These things have little to do with morality

except indirectly in the sense that they affect our behaviour towards others. But even this indirect relationship is only marginal or tangential in the case of many of those states of our being that we would like to have, and which we aspire for in some sense or other. The same seems true with our relationship with whatever is regarded as ultimately real with which we are identical in some sense or other.

The basic point is that man as a self-conscious being feels this sense of "ought" in relation to all these diverse domains which he inhabits and that to restrict the feeling of "ought" only to one realm would not only do injustice to it, but also seriously limit any reflection that is based exclusively on it.[1]

The sense of "ought" that arises with respect to these different fields is of different types as the urgency and the insistence is felt far more in respect to those obligations which relate to other persons than those which relate to the realms of ideal values and the ideal self. The realm of values itself is differentiated and presents a sense of obligatoriness which cannot be regarded as the

1. I had earlier pointed out the distinction between what we called the "moral" and the axiological "ought" in an article entitled "The Moral and the Axiological Ought: an Attempt at a Distinction". However, I now think the distinction within the realm of the "ought" has to be widened further to include not only the two dimensions I had discussed therein, but also the whole realm which consists of the ideal self which I would like to become and the obligatoriness that arises from this. The situation is, of course, far more complicated than this as there is also a demand for reconciling these diverse obligations which is an impossible task.

same, even though it is radically different from the one that one encounters with regard to other human beings. The pursuit of knowledge as an ideal value is different, for example, from the obligatoriness that one feels towards the realization of the hidden beauty that one vaguely apprehends in a work of art, or even embody successfully the "meaning" that one intuits in an inchoate manner in it. Similarly, the feeling that one "ought" to understand and appreciate the work of the great masters is of a different kind than the feeling that one "ought" to pursue knowledge and add to what one has received from the earlier generations. The exploration of the inner diversity of these realms and the different ways in which one feels a sense of "ought" with respect to them, has hardly been explored. The only thinker who has seriously tried to map the realm of values is Nicolai Hartmann who in his three volume work Ethics has delineated in detail the realm as he saw it. But his contention that moral values are second order values which arise in the pursuit of first order values does not seem to take into consideration that these first order values have to be confined to one's relationship to human beings in particular and to living beings in general in order to be meaningfully regarded as "moral". One's pursuit of knowledge, for example, can hardly be considered as "moral" unless one regards the pursuit as contributing indirectly to human welfare. But, as knowledge can always be used for both good and bad ends, it may equally be regarded as immoral, particularly if it is concerned with the achievement of power, as was supposed to be the case with Faust. In fact, the

moral perspective treats all values as ultimately subordinate and instrumental to it, and hence those who subscribe to the primacy of moral values always want to establish a censorship which would regulate the pursuit of other values so that it may not harm the interests of what they consider to be human interests of mankind. On the other hand, those who are genuinely interested in the pursuit of other values find such an interference intolerable, forgetting that unless some sort of a social or political order exists, nothing worthwhile can be pursued for long. Moreover, they, in their own turn treat the moral values as primarily instrumental and "use" human relationships for pursuing their own ends.

The relation of instrumentality and intrinsicality between different "oughts" has seldom been explored. Nor has any attention been paid to the reasons for according primacy to one set of values over others. In fact, the whole realm has been neglected, even though Hartmann tried to draw attention to an important distinction between what he called "ought to be" and "ought to do". But this is not the only distinction, as has been earlier pointed out, as not only has the realm of knowledge been ignored but also the realm of feeling.

In the Kantian perspective, however, the problem that the feeling of obligatoriness which the idea of "ought" in values raises, is the problem of its transcendental character and whether it is confined only to the realm of willing or extends to the structure of self-consciousness as such. If one accepts the former limitation

then the sense of "ought" will basically be a transcendental a priori form of "willing" and thus generate the transcendental illusion that the "ought" belongs to the content that is willed. On the other hand, if the sense of "ought" is seen in terms of the relation between self-consciousness and consciousness, then it will be seen as the transcendental form of this relationship itself. The transcendental illusion generated in that case will consist in seeing the sense of "ought" as belonging to consciousness and inseparably "given" with all that one is conscious of.

The problem has been articulated in existential thinking as resulting from a bifurcation introduced by the fact of self-consciousness resulting in an inalienable alienation at the heart of human reality itself. This "alienation" is thus seen as resulting from the very structure of human reality which is essentially self-conscious. But the term "alienation" does not do justice to the situation as it not only has negative overtones, but also implies that if there were to be no self-consciousness, then it would be the ideal condition as all alienation would then have ceased automatically. This would b a return to animal consciousness, at least in the way we generally apprehend it. The dynamics introduced by the relation between self-consciousness and consciousness is totally missed in this articulation. Nor do the ideas of freedom and creativity that this relationship involves is taken care of in this formulation. The famous statement of Sartre that "man is condemned to be free" shows how little he really

understood the notion of freedom, just as his other well-known statement "hell is other people" reveals how little he understood the relation between people. He did not ask himself the simple question as to whether hell is other living beings also, and if they are not, then does the fact that other human beings are free beings like oneself entail that the relationship with them is intrinsically bound to be "hellish" in nature. But, what them about the relationship between the human and the divine which is supposed to be freest of all? The point is that, in spite of the many insights that the existentialist literature shows, it does not come to grips with either the problem of freedom or the problem that any relationship between free beings involves. In fact, the problem of freedom and the relation between multiple centres of freedom cannot be understood without a discussion of the multiple levels at which freedom operates and the multifarious forms that it takes. The relation between freedom and bondage is not the same as the relation between freedom and causality, and it is surprising that while the latter has been the subject of some reflection amongst western thinkers, the former has hardly been paid any attention in that tradition.

The only context in which the problem of freedom and bondage may have been discussed is that of mental illness with the many varieties of obsessional neuroses and psychotic disorders. Yet, the psychiatrist and the psychoanalyst generally accept the average, normal human individual as exemplifying what psychic

freedom means. But, while this is necessary for legal and medical reasons, everyone knows that the so-called "normal" person can hardly be considered as an example of one who does not suffer from psychic compulsions or bondages. The problem, in fact, has been explored in depth in the spiritual literature of the world and the procedures that have been developed to deal with the problem at various levels where it is realized that the overcoming of one kind of bondage generally gives rise to another, more subtler kind. Nevertheless, even the great spiritual traditions of the world do not seem to have reflected on the question of freedom and bondage either in terms of the relationship of elf-consciousness to consciousness, or of the relationship between persons who have attained different levels of freedom, let alone the problem arising from the fact of their being multiple centres of freedom, each with a self-consciousness of its own and having a specific relationship with the consciousness that one enjoys. Moreover, though the fact of self-consciousness may be assumed to be a distinctive feature possessed by human beings qua human beings, it itself undergoes continuous development and modification in the course of the cultural and civilizational changes that occur. In fact, many of these developments may be seen as reflecting the changes in self-consciousness which get embodied in different objectifications which, in turn, affect each development further. Self-consciousness is basically a reflexive, reflective attitude which occurs at all levels and thus not only brings the objects of consciousness and their relations both to themselves and to

consciousness within its sphere of reflection, but also its own relationship to this whole activity in its diverse dimensions. The reflexivity is in a sense theoretically unending, but it soon reaches an existential limit which, however, cannot be easily specified. The levels of abstraction involved and the reflection on this reflective activity have, as is well known, engendered philosophical activity at all times. But it has not generally been seen that the systematization of knowledge in any field gives rise to a self-conscious activity which makes the disparate, dispersed, particular "knowledges" relating to a special field the subject of reflection and thus result in what may be called a second order self-conscious thinking about it. This activity of systematization of any particular field of knowledge may be said to lie at the beginning of any civilization and may be said to provide the transition from culture to civilization, as the fact of systematization itself raises problems of a purely theoretic kind which would not have arisen if the systematization had not taken place. Once such a self-conscious attempt at systematization of a particular field of knowledge occurs, it not only introduces a new distinction between those who "know" and those who do not know theoretically such a formulation, but organizes a new level of self-consciousness in terms of the cognitive discourse that has been created by the systematic formulation.

The self-conscious attempt at systematic thinking may, however, operate not only with respect to a particular field of

knowledge, but operate in respect to the world of human actions or the world of feelings, or the relationship which man has to nature or other living beings. The realm of society, polity, family, human relationships, or the world of art may become objects of self-conscious reflection and result in a second level *sastric* formulation which in turn organizes self-consciousness at a more sophisticated and differentiated level. When this happens in respect to one's own mental processes, then a new type of self-conscious systematization occurs which challenges one to understand one's self in a new way, leading to attempts at transforming oneself through active manipulation of self-consciousness in certain directions. This whole activity changes one's consciousness in a subtle way, just as one's encounter with what man has created in symbolic form to convey what cannot be conveyed through concepts or the literal use of words. In fact, many a time concepts themselves are used symbolically, creating cognitive meanings which are not referential in nature.

The point is that the continuous objectification of self-consciousness not only transforms consciousness in a subtle way, but also continuously changes the level of self-consciousness itself. The dynamic inter-play between the two and the development over time lies at the centre of the story of all civilizations, though this has not generally been seen in this way. The subtle transformations that take place due to this continuous inter-action, both vertically and horizontally, create new dimensions of obligatoriness due to

the apprehension of new meanings, possibilities and values. This creates new problems for the inter-play between bondage and freedom, as it no more remains bound to the basic biological level which sets the ultimate framework for the inter-play between the two. The constraints imposed by the basic needs of human living and the inevitable biological curve of existence from birth to death itself gets subtly transformed through its articulation in conscious terms and by the reflection that self-consciousness inevitably imposes on it.

This articulation and the reflection on it has, however, a historical dimension which one is not normally aware of as both the consciousness and the self-consciousness at the human level are constituted by a process of socialization and acculturation through which the biological human individual is transformed into a socio-cultural being. The constitutive process which is the result of this internalization makes one forget that what is internalized and thus becomes constitutive of oneself is itself the result of a long historical process the beginnings of which are unknown to us. The immediacy of consciousness even though mediated, in a sense, through self-consciousness, is itself the result of a long "mediated" process which is hidden from both consciousness and self-consciousness. Yet, however much one may become aware of the long historical process through which that which was internalized and thus became a constituent part of oneself, one cannot but continue to feel the illusory immediacy as the real one and the so-

called "real" mediatory process as that which is only theoretically accepted due to undeniable evidence, but existentially rejected as irrelevant to what one "lives" in. The case of language illustrates this dramatically. Ultimately, one's language is the one which one learns in childhood and which thus is one's mother tongue. This is the language that one "lives" in, and the fact that it has had a long history is completely irrelevant to the immediacy and reality of the language one lives in. This is true of other elements of one's culture such as the music that one hears or the visual forms that one enjoys or the food that one finds tasty or the gods that one worships, or even the ideal self that one wants to be.

It is, of course, true that one can learn a different language, just as one can learn to appreciate other cultural creations and sometimes even feel more at home in them than the ones one had grown up in. There is, for example, not only the case of those who are bi-lingual or bi-cultural as George Steiner points out in his *Extraterritorial,* but also the case of the educated elite in all those societies which have been ruled by an alien culture with a different language and a different milieu such as the British in India, or the Moghuls earlier. But, however true this is, it only adds to the tension between the two layers of one's personality, the one constituted by that into which one was born and the other which one adopted because of certain circumstances. There is a substantive difference between the situation when one adopts an alien language or culture because of economic or political reasons

and one where one does so because of one's own free will because one is attracted by the other. There is much talk of "colonialism" these days, but hardly any attention has been paid to instances where a politically conquered culture has still managed to captivate and fascinate the conqueror. The well known example of Greece and its relation to Imperial Rome has been forgotten in this connection. So also have been the innumerable instances where the fascination with the other and the desire to learn has had nothing to do with political or economic reasons. The Chinese fascination with Buddhism in India and the unbelievable effort that went into the travels of those who came to India to collect manuscripts, take them home and patiently translate them into their own language has seldom been reflected upon. Nor has the fascination of the Arabs for the Greek intellectual world and their Herculean efforts at the translation of the Greek texts into Arabic has been the subject of reflection amongst those who talk of cultural encounters as if they only occur in the context of political and economic domination.

There is another aspect of the story which has seldom been looked into. This relates to the difference between generations which are acculturated in an alien culture, either because of political or economic reasons. Persons in the second or third generation hardly even feel the "alienness" of the adopted culture or language as did those who had to make the change for the first time. In fact, radical changes may occur in one's own culture due

to sudden creative breaks because of which the past of one's *own* culture may begin to seem as alien to oneself as anything else.

Yet, the problem of the "constitution" of one's being transcends the problem not only of the culture that one has been born into or the one that one has adopted for any reason whatsoever, but touches two important points which do not seem to have been paid much attention in the literature on the subject. The first relates to the problem as to whether the process of constituting oneself either through one's own effort or through external circumstances over which one has little control, continues throughout life and is not such a static thing as one generally assumes. The second relates to the fact as to whether there are any "constitutive" conditions of being human and, if so, what they are. Kant's attempt to uncover such a constituting structure through his Transcendental Critique, and articulating it in the realm of knowledge, is an attempt in this direction. Unfortunately, Kant's attempt to do the same for the realms of willing and feeling does not appear to have met with the same success as it lacks clarity and precision which is found in the first *Critique*. Nowadays, of course, the whole idea of their being any such thing as "human essence" has been questioned. Not only this, the very idea of understanding anything in terms of its essential qualities has been challenged. There is the fashionable charge against all previous thought of being logo-centric, thus neglecting those aspects of human reality which could not be comprehended in rational terms.

Besides this, there is the usual tirade against thinking in terms of binary opposition which, according to certain critics, has dominated human thought since the earliest times. But those who say this forget that the distinction between the "rational" and the "irrational" is itself based on a binary opposition just as the attribution of essences and the denial of such attribution, as without the exclusive opposition between these, the criticism will make no sense.

The problem, obviously, is not logo-centrism or even phono-centrism, or of thinking in terms of binary opposition but whether there has to be any "centrism" at all and if one has to "think", how one has to do so, particularly if one makes a cognitive claim and wants others to accept what one says not on the basis of the fact that one says it, but on some other grounds which are justifiable in some sense or other. The denial of "authorship" along with the "responsibility" that goes with it alongwith the questioning of the notion of a "text" and of "meaning" has rendered any discussion of these contentions impossible in principle. Thus, what we have is a series of arbitrary statements which, though ostensibly cognitive, have no such intention and are supposed to be accepted on the basis of the "signatures" they carry such as that of a Derrida or a Rorty or some other such currently fashionable name, though if what they had said were to be taken seriously, they could not even put their "names" on it. Some of these writers have explicitly opted out of any discussion and have adopted a tone of literary irony to

convey or rather to persuade others with all sorts of rhetorical devices which alone, in their opinion, has been left for man to do.

However, this is not something entirely new in the history of human thought. The fulminations against reason are as old as the advocacy of reason as the only instrument for the seeking of truth. Nagarjuna, the great Buddhist dialectician had argued against the possibility of reason proving anything at the very beginning of the Clpistian era and even earlier the Upanisadic seers had argued that ultimate truth could not be known by reason. There were sceptics of all sorts whose views have been mentioned in the earliest Buddhist texts belonging to the fourth or fifth century B.C. but it is in Nagarjuna's work that we find a self-conscious, detailed attempt to prove that nothing could really be proved. The obvious answer to this was that if one was really trying to "prove" this, then one was accepting that the arguments could entail a conclusion and that ultimately this was the heart of reasoning. Reasoning consisted in asserting an "if, then" proposition where what was being asserted was only the fact that if one accepted something, then one had to accept something else also.

The debate on this has been long in the Indian tradition, but the dialectical denial of reason has generally been in the service of some higher seeking of man which was supposed to be supra-rational. The Advaitins and the Seunyavadin Buddhists had been the chief protagonists of this view, but there were others also. However, the main philosophical stream never accepted this

suicidal tendency on the part of reason to abdicate its total responsibility as is involved in a withdrawal from any serious attempt to communicate with others on a basis which was grounded in some sort of universality the acknowledgement of which compelled one to revise one's opinion or contention if it was shown that one was wrong. Such an acknowledgement is a precondition not only for all cognitive pursuits and any fruitful discussion and debate about them, but also for meaningful human living if conflicts are to be resolved by argument and not by force. The presupposition does not mean that any ready-made solutions are available either in the field of reason or of what is good or right, but it is seen as an immanent ideal involved in the activity itself which one tries to articulate to the best possible extent. Even if when one agrees to disagree, the "agreement" is based on the acceptance of the possible plurality of viewpoints or visions regarding the issue in question, and the hope that perhaps one would later come back to the exploration through mutual discussion and find a new alternative which was not apprehended by both the parties who had to close the discussion by "agreeing to disagree".

Reason itself is embedded in a larger human enterprise which is basically a pursuit of diverse ideals vaguely apprehended and which conjointly seek a meaningful human living together which has elements of joy and beauty, even though they have seldom been seen in such a way. The human world, of course, is a

"creation" based on "given" materials the limits and possibilities of which are never clearly known. The attempt to articulate these limits, whether in the dimensions of knowledge or action or even of feeling has been repeatedly attempted, but seldom has man remained satisfied with "accepting" those limits and has always tried to overcome them or at least mitigate them to some extent. In fact, the idea of "reasonableness" has always tried to confront the notion of being rational and has tried to suggest that the impulse to realize some one value at the expense of others or to carry an idea to its logical conclusion is fraught with danger not only to oneself but to others as well. Perhaps, the idea is rooted in an awareness of the structural limitations of the human condition which demands that nothing shall be realized or even sought to be realized "absolutely" in it. The notion of wisdom is clearly allied to the notion of reasonableness, though it obtains at a deeper level. Yet, the whole question of structural limits is itself so unknown except at the gross, biological level that one can hardly formulate it "objectively" by virtue of the fact that these structural limitations are the limitation of one's own self and that, in a fundamental sense, they "constitute" what one is.

The idea of a structure which constitutes an entity entails that the entity so constituted would hardly ever be aware of it, as its very "being" is constituted by it. Even at the level of consciousness or self-consciousness this will continue to be a fact in spite of the illusion of transcending each specific limitation

which the phenomenon of self-consciousness inevitably generates. There are, then, at least two basic levels at which the constituted conscious being functions, one of which it is completely unaware and is, in principle, incapable of being aware; and the other consisting of that of which it is aware in all its variety and in respect to which it feels free to manipulate or play with or establish meaningful relations with. However, if one leaves aside the foundational structure which one can only postulate and of which one can in principle never become aware in its concrete specificity, all the other levels have their own "constitutive" structures of which one can become aware if one makes them an object of a transcendental critique such as Kant attempted to do in his well-known *Critiques*. But the very fact that there is such a possibility and that one can become aware of the transcendental pre-suppositions involved and the illusion that they generate suggests that there are faculties other than the one which is the subject of the transcendental critique.

The point is that unless one were to assume a hierarchy of faculties where each exposes the transcendental structure involved in the faulty concerned, the very activity undertaken by the transcendental critique would become impossible in principle. Kant appears to have confined this only to the levels of sensibility, understanding and reason, but there was no necessity for such restriction as the principle of "constituting" and the distinction between the constituted and that which constitutes it operates at

every level. Thus, one would have a hierarchical series where the levels of the "constituting" and the "constituted" become ever more subtle and complex and where each generates the "illusion" of treating something as "given" when, in fact, it is presupposed. This, of course, would operate only within the foundational constitutive structure about which nothing can in principle be known except that is must be there as otherwise one would not be a human being at all. Yet, within this basic limitation, the limitations at all other levels can be, at least in principle, overcome in the sense that the transcendental illusion generated by the fact that what is presupposed is treated as "given" may be understood to be such and "corrected" accordingly.

The problem of the theoretical correction of a transcendental illusion is closely linked to the problem of "freedom" and "bondage" which has troubled many a thinker. Surprisingly, however, Kant does not seem to have considered this problem in the context of his exposure of the transcendental illusions which gave rise to the well-known antinomies which, according to him, had plagued philosophy since its very beginning. Even in his discussion of morality, he does not seem to have seen the problem of freedom in terms of a dialectics where freedom is seen as freedom from an illusion which is transcendentally imposed by the very structure of willing and yet where the possibility of getting rid of the illusion exists because one may always get an insight into the "illusoriness" of the illusion through the transcendental critique which he

himself had brought to the attention of the philosophical world of his times.

The problem of "bondage" which all action, whether moral or non-moral, involves was a subject of continuous debate and reflection in the Indian tradition. Action, it was contended, always involved a "dependence" on causality, time and a desire for achieving something which was not present. Along with this, there was the deeper dependence on "others" to the extent that one required them for the execution of one's action. The former dependence was intrinsic to all human action since it presupposed some knowledge of causality and the purpose for the achievement of which the action was undertaken and which causal knowledge was supposed to ensure. The "dissatisfaction" with the state of affairs as it prevailed whether at the physical or the psychical level along with a desire to change it was also involved in the very notion of human action. It was, of course, true that a large part of human action was concerned with the maintenance of the existing situation so that it may not deteriorate or become worse as in the case of cleanliness or health, or other such things. But even in such cases, action was inherently purposive in that it was clearly based on the knowledge that if it were not done the state of affairs would become so undesirable as to require even more effort on one's part to restore it to a reasonably acceptable condition. This aspect of action has generally been neglected by those who have reflected on a large part of the work that is usually undertaken by

women in most cultures. Simone de Beauvoir is one of those rare thinkers who has drawn attention to this aspect of repeated, continuous maintenance from morning to evening, involved in household work in her well-known book, *The Second Sex*. This eternal Sisyphean work has been reflected upon by Camus in the context of the perpetual effort involved in the maintenance of the good or the perpetual fight against the "plague" lurking just around the corner. The two differing dimensions of action pointed out by Camus and de Beauvoir are not so unrelated as they may seem at first sight. All action involves a continuous repetition and attempt at maintenance of structures and functions which are necessary so that anything worthwhile may be pursued as it presupposes their relatively efficient functioning. Even the most creative activity has this underpinning as those who engage in them know very well. The levels of repetitive formations which at the human level are called habits and which, at a more general level, are called regularities when they occur in cycles of nature, provide the "freedom" which occurs at the level which they help to maintain. There is, then, at least at the human level, successive levels of "freedom" and bonds of "habitual necessities" which may be fell as "bondage" when seen in relation to the "freedom" that they allow to emerge. But there is no level which does not create a "bondage" of some sort as the "freedom" that it allows to emerge generally has an indefinitely open horizon where one just does not know what the next level would reveal or allow. One, of course, posits an ultimate level of freedom beyond which there is no

"other", as in the ideas of *moksa* and *nirvana*, so powerfully formulated and pursued in India over millennia. But this basically is a logical limit postulated as an ideal as one is aware in experience of levels of freedom and bondage. In fact, the other pole of the continuum is usually called nature or *prakrti* where complete determination is supposed to reign and no "freedom" ever occurs. This is the most stable foundation on which successive stories of freedom are built, each providing the basis for the one that occurs at a relatively higher level. The biological basis is the closest analogue to this which one finds at the human level and which is seen as continuously constraining and permitting the emergence of forms of freedom at other levels such as the mental, the intellectual, the imaginative and the spiritual. These are only rough indicators and many of those who have sought freedom at any of these levels and reflected on the phenomenon have mapped them in greater detail than is generally known.

Besides the biological level which everyone knows, at least to some extent, there is the structural constraint involved in the very fact of self-consciousness which has seldom been seen or articulated as such consciousness is intrinsically confined to the present and, in fact, the temporal "present" is defined as that which is present to consciousness. It is true that in memory consciousness can present to itself something that was past and in vivid imagination it can present itself something which is not present" in the ordinary sense of the term. It can even imagine a

future as something that may happen or which it would like to happen, but in all these cases there is a "presentness" which affects the consciousness in a concrete way which, however, is radically distinguished from that which is sensuously present to it because of its contact with the world through the senses and all the other "instruments" which it has at its command. This "present-centric" character of consciousness imposes a limitation on it so that it is confined in its existential experience only to that which is present, and all that was past is, in an essential sense irrelevant to it. The present pain not only obliterates all the past pleasures and moments of happiness, but also makes them irrelevant in the face of the compelling "reality" of the present. The same is true of the pain and the suffering that was there in the past, and thus we "live" from moment to moment totally absorbed in a succession of instantaneous experiences where each seems utterly real till it is replaced by another. But this is not the only limitation that consciousness has and which it cannot in principle overcome. Besides this, consciousness, particularly self-consciousness, is essentially "egocentric" or "I-centric" in the sense that whatever happens to it or is experienced by it is in a sense its "own" which is radically different, and is seen and felt as different, from that which happens to "others", as it is "experienced" by them and not by oneself. The pain of the other is somebody else's pain and not mine even though I may experience it to some extent by empathy or by imaginative identification with the others.

The sense of the "I", however, is ultimately two-dimensional and the "present" to which it is structurally confined has a fairly extended "spread" within which there is, at least, marginally, the freedom to "attend" to any particular aspect of it which one chooses. Also, the attention to the aspect may itself be coloured and, in fact, is coloured by "association of ideas" over which one has little control, but which one can manipulate to some extent. The two dimensions of the consciousness of the "I" are related in a strange way as, while the one is the perennially present character of "seeing" or "witnessing" which intrinsically belongs to it, the second concerns the ever-present capacity to will or to attend or just to "think" that something he done or that something should happen *because* one has "decided" that it should happen. This aspect which is inherent in consciousness is one of the strangest things which defies all understanding as ultimately its ineffectivity is realized when one becomes paralysed and loses the control of the bodily function which generally gives effect to what one "wills" to happen. The "willing" is still there, but nothing happens. Yet, even in this situation there generally remains the capacity to shift one's attention from one aspect of the "present" to another and, at least partially, to evoke some association of ideas instead of others. It is, of course, true that attention, or rather "attending" is continuously influenced by factors about which one knows very little but there is always a residual element of "freedom" that one feels in the situation.

The "witnessing" aspect of consciousness itself varies in a way that has seldom been emphasized or explored in those traditions of thought which have considered it as the only essential characteristic of consciousness, as was done in many of the Indian schools of philosophical and spiritual thought. Consciousness can grow dim, or vague or confused, just as it can be clear or translucent. It is affected by drugs and even by such ordinary things as tea or coffee or sensations from outside and, of course, by persons with whom one had some sort of relationship. The point is that the "witnessing" function of consciousness is itself variable both in quantity and quality and thus cannot be treated as an indefinable constant, the way it has been understood in Samkhya or Advaita Vedanta.

As for the dynamic aspect of the "I-consciousness" it has seldom been emphasized in the Indian tradition except in Kashmir Saivism where Abhinavgupta argued for the presence of *vimarsa* as an essential quality of consciousness. Yet, he does not seem to have conceived of this activity in terms of what we have called "attending" or "willing", and which may be termed as *sankalpa* in the Indian tradition. He considered if more on the analogy of thinking and perhaps is closest in his use of the term to the way it was used by Descartes when he said that the essence of mind was in the activity of "thinking". There was, however, a close analogue of the notion of "willing" or *sankalpa* in his own system of thought, that is, *sakti*, which has generally been translated as "power" or

"force" to convey the dynamic or active aspect of Being which, in this discourse, has usually been rendered as "Siva". The notion of *sakti*, however, has been segregated for some reason in the Indian tradition and made an exclusive monopoly of the tantric and *sakta* sects and not seen as a general characteristic of Being or Reality itself. Also, it has been too much identified with the feminine principle deriving perhaps from the Sankhyan idea of *prakrti* which was conceived of as an ever-active dynamic principle completely separated from *purusa* which, by contrast, was conceived of as the completely inactive male principle which could only "witness" or "see" and not be ever an agent in any sense of the word.

This Sankhyan identification of *purusa* and *prakrti* with male and female principles and its conception of the *purusa* as completely inactive and the *prakrti* as ever-dynamic and active has played a disastrous role in the Indian tradition. This, along with its contention that the two were completely separated from each other and that any identification of the one with the other was the cause of all ignorance and suffering, further compounded the problem created by the earlier conception. The Saiva and the *sakta* traditions tried to bridge the separation and unify the two aspects, but interpreted them too literally and conceived of their union in explicitly sexual terms as symbolized by the union of the male and the female principle in human form. The Advaitins not only followed the Sankhyans in their absolute separation, but further conceived of the active and the dynamic principle itself as that

which creates the illusory world of plurality and objectivity, giving it the name of "*maya*". It is only in Sri Aurobindo that an attempt has been made to integrate the two aspects in his notion of "consciousness-force" where consciousness itself has been conceived of as a principle of creative effectivity which continuously brings things into being without ever being exhausted or limited by what it has created. The analogy is with the creative power of consciousness as revealed in all artistic activity and is seen not as something accidental or adventitious to it, but rather as its inalienable, essential characteristic by nature of which alone it can be characterized as real. The static and the dynamic aspects are two sides of the same reality and any attempt to separate or divide the two is not only to misunderstand the nature of the real, but to do injustice to it. However, the power of "withdrawal" is as much a power as the power which is seen and witnessed in the out-going activity of consciousness which is normally felt as "attending" or what we have called "*sankalpa*" or "willing" or "intending."

The weight of the tradition, however, has been so over-whelming that in spite of the continuous efforts of Indian thinkers from Vivekanand onwards and including such outstanding persons as Tagore, Aurobindo, Tilak and Gandhi, the Advaitin-Sankhyan conception continues to hold sway and the world of action seen as ultimately unreal when contrasted with the withdrawal into silence or *sunya* which alone is felt to be "really real" and where alone the

being finds its truth and reality in the ultimate Being which alone is.

The reason for this may lie in the fact that the capacity of consciousness to "withdraw" from any object of attention is felt as implying a deeper and more fundamental "freedom" than the capacity to "attend", as in the latter consciousness has to become subservient in a certain sense to the object that it attends. This is true even when the "object" is its own creation as is the case not only in respect to works of art, but also "dreams" which are supposed to be pure creations of consciousness itself. The objection may be raised that there is hardly any "freedom" in attending to a dreamt object and that even in the case of an art object, one would have to make a distinction between the act of creating and the act of appreciating. A dreamt object may be regarded not as the "free" creation of consciousness, but as the creation of an obsessive desire with respect to which consciousness does not feel free at all, while in the case of an art object, the act of creation feels bound by norms of beauty and the act of appreciating by the "object" and the values immanent in it. Thus, the act of withdrawal has always been seen as a more basic assertion of freedom than one's engagement and involvement with any "object" whether in a relation of feeling or willing, or even "knowing", as in all these the activity in which consciousness is engaged in, is determined not only by the nature of the object but also by the norms governing the "activity" itself. Yet, the so-called

withdrawal would have no meaning if it were not for the fact that there is something to withdraw from. But the deeper problem, at least at the human level, concerning this "something" and the relationships that one can have with it, has been generally ignored. And, even when some attention has been paid to it, it has primarily been seen in terms of a relationship with the transcendent "other", and not with nature or other human beings, or even other living beings in general.

The fact that consciousness has this capacity to attend and to withdraw may be seen in diverse ways depending upon the modes of attending and withdrawal, on the one hand, and of the object which is attended to or, withdrawn from. Normally, both the acts of "attending" and "withdrawing" are supposed to presuppose a pre-existent "object" which is attend to or withdrawn from. While this is true to some extent, what is ultimately presupposed is a bare "something" a sort of indeterminate "X" which yet has some inner resistance about it, something which Kant called the "thing-in-itself" and which he thought was necessary if the object was not to be conceived of as purely constituted by the activity of the subject. But even if this is accepted, it should not be forgotten that the very act of attending makes a relevant difference to the object and so does the act of withdrawal, though the latter has not been seen in this way. The "attending" generally involves, at least to some extent, a choice as to what aspect of the object will be attended to and how it will be related to other aspects of the object and objects

other than itself. This, of course, occurs when the act of "attending" is purely cognitive in intent. On the other hand, it may be, and usually is, affected by interests and purposes other than those which govern pure cognition. Indian philosophers called this *prayojana* and considered it as an essential element of all activity, including the cognitive one. However, for some reason they did not accept the fact that a pure cognitive pursuit was possible which had no other purpose besides the end and values it sought itself. This occurred, even though such a well-known thinker as Uddyotakara tried to widen the notion of *nihsreynsa* to include the immanent ideals and purposes of different realms such as the realm of economy or polity or, to use the Indian terms, *varta* and *artha sastra*. The idea of disinterested reason which was only governed by objective considerations of evidence and argument was somehow never pursued in the Indian tradition, even though the idea of disinterested action or *niskama karma* was formulated where it is far more difficult to conceive of meaningfully than in the realm of knowledge or thought.

There is, then, both an element of freedom and constraint in the capacity of consciousness to attend as there is always some commitment to both the object which is attended to and the purpose for which it is being attended to. Both the freedom and the constraint are thus a function of the type of object and the purpose for which the task of attending is being undertaken. There is always the possibility of an obsessive compulsion to attend to

certain kinds of objects, but except for situations where the external nature of the physical or the sensory stimuli are of such a nature as to "compel" attention as, say, a sudden, loud noise or pain, the "obsessive compulsion to attend" arises more from imagination which itself is a function of latent desire about which one is hardly aware at the conscious level. The dominant force of purposes that compels one's attention in a certain direction is again a function of desire about which one knows very little.

The "worlds" of freedom and constraint that are built by desire have not been explored in the philosophical tradition, though as we shall see later, "desire" can also be seen as "creating" a world as much as the transcendental forms of sensibility and the categories of understanding which Kant so powerfully delineated in his *Critique of Pure Reason.* In fact, the movement of thought from Kant to Schopenhauer and Nietzche shifts the attention from the primacy of reason or intellect in the construction of the world to what the former called the "will to live" and the latter the "will to power". Even in Kant, there was the primacy of practical reason over pure reason, but the philosophical world has seen his major contribution to lie in the latter rather than in the former. Also, Kant had not seen the independence of the world created by desire from both reason and morality and thought that the latter alone constituted the realm of practical reason, while the truth was that reason, even in the form of morality, was always subservient to the demands of "desire", if not always at the individual level then

certainly at the level of the society or the species which always strive to preserve itself at the cost of everything else. In fact, no distinction between the human and the living world can be made at the level of desire, except in terms of the transformations that is undergoes because of imagination and the apprehension of ideal possibilities that self-consciousness finds or discovers or invents in them. Most thinkers have distinguished between the human and the non-human living world on the basis of morality or the sense of "ought" or what the Indian tradition has called *dharma*. Only Schapenhauer saw it in terms of a reversal or a denial of the "will to live" which came to be questioned as man had become self-conscious about it and saw the futility of it all. In this perspective morality in the sense of "ordering" the world of desires was only a half-way house towards the total destruction of the roots of the "will to live" from which all suffering arose. Nietzche's emendation of Schapenhauer's "will to live" as "will to power" is an interesting move in the sense that it does not see "desire" merely in terms of sustenance and perpetuation of itself, but gives it a purpose beyond survival. However, Nictzche does not seem to have closely analyzed the notion of power even though he did see the ascetic's denial of the "will to live" also as an assertion of the "will to power". But power may have diverse forms and may be used for different purposes. Also, the will to power is different from the will to create, even though there have been attempts to interpret the latter in terms of the former. The will to create a world of joy and beauty and meaningful human relationships alongwith a significant

relationship with the living world, the world of nature and the "transcendent" is not exactly the exercise of a will to power. In fact, the relation of "will" to "desire", on the one hand, and to "creation", on the other, has seldom been explored, just as the relation of all of these to "understanding" and its converse relationship to them. Still, the "worlds" that desire creates and the illusions that it generates deserve to be explored as much as those of the will in its diverse forms and the transcendental a priori conditions of these, for if the Kantian analysis is to be believed, there can be no faculty of man which does not have transcendental conditions involved in its exercise. These transcendental forms of desire and willing, and the illusions they generate will be the subject of discussion in the next chapter of this work.

Chapter II

The transcendental form of willing involves simultaneously the notions of freedom,. purpose and causality. The relation of these to "desire" is unclear even though it is presupposed by all of them in some sense or other. Freedom sometimes seems a residual category unamenable to any proper understanding of itself. It appears to be rooted in a feeling which many consider to be illusory, but even if the feeling were to be illusory in some ontological sense, there can be little doubt that phenomenologically it is as real as anything can be. There are entities in the case of which their being "the object of consciousness" involves their "reality" as, for example, in the case of pain. To say that one's feeling of pain is illusory may only mean that the person who says so cannot find any determinate, relevant conditions for the occurrence of pain which the other person complains of. This is also true of consciousness and self-consciousness and hence much of the perennial discussion about the reality of consciousness is as meaningless as any discussion about the reality of pain. Consciousness may have causes just as pain has and consciousness may as easily be removed as many a time pain can be, but these facts do not affect the reality either of pain or consciousness, unless one believes that a cause is more "real" than the effect. But, one can do so only if one forgets that the so-called cause was itself an effect and hence, to that extent, unreal, if to be an effect means to be "unreal" in any sense of the term. The

relation of cause and effect is a relative one and as "effects" themselves are "causes", they are as "real" as that which is supposed to cause them. Consciousness has effects as does pain and, to say, therefore, that they are unreal or illusory because they are embedded in a physiological nexus is to say nothing, for there are things that are embedded in consciousness as a phenomenological fact even if its ontological underpinning may be supposed to lie in some "X" which does not have the character of consciousness. The chain of causes may be both complex and infinite and yet every element in the chain will have to be conceded equal "reality' or "unreality" and, hence the use of these terms is irrelevant except to convey one's personal valuational judgment about it. In fact, the issue of "unreality" raises problems of a deeper sort, both epistemological and ontological, which the present day discussion about consciousness totally ignores. What exactly is meant when we term anything as "unreal" except that it lacks certain criteria which we ascribe to things which we call "real". This ultimately tells more about the criterion than about the thing itself. The moment we change the criterion, things that were deemed to be "real" become "unreal" and those that were regarded as "unreal" become "real". We have discussed this question at length in the chapter entitled "Logic and Reality" in our book *The Nature of Philosophy*, published a long-time ago, and hence we need not go into the question once again, but the issue regarding "unreality" should be disengaged from the question of erroneous cognition as the latter has certain characteristics which the former

has not and provides a clue to the nature of consciousness which the former can never do. An erroneous cognition has to be believed to be true as otherwise one will not hold it at all. But if believed to be true, it is bound to be acted upon and thus bring consequences into being that are "real" both for oneself and for others. This is the well-known phenomenon called the "self-fulfilling prophecy". Here an erroneous belief gives rise to consequences which make what was actually "false" become true because of the behaviour that was caused by the belief that was erroneous as it was thought to be true. Thus, in terms of consequences, it is immaterial whether a belief is actually true or false. What matters is that it should be believed to be true and result in action consequent upon that belief. Human reality is built on the basis of beliefs which have been held to be true and in case such beliefs are held by a large majority of persons, they create a "world" where the actions consequent upon those beliefs build a "reality" which is as "inter-subjective" in character as the world of nature is supposed to be. The only difference may lie in the fact that while what is regarded as "nature" cuts across all human groups which may constitute themselves into different segments separated from each other by the set of beliefs they hold in common. The identity of nature, then, transcends the identity of a human group as the latter is constituted by the beliefs it holds to be true and thus whose behaviour confirms their truth as it is constituted by them.

It is, of course, true that human beings have beliefs about nature also and that these beliefs influence their conduct as do other beliefs. Thus, beliefs about nature also generate a common "world" amongst those who share those beliefs. But one may still discern a difference between beliefs that concern inanimate, natural objets and those which concern living beings, particularly those that concern other human beings. There is a large world of independent causality that operates in the world of nature and provides that matrix within which man's interaction with the non-human world takes place. In this "world" false beliefs lead more directly to failure in action and thus to the necessity of the revision of the belief concerned than in purely cultural contexts where beliefs begin to build an independent world of their own. Perhaps, there is a continuum of man's interaction with the world at different levels where his beliefs play a varying role in creating and sustaining the world that he lives in. In fact, the encounter with nature is primarily in terms of survival, while the encounter with all that is "living" is primarily in terms of significance and meaningfulness. The inter-meshing of considerations of survival and significance occurs at all levels; only their relative proportion increases or decreases as one moves in different directions.

To talk of "significance" and "meaningfulness" is to enter a world which is radically different from the world as we ordinarily conceive it, for the latter is supposed to be without any meaning or significance in itself. It just *is*, and that is all that can or need be

said about it. The world of meaning and significance thus is a human creation, something brought into being by the beliefs on which one acts and the desires that one has and the ideals that one vaguely apprehends. The relation of this "world" to the other "world" is only that the latter is presupposed as its necessary condition, something like the body which has to be given life, mind and reason to make it really human. The point is perhaps more significantly brought out in language which is the most human creation of all. By itself, language is nothing, just a series of sounds or marks on paper or stone or anything else. Undeciphered language or languages that one does not understand are just these and nothing more. How quickly one turns away from listening to a language one does not understand, even though one may know that something is being said. Yet, the moment one deciphers or understands, the whole situation changes. But what exactly this "change" is, is the question which is difficult to answer. Everyone knows the difference, and yet the articulation of the difference is difficult because it involves the understanding of the human essence itself.

There is, of course, a wider sense in which everything can be seen as language. Gesture language is well known as is the language of the body. Even the involuntary bodily symptoms that a doctor interprets have been considered as language by an extension of the term. But all these extensions fall within the region of interpretation, though some of them are almost on the

borderline where a causal relationship is at the heart of the interpretative process as in the case of medical diagnostics. All differentiated response to different stimuli is not interpretation or communication, even though the generalized theory of information may treat them as such. In any case, language in the human context always involves not only a reference beyond itself, but also to something that cannot be conveyed without it, even when it is used in the widest possible sense. The strictly referential function of language is thus only minimal in character as without it language would not be language at all.

The "world" created through this activity of giving meaning and significance is thus at the heart of the understanding of the human situation. At the root of this lies, not the phenomenon of cognition which we have explored at such length in the last chapter, but desire and imagination which find little place if we put cognition at the centre in understanding the human reality. But what is desire? and what is imagination? and how do the "words" they create differ from those that come into being purely in terms of causality? Causality is a category that one inevitably uses for understanding nature, and whatever is "given" is generally treated as part of nature. But the "causality" of desire and imagination is totally different from the causality that is supposed to be involved in a process where no conscious factors are thought to be involved. There is no contingency involved in the latter situation, at least at the conceptual level, for if one thinks so, then one introduces an

essential unintelligibility in the situation. On the contrary, in the case of that which is brought into being by desire and imagination, the contingency is in-built in the situation and makes it intelligible as without that element of contingency, it would not be something which has been brought into by being desire . One need not have desired and there would have been no contradiction involved if one had not desired what one actually did. This is not the type of counter-factual statement which can always be constructed with respect to any situation as in the case of those situations which are supposed to be governed by pure causality, the statement is purely wishful and just an exercise in imagination, while in the case of desire it lies in its very nature, for behind the act of "desiring" there is supposed to be freedom which is absent in the other case. Yet, while desire presupposes freedom, it also has been seen as binding the soul or the self or the consciousness which desires. Also, desire may not necessarily lead to action as in the case of day-dreaming or just imaginary wish-fulfilment. The causality here consists only in a loose association of ideas and images to which the notion of "causality" may not be applicable, at least in the strict sense of the term. Thus one will have to distinguish between desires which lead to some sort of action and those which do not. But even the latter have consequences for consciousness and perhaps it is these which are supposed to bind, just as desires which lead to action initiate a chain of causality in the external world which binds one in an unending web about which one knows very little.

Thus desire has two-fold consequences in different directions; one leading to action and thus creating a world in the external domain and the other in the realm of consciousness where it creates a different kind of world consisting of what in the Indian tradition has been called *samskaras*, or traces in the mind leading to the formation of habits or dispositions to repeat the act of desiring again and again. One may, it should be remembered, desire even if one does not want to desire. Such an obsessive desiring is because of the habits formed by past acts of desiring even though they had left one unfulfilled. The psychology and logic of desiring has seldom been explored in detail except in schools of yoga or spiritual pray seem equally, afraid of "psychologism" is where it has been analysed in its subtlest forms and shades. However, this is hardly known to contemporary students of psychology who have shut off the whole realm of introspective investigation because of a methodological prejudice which they have called "scientific". The phenomenologists forgetting that if there were no self-consciousness, there would be no phenomenology either.

There has, of course, been some discussion of desire in the context of economics where it has been usually discussed under the guise of "utility". The law of diminishing utility is one of the formulations pointing to the fact that the repeated satisfaction of a desire tends to diminish as the act gets repeated in time. But as the economist is not exactly interested in the psychological

question as to why it happens to be so, he does not notice that in spite of this diminishing satisfaction the act of desiring not only persists, but increases in its obsessive repetition. This is well known in the case of those who become habitual drinkers, unable to give up drinking even when it ruins their health. But the same is true of many other realms and happens in the case of most persons in varying degrees.

The psycho-analysts have analysed this phenomenon and named it as "obsessive compulsion" to repeat an action even though it is unfulfilling and unpleasant. The "compulsion repetition" which Freud explained in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* has seldom been seen as an extreme example of a wide-spread phenomenon which occurs in all persons to some extent, and thus providing a clue to that aspect of desire which, in the traditional analysis, has been seen as the cause leading to bondage. Yet, desire is not always considered as the cause of bondage even by the traditional analysts, for they themselves argue that one should desire to traverse the spiritual path and engage in meditation and practice Yoga of whatever kind, and that, if one does so more and more one becomes less and less bound by the usual habits that enchain one to the psycho-physical habits in which one is enmeshed all the time. One would, therefore, have to make a distinction between desires and desires, that is, those which have a natural tendency to lead one into psychological bondage and those that tend to increase one's "freedom" as they are pursued to

a greater and greater degree. The former seem generally to be concerned with sensuous satisfactions, while the latter appear to belong to higher and subtler seekings such as those of the intellect or the imagination, or the life of contemplation. Yet, even in the case of the latter, there is an element which tends to "bind" consciousness and of which consciousness wants to be free. This is obvious in the case of the pursuits of intellect and imagination, and even in the realm of moral action. But it is not clear whether the same applies to the pursuit of a contemplative, meditative life as consciousness itself is the centre of this kind of activity. Still, its relation to the other realms and seekings of man is not quite clear, for if it makes one incapable of pursuing those realms or observing the norms and appreciating the ideals immanent in them, then one is, at least to some extent, imprisoned in the consciousness that one has cultivated and in which one mostly lives.

However, the theme we are presently interested in is not the relation between levels of freedom and levels of bondage, but in the "worlds" that these create and the structural and transcendental illusions that are generated in respect to each of them. The realm of desire at the sensuous level creates, as everyone knows, the diversely infinite "worlds" relating to each of the senses that man possesses. The sense of taste, for example, has created the infinite variety of food and drink all over the world and it still continues to fascinate man as this is one thing that s/he perforce has to enter in all the time. So is the case with the other senses and the

combinations of them that one encounters all the time. Yet though there is a common biological basis for the worlds that are created, they are primarily the result of the desire which, though rooted in a biological need, is infected with imagination and an immanent ideal which have hardly been noticed. Normally one only talks of imagination in the realm of art and literature, and of ideals in relation to the pursuits of knowledge and action. However, there is an obvious element of imagination in the immense variety that is continuously created in such realms as those of dress, food and drink. Perhaps, it may seem strange to talk of "ideals" in these domains, but wherever there is imagination, there is bound to be some element of "ideality" involved. This would become evident if one remembers that one recalls the taste of a unique dish one had enjoyed the whole of one's life and that one seeks its repetition time and again even though one often gets disappointed as what one tastes does not come up to one's expectation. Not only this, one "imagines" a taste that would be even better than the one that had been one's standard for assessing the subsequent satisfaction. Many a time this is determined or conditioned by the experiences of one's childhood where the relationship with the parents, particularly the mother, enlivened the situation wherein one's habits of taste were formed. Yet, this does not foreclose the possibility of later developments as one discovers new tastes all the time.

The example from taste is only symptomatic of a wide-spread phenomenon where, on the basis of each of the senses, a whole world is developed in which both imagination and ideality play a constitutive role in the creation of that world. Food is served not only for purposes of taste or nutrition but also involves the art of the way it is presented and served. The visual presentation is as important even though one knows that the aesthetic delight of the presentation will have to be disturbed very soon if what is presented has to be served. Even more important than this is a fact which is seldom taken into account even though it relates to the very essence of the human situation in which food or anything else is served. It is the "manner" of serving, the care and the affection with which it is served, and if this is taken into account, it would reveal those dimensions of ideality more clearly which ordinarily remain unnoticed when we discuss such subjects.

Each of the senses, thus, creates a world of its own, and many of the senses combine to create a complex world where each of the senses makes its own contribution. The structural limits that are imposed on this creation are the biological limits of each of the human senses as beyond these limits we do not see colours or hear sounds or taste or smell anything. We "know" that there are colours which are called infra-red or ultra-violet, that is those which are below or above a certain frequency, but we do not "see" them and thus they are not colours for us. No painter would ever paint them, for neither s/he nor anyone else would ever see them.

Similarly, we know that there are sounds which, for example, some birds make, but which we do not bear because they touch frequencies which are structurally inaudible to us. Yet, though we do not "hear" them, other birds hear and respond to them for they do not suffer from the structural limits that we have.

The worlds that are created on the basis of the senses thus are built on the structural limits that the human senses inevitably have and yet this is usually forgotten and the illusion generated that this is the "only" world that there is and that there is no possible world beyond them. We know that animals can see in the dark, but for us the darkness is still dark because we cannot see in it. Surely, the statement that animals can see in the dark imposes our own view of the world on the animal; as for him it certainly cannot be dark if he can see in it. However, the sentence has a meaning for us as we, as human beings, see it as dark, for we cannot see in it. The point is that we live in a world which is common to all human beings and thus has the characteristic of "objectivity" where the structural limitations of each is guaranteed for its objectivity by the similar structural limitation of the other. Human beings create an objective world as much as animals do, even though our world is vastly different from theirs.

Within the structural limits imposed by the senses, imagination and ideality perform their creative function to build possible worlds out of these which have practically no limit whatsoever. Yet, if imagination and ideality have structures of their

own, then those structures must impose a limit, even though we may not know them. The relation between the senses, the imagination and the ideal element involved in them may, however, vary and hence create different levels of those worlds which, even though ultimately deriving from the senses are not totally dependent on them. The creations of the sensory worlds ultimately have both imagination and ideality as subsidiary elements in them, as the primacy always belongs to the concrete sensory objects themselves and the biological needs they subserve. However, the roles get reversed and the imagination and the ideality get freed from their subsidiary role to create an independent world of their own which, though still sensuous, is not "sensual" as it has lost its primary dependence on the concrete world of the senses and the functions they deal with. This is the realm of art where colours and sounds and the other senses combine to create worlds of their own which are, in a sense, a second order world built out of the sense materials "freed" from their primary functions.

The world of art, however, has itself a dual aspect and hence a dual pull in different directions. The first is the aspect of its relationship to the primary sensual realm from which it arises and to which it continuously refers, as without it, it will not have its distinctive being. The other is that element of ideality which informs it continuously to give it a shape, a form and a meaning without which it would have no distinctive being of its own. It is, in fact, this second element, that creates the puzzling problem as to

why such second level worlds are not created on the basis of all the senses when, in principle, this should have been so. It is only the visual and the audio senses which appear to have a privileged status as on their basis alone, the second level worlds seem to be created. The senses of taste, touch and smell do not seem to have become the foundation for the creation of any distinctive second level worlds of their own. It is, of course, true that they play a secondary role in the creation of some of these second order worlds, but their role is only marginal in character.

The contrary pulls in the creation of these second level worlds creates a tension in them which has not generally been noticed. The tendency to free themselves from the realms of their primary reference and express something which normally cannot be conveyed through those sensual realms, is evident in almost all such second level worlds which man creates. This may become a little more intelligible if we reflect on the fact that the first level world created by the senses can hardly ever contain that realm of meaning which the second level worlds generally contain in themselves, even though they suffer from an intrinsic limitation in the effort they make in this direction. And this occurs in spite of the fact, as we said earlier, that there is an element of imagination and ideality even in the first level world that man creates.

The world of art thus forms a transition to a world where both imagination and ideality free themselves completely from the world that the senses have created, or that has been created on the

basis of the senses. Language admirably performs this function, though it also is plagued by the same problem in a slightly different form. Language gives almost infinite freedom to imagination to build whatever it likes and as far as the world of ideal meanings is concerned, it is so intimately bound with language that it is almost impossible to disengage it completely. Yet, language has a referential function and there is always the problem of distinguishing between the literal, the metaphorical, and the symbolic meanings involved in what one reads or hears or speaks.

The problem is further complicated by the fact that language may be used to talk about language and thus performs a second level function where language itself becomes the object of reference. The heart of language is thus the concept which, on the one hand, refers to something which can never be completely grasped in sensuous terms or even in any finite, limited non-sensuous sense as it appears to have an unending openness about it. Man, of course, always tries to delimit and demarcate the meaning of concepts as precisely as possible, and a large part of philosophical activity consists in attempting just this. But it is a vain exercise as it is the nature of linguistic reality to overflow these artificially created boundaries so carefully built by the effort of philosophers. The literary uses of language continuously collide with the effort which the philosophers make and generate an inbuilt tension between the image and the concept with which the

two deal with in the context of language. On the other hand, language "images" or mirrors that which it wants to convey, while on the other, it also wants not just to inform, but to create feelings and attitudes in those to whom the communication is being addressed. The informational and the evocative functions, thus, are simultaneously involved in the use of any language and these pull it in different directions. Literature arises out of this double tension in language and, hence, is always built on an inter-play between the informative and evocative aspects where the former is not only subsidiary, but is, in fact, used to create the latter. The whole façade of description is thus a deception deliberately used to create something else which is the primary purpose of what is being said and that is why it is called "literature" and considered an art form.

But literature is not the only art form which language gives rise to. There is another which, however, has never been regarded as such, perhaps for the reason that the idea of art itself has been too narrowly conceived and confined to only certain forms. This other art form which language gives rise to, but which has not generally been recognized as such, is philosophy. Philosophy builds its world on the basis of the concept which also is an integral part of language and which, in fact, arises because of the intrinsic nature of language itself. Words have a universality which hardly anything else has. Not only this, they have only a tenuous relationship with that which they refer to, and many a time it is

not even clear as to what it refers to. The concept that the word embodies is, thus, not only unexhausted by any particular instance of what it refers to, but also by the set of all those objects which it refers to and which is inexhaustible in principle. The point is that the universality of the concept ensures not only that no finite set of particulars ever illustrates or exhibits it completely, but also that they illustrate it only in a more or less complete form, thus opening an ideal dimension which normally remains hidden in all non-linguistic art forms and even in linguistic art-forms which are not primarily conceptual in nature. It is, of course, true that literature as a linguistic art form uses concepts just as it uses images and descriptive reference of language, but it uses all these, including the conceptual dimension of language to evoke a non-conceptual world which is primarily centered in feelings or emotions. Thus, though language is used both in literature and philosophy, it is used for radically different purposes and hence the "worlds" that they create are also totally different in nature. Literary forms generally are used to create a self-contained world of feeling where no questioning is supposed to arise. It is a state where the questioning activity of consciousness is suspended. On the other hand, the world which philosophy creates is not only built on the basis of the questioning activity of consciousness and the doubts that it involves, but is itself constituted by the dynamic unfoldment of concepts in their inter-relationships where each step in the construction not only actualizes a hidden possibility but also reveals the inadequacy and inner inconsistency of what has been

conceptually realized, thus challenging to a further exploration which might overcome the inadequacies and the inconsistencies so revealed. Images also have an inherent dynamism of their own and reveal their explosive hidden possibilities when they are juxtaposed in unexpected interrelationship with other images, but these never have that character of questioning for the revelation of inner inadequacies and inconsistencies which provide the dynamic momentum for the construction of the conceptual world through philosophical activity.

However, as both literature and philosophy use language which is supposed to have primarily a descriptive-informative dimension which is said to give us "knowledge" about the world which is given to us by the senses; they are also inevitably ascribed a cognitive dimension which, however, is always difficult to specify. Literature faces this problem only obliquely as it self-consciously proclaims the primacy of its non-cognitive function. Philosophy, on the other hand, never does so. On the contrary, it considers itself to be the cognitive activity par excellence, the only one that tries to understand the whole in its totality and integrating. This it does because it deals with concepts, and concepts *are* the stuff out of which knowledge is built. But, though this is natural, it forgets that while in most of the cognitive disciplines concepts are used instrumentally, in philosophy they themselves are the objects on which the supposed cognitive activity is exercised. However, though ostensibly the concepts appear to be the subject matter of

an analysis which seems to be cognitive in character, the exploration of the concept is more akin to the poet's exploration of the image and the hidden meanings lying within it. This has generally not been noticed and philosophy has been considered not as an art-form, but as a cognitive activity akin to the sciences. This misunderstanding of the nature of philosophy has puzzled the philosophers themselves and many of them have felt that most of the philosophical problems arise because of a "mis-use" of language, or because one has not sufficiently distinguished what ought to have been distinguished or made a distinction where one ought not to have done so. Philosophy thus has been proclaimed as a disease of the language or as an activity which arises when language takes a holdiday from its natural function. But this is to forget that language it always taking a holiday from its supposedly "natural" function, as one may observe in the perennial tendency to joke or embellish even in the reporting of what has occurred or taken place, or the modalities in which one greets or addresses or engages in a conversation with people. These are not departures from the natural use of language; rather these *are* the natural uses or modes in which language is used and the purely informative use of language as is sought to be attempted in the pure cognitive discourse of language is an unnatural departure for which one has to make a special effort and for which one has to be trained. But even in science, the natural modes of speech continuously intrude, except when it uses the purely formal language of mathematics.

To understand the nature of language, therefore, one has to go not to the pure sciences, but to literature and philosophy where language exercises its pure creative function and tries to become independent of the first-level world to which it is supposed to be necessarily bound by those who have usually written on the philosophy of language. Here language has the colours, the nuances and the shades which normally are required to paint a new picture, just as people are misled to think that the primary function of painting is to reproduce the world that is outside it or to portray it, forgetting that it is only its secondary task, the primary function being to create an independent world of its own. The purely informative use of language is as colourless, odorless and tasteless as distilled water. Austin had drawn our attention to the "performative" use of language where the exercise of language itself beings a "reality" into being which without that exercise, would never have been there. The paradigmatic example of such a constitutive function of language is usually given in the utterance of a "promise" which, when made in appropriate circumstances, brings the "reality" of promising into being. In fact, this "reality-constituting" function has not been given sufficient attention in spite of Austin's efforts to focus attention upon it. Yet, such a function is not something external or accidental or marginal as is generally assumed. Instead, it *is* the central function of language in its primary mode of being in which consciousness creates the world where man lives and with reference to which he defines his being. *Vak* was the nane given to this primary mode of language by

the ancient seers of the Rg Veda and even in the Biblical tradition it is said that "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God."

But once one accepts that language and its primary mode of being is creative in character, then the question naturally arises as to what the relationship of this function is to that other function of language which seems as fundamental and primary as this is. This is the communicative function of language, and "communication" pre-supposes the "other", even if the other is sometimes the self itself. As normally the other is a conscious or self-conscious being, the communication demands a response which at least in the case of human beings involves the use of language, even though it may not be the only way in which the response is made. Communication thus, is a two-way affair and hence the use of language should be seen primarily not only in terms of creation, but as an invitation to the other to jointly create something which was not there before. This function of language as an invitation to other to the participate in a joint act of creating a world has seldom been paid attention to, even though it is continuously going on around us all the time. In fact, the communicative act even with the animal world partakes to some extent of this, as one knows in one's relationship with one's pets. Not only this, even with an infant who can hardly speak, one does this all the time. Yet, those who have written and reflected on language have hardly written about this aspect.

Language, however, is part of a wider expression of consciousness through every medium at its command of which the primary exemplar is the body. There has recently been much talk of the "intentionality" of the body, but it is the intentionality of consciousness that expresses itself both through the language and the infinitely nuanced expressions and culturally modulated gestures of the body. Neither the language nor the expressions and gestures are identical or the same with all human being. As everyone knows, there is not one language, but languages, and similarly the ways of expressing intentionality through the body are as various as societies and cultures. Thus, if both language and bodily gestures are seen as invitations to create jointly a world, then the differences in language and styles of bodily gestures would be seen as attempts to create different kinds of worlds, even though the basic mechanisms underlying the capacities for generating language and bodily gestures may be the same in all human beings.

But, ironically, the messages sent through language and through bodily gestures may be conflicting and generally what is conveyed through bodily gestures is taken to be more true to the intentionality of consciousness than that which is conveyed through language. One may, as is well known, deceive through the language that one uses, though it is not as easy to do so through the bodily gestures which betray one's real intentions than is generally the case with language. Yet, one may "learn" to

manipulate the body just as one does in the case of language. The art of "acting" does just this and though it is difficult to transpose it into natural contexts, one may do it as in the case of diplomats and politicians.

Nevertheless, while all this is true to a certain extent, consciousness itself may not be very clear about its own intentionality and hence generally the communicative act, whether it be through language or bodily gesture, or anything else, gives it a far more definiteness than it generally has. One may try to deceive, but the art of deception is as difficult to learn and practice as is the case with all the other arts. And, in any case, one cannot practice an art all the time.

The invitation to create, thus, is itself embedded in an ambiguous situation where the ambiguity inherent in the intentionality of consciousness is further compounded by the ambiguities of the communicative medium and the skill which one has in practicing it. The description of the situation is, however, misleading as it suggests a clear-cut division between the different stages of a process which is continuous and where the one not only merges into the other, but itself gets modified through reaction to it. One may become aware than one has not "expressed" oneself correctly, or the expression itself may reveal to oneself what one was intending to convey more clearly that one had thought before. The ambiguous dialectic of such a situation where the intentionality of consciousness is itself affected by the

communicative act is perhaps seen more clearly in the case where one writes a poem or creates a work of art. The image or the metaphor or the turn of the phrase in a poetic composition suggests the direction that the poetic intention may take as it suggests possibilities which may not have been there before the image or the simile occurred to one who was engaged in the art of writing.

The same appears to be true in the case of the other arts also. A painter when he starts painting may have only a vague idea of what he wants to do, but as he draws the line or puts the colour, it itself suggests what could be done with it. The interaction between the intentionality of consciousness and the expressive art may vary in the case of different arts and with different types belonging to the same art. Yet, the element of interaction is always there, though its degree may vary at different moments and with different people.

The distinction between the "expressive" and the "communicative" act has generally not been noted, even though there is a radical difference between them. In the communicative act, it is the recipient of the communication who is the centre of attention and whose specific nature determines the communication to a significant degree. On the other hand, in the expressive act it is the subject whose feelings, emotions, intentions, thoughts, etc. are the centre of attention and the so-

called "audience" or the one who is addressed, is only marginally present.

Besides the creativity revealed in both the acts of communication and expression, there is that which is revealed in and through action. Action, of course, presupposes both communication and expression, but goes beyond them in transforming the world itself in a direction that is considered to be desirable for one reason or other. The transformations that are effected through the creation of works of art involve "action" of a certain sort, but both the action and the result it is expected to achieve are self-consciously meant to stand apart from that which one considers to be the "real" world. And, that is why the aesthetic creations of man are segregated into museums, art galleries and other such places where one visits them occasionally when one can take a holiday from the "real" world which they are supposed to embellish by their presence without taking any real part in it. Action, on the other hand, deals with he world directly and tries to infuse imagination into it in such a way that whatever is brought into being through it becomes an integral part of "reality" itself and not stand as segregated from it to be looked at, appreciated and enjoyed only on the condition that the "real" world allows it or does not interfere with it.

The realm of creativity, therefore, is ultimately to be found not in the imaginative creations of man nor the elaborate constructions of thought that he has mode, or even in the meditative worlds into

which he has withdrawn; but in the intersubjective world that he continuously creates by his interaction with others who, in a certain sense, are the joint creators of this world. The creation is always unfinished, as it continues all the time and demands both sensitivity and imagination along with an awareness of the imperfections of what has been created so that they may be removed, modified or overcome to a certain extent by invoking the resources of joint action once more.

Action, at least at the human level, presupposes not only the functioning of the motor organs of the body and the mind with its multitudinous desires which seek fulfilment but also a sense of rightness" or "appropriateness" along with a vision of values without which it will cease to be "human" at all. Besides this, there is some knowledge of causality implying that if one does something then most probably something else will follow. The structure of action through which all creativity operates at the human level thus presupposes not only the body and the mind and the imagination, but also a sense of values which has both a moral and an aesthetic dimension in it. The former concerns the "other" or "others" towards whom the action is directed, while the latter is concerned with the form of action itself. However, as action is almost always performed in concert with others and as the script is always open and indeterminate to a large extent, there is an essential indeterminacy in it which demarcates it radically from a dramatic performance which is its closest analogue at the level of

what are called the performing arts. The challenge to creativity in the field of action, then, is radically different from the one that one encounters in what are considered to be the paradigmatic realms where human creativity is supposed to be manifested. It is, of course, true that the socio-cultural habits and norms provide one with an unwritten script to guide one in one's inter-personal interaction which normally occurs in institutional frameworks or fairly defined situations when it occurs outside them. But these only provide a flexible and shifting framework within which the situations change continuously, challenging one's ingenuity to create something that is both meaningful in itself and yet contributes to the realization of a value that is outside itself. Also, as other persons are almost always involved directly in the situation, one has to take care that the intrinsic value of their being is not violated and that, wherever possible, their intrinsic good is realized or fostered to some extent. There is, thus, always the aesthetic, the teleological and the moral dimensions involved in action and the creativity has to be structured simultaneously in each of these three dimensions in such a way that they form some sort of a coherent whole or at least do not go counter to one another.

The problem of creativity in action is far more complicated as it is mostly performed in the pursuit of interests or even values which belong to one particular group and are conceived of in such a way that they are to be pursued even when this occurs at the

expense of others. The clearest example of this occurs in the political realm where the interests of the polity or the nation-state is seen not only as over-riding everything else, but also conceived in such a way as to necessarily involve the impossibility of the realization of that value by other polities or nation-states.

Any identification with a group thus tends to jeopardise the realization of value at the deepest level just as one's own identification with one's empirical self tends to do when it is conceived in such a way as to exclude others. This may occur even at the transcendental level where one aspires to de-identify oneself with all that is given to consciousness as the "other". The only way out of the dilemma, at least at the theoretical level is to conceive of oneself, at every level of its identification as subserving the interests and values of the "other" or, at least as not harming them in any essential manner. Man has sought to overcome these limitations by seeking larger and larger identifications till one feels oneself as belonging not only to humankind but also to all living beings so that one feels an essential relationship with them.

The expanding circles of identification and the converse process when one narrows oneself to the concrete present situation in which one finds oneself are thus the two poles of consciousness that are simultaneously present in action which always occurs in the present and is oriented to the given specificity of the situation present in it and yet is imbued by the vague apprehension of something that is to be actualized or realized through it. The self-

conscious awareness of these two extreme poles of consciousness and their presence in action might help to save oneself from the perversities of "ego-centredness" at whatever level, on the one hand, and the futility of pure romantic idealism on the others, as the latter ignores the specificity of the situation in which all action takes place.

The consciousness thus has almost opposed dimensions, the presuppositions of which are diametrically different from one another. The knowing consciousness cannot but treat the object as "given", while consciousness as involved in action can only see it as something to be changed or transformed in the direction of what it considers to be "better". At the level of feeling it is neither concerned with knowing the object as it is or in changing it in any specific way except when it sees it as producing a state of feeling in one which one considers to be unwelcome. The object is seen here purely instrumentally; what matters is the state of feeling itself. However, this instrumentality of the object in the context of feeling transforms human action and gives a radically different direction to action from the one it takes when it seeks a value which essentially involves the other.

The diverse relationship with the object that consciousness has in its modalities of what are usually called "knowing", "feeling", and "willing", and the transcendental presuppositions and structures that are involved in these different relationships along with the interrelationships between them, defines the human

condition in both its transcendent and immanent aspects. The complexity that this introduces into the human situation is literally unimaginable and the fact that consciousness may give primacy in its functioning to one or the other, along with the fact that self-consciousness can make this whole situation an object to itself and thus distance itself from it, introduces new dimensions into the situation which, even without them, has depths which seem unfathomable in principle.

Few thinkers have kept simultaneously all these dimensions into equal focus in their thinking and hence much of what they have said has been so one-sided as to distort, rather than illuminate, the human situation. It seems that by their choice and emphasis on only some aspects, while ignoring all the others, they want to make their readers forget that there are dimensions other than the ones that they are talking about. This is done perhaps in the belief that the aspects they have chosen to focus their attention upon, are the only ones that are worthwhile or the only ones which "ought" to be the subject of active pursuit by the humankind. Even those who have tried to spread their net as widely as possible, have generally done it in such a way as to give predominance to only one dimension and therein only to some aspects, and treat all the rest as subordinate or subservient to it. The only exception to this that I know of is K.C. Bhattacharya, the most original thinker that India has produced in the twentieth century. He has talked of "alternative absolutes" immanent in the three dimensions of

consciousness, that is, knowing, feeling and willing and treated each of them as *equally* valid and worthy of human pursuit. But even he has not seen that each of the different 'absolutes' involved in these three dimensions has in it many alternative varieties and that one has the choice to engage in the realization of any of them and such a choice is never irreversible, as he seems to think. The consciousness that chooses between alternatives is never bound by the choice it has made, at least at the transcendental level, even if it may be true that once one has made a choice, because of whatever reason, one is naturally inclined to pursue it because of the empirical conditions that one has created by one's choice. These involve not only the external conditions that come into being because of the action that one undertakes to actualize the choice but also the psychological propensities which the choice itself generates in the psyche. Beyond this, there is the fact that one is always aware of the 'absolutes' immanent in the other dimensions of one's being which equally demand their actualization, at least to some extent, if one is to be a full and complete human being with all that is involved in the human situation.

Kalidas Bhattacharya, who is perhaps the only person who tried to develop K.C. Bhattacharya's thought in a new direction has, however, been too obsessed by the notion of "alternation" and the feeling that if one has chosen one alternative, one cannot choose the other. Also, neither of them seem to be aware that there is an indefinite variety in the "ideals" involved in the dimensions of

knowing, feeling and willing, and that there are not just three alternative 'absolutes' as they seem to think, but that within each of these "absolutes" there is an indefinite multiplicity of 'absolutes' which "exclude" the realization of the others even within that realm if any one of them has been sought to be realized. The "exclusion" is not only due to the temporal limitation that if one is sought to be realized, the other cannot be even attempted to be actualized because one cannot simultaneously try to attempt both, given the structural limitation of time itself in which all action has to be performed. But beyond the limitation imposed by the very structure of temporality which is a transcendental presupposition of the notion of action, the very content and direction of the diversity in the realizations within the same domain also ensures that if one is sought to be pursued, the other cannot be pursued also, at least to the same extent.

The deeper limitation of the thought of both the Bhattacharyas, however, lies in the fact that they have conceived of the choice between the "alternative absolutes" as having a finality about it which, in fact, it never has. It is not that the choice is made for once and all, and that one cannot choose to give it up or return to pursue what had been temporarily given up for some reason or other. The choices in the realm of the spirit are not either absolute or final, as one is always aware of the route that one has not taken and the fact that what one had given up has resulted in a limitation of one's personality in that dimension. Also, it is never

a question of either/or as both the Bhattacharyas seem to think, but rather of what is to be treated as dominant and what is subsidiary in relation to one's own personality. In fact, even in the realm of knowledge, the intrinsic diversity of the objects that one seeks to know and the different methodologies that are adequate to the understanding of different types of objects imposes a limitation on the type of knowledge that one chooses to pursue. The same is true in the realm of action and the realm of feeling also. Each of these realms is infinite and the levels, shades and nuances lend them an unimaginable rich diversity which all those who have sought to deeply investigate and "live" in any of them well know. The hazy borderlands between them and the constant interactions that always take place between them, add a dimension of their own.

The basic mistake of both the Bhattacharyas lies in the fact that they build their construction on the supposedly paradoxical relation between consciousness and the content of consciousness. This may or may not be so, for ultimately a paradox or a problem is what one feels to be so. But the deeper problematic which consciousness raises and on which everything else is founded, is the fact that consciousness can attend to anything whatsoever, and through this act of attention make it alive and real for itself and treat it as a world infinite both in depth and extent. Yet, it can withdraw from all this and reduce it to an utter nullity, a nothingness. It is, of course true, that both the freedom to attend

and to withdraw are limited by factors that we do not quite understand, but there can be little doubt that both the freedoms exist and, in a sense, define the very structure of consciousness as we know it. The outward movement of consciousness is coeval with the notion of "awakening", as it brings life into being with its rich multiplicity of colours and sounds, tastes and smells, and all the rest which goes with it. The movement of withdrawal is embodied in the desire to sleep, to lie down, to close one's eyes and let all sounds cease so that nothing may disturb this falling into oblivion. The cycle of waking and sleeping is perhaps a part of a larger cycle of being born and dying, just as there are the still smaller cycles of breathing in and out and other such activities of the body which maintain the process of living. Even the mind and the intellect and all the other faculties in man such as imagination and action have their cycles too. And one always knows the tiredness which makes one want the cessation of that which one enthusiastically welcomed and enjoyed, only to get tired once again of being tired itself and plunge once again into the joy of the outward movement which creates multiplicity and the infinite relations with it.

The life of the cosmos itself has been seen in this way in the Indian tradition and creation the awakening of the Lord from deep sleep and the ultimate dissolution of everything as a return into that sleep once again. Toynbee has seen the rise and fall of civilizations in a similar manner and postulated its roots in the withdrawal-and-return of creative men of genius who successfully

responded to the challenges of the times and fell so much in love with the responses they had made, that they or their successors continued to make the some responses even when the situation had changed, thus leading to the failure and decline of the civilization itself.

Whatever may be the meaning of these symbolic myths or their correlation with the cycles of days and nights, sleeping and waking, birth and death, creation and dissolution, the point remains that one intimately knows in one's consciousness the twin movement and the two directions which pull one alternatively in opposite directions. Each of the directions has infinite "worlds" within itself and the journey in both the directions is fascinating in more ways than one. The road to sleep is lined with dreams and the road to awakening with the colour of the dawn and the songs of the birds. The dreams, of course, may become nightmares and the songs of the birds turn into the shriek of the hawk, but even if it is so, it is more because of the fears in the psyche that loses faith in the turn and return of everything and does not know how to wait for the unpleasant moment to pass and the fulfilling moment to return. Beyond the duality of the two movements and the myriad turns and twists that the twin journeys may take, there is the fact of "something" underlying it all of which one is vaguely aware all the time and which makes one realize that in comparison with it, it all is a shadow-play, a *maya* or a *lila*, the deeper purpose of which one cannot understand. The awareness, however does not

substantially affect the movement either way or the problems that they pose for the consciousness that is involved in them. At best, it imparts a marginal touch of detachment, a tangential awareness which distances one from the involvement in a manner the effect of which is difficult to determine. In fact, there is a strange insularity that somehow seems to govern the relationships between the levels at which one lives, or of which one is aware. What occurs at one level hardly seems to affect other levels and it appears that one inhabits many different worlds with little intercommunication between them. This is well known in respect to the generalized division between the realms of knowing, feeling and action. All the knowledge that one may have hardly affects the way one feels about things or behaves in concrete situations. Similarly, one may show the utmost sensitivity and subtlety in response to works of art or nature and yet may behave with utmost indifference or even cruelty to human beings, and be dishonest in one's relationship with them. What is still more surprising is the fact that even within the same domain, one may show sensitivity and concern and discrimination with respect to certain aspects or realms while being utterly crude and non-discriminating in realms which are closely allied. One may, for example, show great taste in one's response to music but may have very poor sensibility in respect to literature. Or it may be just the reverse. Nothing guarantees that one's training and tastes and judgement will spill over to other realms, however close they may seem to be to an objective observer. Even in the realm of knowledge one may be highly

sceptical and critically believe only on the basis of strong evidence and strong argument in one field, while at the same time, one may be credulous enough, or even just superstitious about fields other than the one in which one adopts self-consciously a critical attitude. Science and superstition are not opposed to each other; for one's being "scientific" in one domain does not ensure that one will not be superstitious with respect to other realms. Even a Socrates may believe in oracles and a Descartes may undertake a journey to a sacred shrine in the belief that some good will come to him because of it. A Newton may believe in hell and an Einstein may have faith that God does not play dice with men. These are well-known examples and one can multiply then to one's heart's content. The chasm between belief and action is well known and the inconsistencies in behaviour are there for all to see, though it is surprising that one seldom sees them in oneself. The point is that there seem to be invisible barriers which somehow keep such realms, or even a part of each realm, self-enclosed ensuring it an autonomy of its own where it can be pursued or lived in or cultivated in terms of the ideals immanent in it.

The autonomy and insularity of realms, however, is not complete as it can always become the object of self-consciousness and one may become aware of the fact that the development in one field or even in one sub-section of that field does not match the development in other fields. Such an awareness can lead both to humility and a desire to develop one-self in other fields as well, at

least to some extent. The awareness is salutary in the sense that it leads not only to the consciousness of one's own shortcomings, but also to the recognition that others are superior to one in many respects and that one can always learn from them if one wishes to do so. The openness to perpetual learning is a feature of self-consciousness that has seldom been emphasized; nor has its relation to "equality in inequalities" been seen. The ideal of equality bequeathed by the French Revolution is illusory as neither in terms of quantity nor quality there is or can ever be equality amongst men. Nor can it he held as desirable for the pursuit of excellence which is the essence of man and the desire to surpass whatever has been achieved the motive force of all his actions. Equality can only be postulated in some metaphysical sense, but then it has no empirical relevance to man's actual condition as found in fact. In terms of "being", all beings are equal, but that is a vacuous equality and nothing is gained by asserting it.

Inequality, however, not only obtains between different beings at all levels, but is also to be found within each being at all the levels in which it lives. In fact, inequality is merely another name for difference and difference is the heart of the matter. Those who have asserted the reality of identity or its superiority to difference have done so only at the cost of denying all reality and value to the world we live in and the diverse experiences that we go through in it. The Advaita Vedantins are the best known protagonists of this denial of the reality of all difference and they have treated the

whole world as *maya*. The cost is too great and, in any case, unacceptable to anyone who cherishes or values the immense diversity at every level of being which is found in the world. Not only this, it denies also the very notion of "possibility" which opens horizons for man's effort at attaining what is not yet achieved and thus what is "different" from it. The notion of an "ideal" itself involves a difference from actuality, and without ideals life is not worth living. Thus the reality of difference is that which makes one move and without acknowledging its reality one would be dead.

In a deeper sense, the debate between those who have opted for identity alone as real and the ones who asserted the reality of difference is unmeaning, for one has to accept the reality of both as without such an acceptance, one cannot either meaningfully speak or make sense of one's experience. The assertion of difference does not deny the possibility of relation or even of similarity between those that are different. Thus similarity, relatedness and difference are three aspects of one and the same phenomenon, the other name of which is self-consciousness. Similarity assumes both identity and difference and relatedness is the over-coming of the illusoriness of the absoluteness of difference, while still preserving its reality within itself.

It is "relatedness", therefore, that is the heart of the matter and the exploration of the diverse forms that it takes, and may take, in its pursuit has to be seen so that one may understand human life as it finds itself in this world. The phrase "this world" or

as it is called in the Indian tradition "*loka*", does not deny the possibility of there being "other" worlds or other *lokas*. The term itself denotes such an awareness and the effect of self-consciousness ensures that one is always aware of that which transcends the essential limitations in which one lives and by which one's being is constituted or defined in a certain way. The awareness of the "Beyond", thus, not only haunts man's self-consciousness, but is also constitutive of it in a sense in which it perhaps constitutes no other being in the world. The "relationship" to this "sense of Beyond" which man's innermost being feels is, thus, the fundamental relationship underlying all other relationships that he has with the myriad beings which also exist in the same *loka* which he inhabits. How far this basic relationship affects the others, or is affected by them, has never been a matter of serious exploration on the part of those who have even remotely concerned themselves with this issue. But unless this is done, one cannot meaningfully articulate the human situation or understand it in such a way as to help men to make these relationships better, subtler and more profound.

The broad realms with which these relationships are concerned are well known as everyone distinguishes between animate and inanimate nature, and divides the former into the plant and the animal world and the animal world into that which is constituted by human beings and all the rest who do not belong to that class. The relationship with all these is a complex affair, but

where human beings are concerned, it is radically affected by two factors which generally have not been paid much attention to. These relate to the fact that each human being is self-conscious and hence directly relates to the transcendent in a relationship which does not occur in the case of other beings mentioned above. The other dimension of the difference lies in the fact that one is an "object" to all the others in the same way as they are "objects" to oneself. This simultaneity of being "subject" to oneself and an "object" to all the others results in the paradoxical situation where each in his self-consciousness is inevitably the centre of his world which only marginally exists for all the others, and that too, only so far, as it is relevant to their own concerns. The "ego-centric predicament" in the field of knowledge has been pointed out by some philosophers, but it has seldom been paid attention to in other fields, especially in the sense in which it constitutes the very being of man's self-consciousness as he finds himself in the world. It obtains equally in the realms of feeling and willing, as it does in the realm of knowing. It should, however, he distinguished from the sense of egoism about which so much has been written and talked about, especially in the context of morality. The ego-centric predicament results from the sense of "I-ness" which is inevitably a function of self-consciousness and remains with oneself even when one recognizes that others also have the same sense of "I-ness" that one has. One can, by an act of imagination, re-live the fact that the other is also the centre of his own world with a sense of I-ness that suffers from the same ego-centric predicament as one

does oneself. But, this is, and can be, only a momentary achievement which cannot, in principle, last very long. The relapse into one's own "self-centricity" is inevitable and thus we have the tragi-comic situation where each thinks and feels himself or herself to be the centre of the world and sees all others as primarily instrumental to the fulfillment of one's own desires, pursuits, including the achievement of what have been called the *purusarthas* in the Indian tradition. There is, of course, the pursuit of collective ends which can only be achieved by the joint co-operative effort where each has to contribute his or her own share in order that the collective end may be achieved. But even in this enterprise there is the paradoxical element involved in that, firstly, the collective end is seldom known except to the person or persons at the very top of the hierarchy and that there is generally a relation of subordination and superordination in the hierarchy so that collective ends may be achieved. This necessity of an a-symmetrical relation between persons involved in hierarchy cuts at the very root of that 'equality' which all human beings *qua* human beings generally claim, a claim ultimately termed from the fact that each is a "subject" to whom all the rest are objects, both in the epistemological and the metaphysical sense, as the later here is a function of the former. But the exigencies of collective action make one increasingly more often 'object' than a subject as one is primarily treated in terms of relationships where one does not, and cannot, be treated as an 'equal' except in some residual, tangential sense which may or may not be realized. There is, of course,

always the restoration of the relationship of 'equality', at least to a large extent, in relations of friendship and love which most people enjoy, however brief or transient they may be. Also, the asymmetrical relationship in which one is necessarily involved in complex hierarchical organizations evolved by man to achieve collective ends, generally permit one to be simultaneously a 'subject' to those inferior in the hierarchy, while being an 'object' to those who happen to be superior in it. The relative situation of being simultaneously a 'subject' and an 'object' in this context, however, is radically different than the one that obtains at the epistemological level which occurs as a result of the very structure of human consciousness at the self-conscious level. In the earlier case, on is being made an 'object' or even forced to be one as one has to do what someone else commands, particularly as he or she is 'authorized' to do so. It is thus more in the context of 'will' and 'action' that the relations of being a 'subject' and 'object' emerge here than in the 'context of knowledge' which has generally been the centre of the philosophical discussion uptill now. Both Hegel and Marx seem to have forgotten this essential difference in their treatment of the subject. The slave *is* a *slave* because he can be 'forced' to do what the master wants, even at the cost of his life. It is true that human conscience has always felt guilty about this and struggled to alleviate the situation, by talking of the 'rights' of a slave which could even be 'demanded' to be legally enforced by him. Yet, as everyone knows, the 'rights' even when accepted were only minimal in character and their enforcement was always at the

mercy of the stronger as is the case even now with those who talk of 'human rights' but violate them themselves.

The relations between beings who are 'self-conscious' are, thus, structurally determined by the fact that each of them happens to be simultaneously a 'subject' and an 'object' to the other. This relationship, however, is itself differentiated radically in the dimensions of knowing, feeling and action which seem to be so incommensurate that it is difficult to see how they can be reconciled in a unitary relationship which is demanded by the existential structure of the human reality itself. The dilemmas and the paradoxes in the realm of knowledge and action are clear for everyone to see, even though at the level of the former they are masked by the fact that differences in the realm of knowledge between self-conscious beings are not generally taken into account in the analysis and understanding of the basic 'epistemological' situation that obtains between them. The situation in the realm of feeling is far more complex and hence has hardly been paid any attention by thinkers as even those who have tried to think about this dimension of human reality have seen it primarily in terms of 'understanding', a task which is undertaken in the same way as one 'understands' other objects in the context of the enterprise of knowledge. But 'feelings' are not to be understood, at least in the same sense of 'understanding', as one does when the term is applied to inanimate matter, or a living being or even a cultural object which is a human creation. Feelings are 'lived' through, 'felt'

and existentially experienced in a way that nothing else is. The terms 'erleben' and 'einfuhulung' are as inadequate to convey the difference as the terms sympathy or empathy which primarily refer to a relationship with the other where one tries to relate in terms of feeling. But, the feeling as felt is different from the feeling as it relates to the 'feeling' in the other, just as the relation of one feeling to another, even in one's own 'lived' life, has a character different from the one that happens to the same feeling when it relates to the feeling in the other.

The realm of feelings, however, never attains and can not, in fact, ever attain in principle the 'definiteness' and 'coherence' which all knowledge attempts to attain and which action also tries to achieve, even if it never attains it completely. The incohateness and indefinitness which infects the world of feelings makes it thus impervious to both knowledge and action which continually try to affect and modify them in the light of what they consider as the 'ideal norm' of what they 'should', or even 'ought' to be. One is thus always confronted by the fact that the life of feelings one 'lives' and the 'world' one builds out of them is not only irrational but also violates one's own sense of what is 'right' and 'wrong' or 'good' and 'bad'. Pleasure and pain or attraction and aversion constitute the essence of this world. But, at the self-conscious level, a new dimension is added beyond the purely sensuous one which is determined by the structure of the living body in which one 'lives', and this is the dimension of feeling aroused by form in the context

of which the content is irrelevant. This is the world of beauty whose magical enchantment is known to everyone and yet one does realize that this is the one dimension which man has self-consciously pursued in the myriad creations in which and through which he has tried to create and control this world which, at least *prima facie*, seems uncontrollable in principle. But the world of art in all its forms seems insipid when confronted with the actually lived life of feelings which are engendered by the interactive relationships between man and the world and man and other men, structurally differentiated by age on the one hand and gender on the other. The latter has occupied the attention of everyone who has thought about the world of feelings, but the former is even more important for it constitutes the relation between the generations, the young and the old, the growing and the grown-ups and all that this involves. The process of learning and transmission of culture is mediated by these twin differences which structurally determine the world of feelings in which man lives. Strangely, the senses have primarily been seen in terms of the knowledge they provide at the level of perception and the so-called motor-organs have seen in terms of the activity they make possible but the *ihanendriyas* and the *karmendriyas* are primarily not the sources of knowledge or action but those through which man enters into a relationship with the world and 'enjoys' it through feelings that are the life-breath of all that pulsates with the breath or *prana* that pervades the universe. But, even those who have seen it in this way, as the Indian thinkers belonging to *bhogayatana* school seem

to have done, have forgotten that it is not the self which is the centre but the relationship with the other which constitutes the world of feelings and hence, the self-by-itself or the self in isolation will not only be imprisoned in itself but also be intrinsically incapable of 'building' the world of feelings in which it wants to live. Neither the *advaitin* nor the Samkhyan nor the Naiyayika are, thus, capable of understanding the nature of the self or the world it wants to build and 'live' in. As for the Buddhists and the Jains, they hardly will ever understand the world built out of relationships as what they seek is absolute unrelatedness where even the possibility of a relation can not, in principle, exist. The Ideal of the Bodhisatva may appear as disconfirming what we have said, but neither *maitri* nor *karma* nor *ahimsa* can ever attain the symmetrical relationship of equality which the creative act of building a world of "feeling in togetherness" demands. Islam, strictly speaking, can not accept the notion of 'creation' on the part of man outside or beyond the world built by *Allah* who, surprisingly, gave up his concern with the world after sending his prophet, Mohammad and declaring him to be the last of them and thus disclaiming the possibility of any further creativity in Himself. And, Christianity's obsession with the cross and the sacrifice of the son of God on it even if it was for the love of mankind only mirrors the 'compassion' of the Buddha for suffering humanity which essentially has to suffer. None of them accepts man as he is *in* the world bound by the necessity of being born and growing up and dying and yet, building and creating the world ever anew in

relationship with all other beings, living and non-living, internally divided on the basis of qualities belonging to the body, the mind, the intellect and consciousness and which, in man, becomes simultaneously self-consciousness of itself and the world, and or that which underlies and envelopes them both.

The truth, as objectively seen as possible, is thus that everything, including man, exists in inter-relationship with others, an 'interrelationship' that changes both in a perpetually interactive manner. But, in spite of this, each one considers itself not only as an isolated, closed, unchanging centre, but also as something to which all 'relationships' are adventitious, accidental and hence un-necessary. They are, to use the well-known advaitic terms, *upadhis*, that is, something which is super-imposed on, and hence in essentially illusory in character. Not only this, consciousness considers itself to be transparent and identical with that which is conveyed by the term knowledge and joy or a state of feeling which may be described as simultaneously peaceful and blissful in character. But, consciousness, as everyone knows, varies all the time and is sometimes clear and sometimes confused or dimmed or even sullied and also bored with itself. What is even more intriguing is that it is continually affected by other 'consciousnesses' with whom it comes into a relationship which might itself be positive or negative in nature.

The structural and transcendental illusions involved in consciousness and self-consciousness thus, need to be explored so

that the human situation may become aware of these and deal with them in order to both mitigate their undesirable effects and creatively enhance those which have a positive effect not only on itself but on the inter-relationship that it has with others. Some of these illusions we have already referred to in our previous discussion on the subject. The most fundamental illusions that operate at the level of self-consciousness which defines the human reality consist however, in what may be described in one word as 'being' that which one is not and can never be, that is, God. Omniscience and omnipotence are the usual features of this illusion and it has been formulated as the ultimate truth about man in the Indian tradition in the notion of the *sarvajna* and in the well-known *upanisadic* saying *'Aham Brahmasmi'* Both these terms involve a relationship which is denied ultimately in the illusion of the 'self' in self-consciousness as being self-sufficient to itself. This is the illusion enshrined in the notion of the *kevalin,* so dear to the Indian analyst, whether in the Jain or the Samkhyan or the Advaitic tradition. Not only the world is negated, but even other living beings including those who are, like oneself, proclaiming themselves to be *Brahman* or *Sarvajna.* An illusion deeper than even these is that the self-consciousness is intrinsically capable of being not only self-sufficient, but self-fulfilled in itself. This illusion has been formulated in the Indian tradition both negatively and positively which are fundamentally two different ways of saying the same thing. The negative formulation is made in the notion of *atyantic dukh a nivrtti,* while the positive formulation is made in

terms of *ananda* and that which is called *santa*. The former connotes the absolute denial of the very possibility of suffering ever occurring in consciousness; the second connotes an ever blissful state of consciousness or a state that is ever at peace with itself.

Transcendental Illusions

Chapter-3

The Human situation is structured by the fact that it is not only conscious of everything else, put also capable of being 'self-conscious' about it. The dual relationship of consciousness to everything else, and of self-consciousness to consciousness thus determines the human situation in both its structural and transcendental aspect. The illusions that both these aspects generate have been indicated to some extent in the previous chapters. But unless the structural aspects of these two foundational relationships is articulated clearly and the distinction between the 'given' and 'pre-supposed' is clarified, the structural and transcendental illusions involved in the situation can not be grasped even in a minimal manner.

However, the very idea of a determinate 'structure' does not seem applicable in the situation, even though the almost axiomatic truth that if something 'is', then it must have a "structure", must apply to this case also. The reflexivity involved in this situation makes it doubly difficult as it is an exercise which appears to be self-defeating because of the seeming self-contradiction involved in it. How can one ever 'know' what one is, or the limits which one can not trespass, for it's trespassing then would mean to become what one is not or, in other words, to destroy one's own being.

Yet, the very nature of consciousness and self-consciousness tempt one to attempt this seemingly 'impossible' task, for how can one know one's limits, unless one goes on trying and find that one can not go further and that something restricts or stops one's movement forward.

The restriction or the stoppage, however, never seems to be final as there is always some flexibility about them and the so-called 'limitation' may be only a temporary one due to deficiencies in oneself or the effort one has made to overcome them. There is, thus, an attitude of self-consciousness to itself and to its relation to consciousness which seems to determine the exercise of the discovery of the structure at both those levels which 'determine' the illusions projected by them.

The "self-centricity" generated by self-consciousness provides that first illusion which seems to be intrinsically in built in the very nature of the phenomenon itself. The very fact that everything is an object to consciousness and that one can negate the 'being' of everything else by just becoming unaware of it or by withdrawing one's consciousness from it, ensures that the only being that has a self-evident necessity about it is that of one's own self which alone seems to have the ground of its being within itself as it can not be negated or denied without involving one in an existential self-contradiction.

Everything can be doubted or denied or negated or reduced to an absolute nullity except oneself. Philosophical thought everywhere has built itself on this foundational illusion which is 'given' as an indubitable fact to consciousness by its very nature and which it is impossible for it to deny at the level of self-consciousness unless it reflects on the fact that there is such a thing as unconsciousness and that the term is not vacuous in character. If there is such a thing as unconsciousness and if the phrase 'I can be unconscious' is not a contradiction in terms then one may realize the illusoriness of that which seems to be transparently given in the act of self-consciousness.

The 'I' that seems to be so self-evidently and indubitably given is revealed by a transcendental critique to be a projection of the necessity of attributing the self-consciously apprehended states of consciousness to some substantial entity which is designated by different names in different traditions of thinking. The Buddhists grasped this but failed to see that the 'necessity' of such a postulation is involved in the very act of self-consciousness and that its negation can only be at a theoretical level for most persons.

The Buddhists' attempt to existentially realize the 'illusoriness of the 'I' as given in the act of self-consciousness reveals a possibility undreamt of by Kant in his expositions of the transcendental critique of that which seems to be indubitably 'given' in sense experience and the act of thinking at the human level. The Buddhist analysis, however, fails to distinguish between

that which is transcendentally pre-supposed and that which is only a complex construction at the level of experience. To treat everything as a *vikalpa* fails to distinguish between different types and levels of *vikalpa* and, in any case, does not grasp that activity of consciousness which gives rise to these complex constructions. Not only this, it does not address itself to the inherent differences in the elements out of which the complex constructions are made, even though it shows some awareness of the problem in its doctrine of momentariness. Strangely the Buddhist thinkers do not seem to have realized that the so-called "*ksana*" or moment of reality was itself the result of an analysis and was not 'given' in experience. Not only this, it pre-supposes the category of time which does not seem to have been an object of analysis in the Buddhist tradition. In fact, the relation of consciousness to temporality has, as far as I know, not been the subject of philosophical reflection, particularly, as neither consciousness, nor self-consciousness been subjected to a self-reflexive analysis.

Time, of course, has been treated as the form of inner sensibility by Kant, but even if this be accepted self-consciousness in making 'consciousness' the 'object' of its awareness would also make "time", in some sense, the object to itself. This, Kant did not see. Nor did he see that once self-consciousness becomes an 'actuality', 'time' undergoes a transformation rendering the objectification of consciousness almost impossible in principle. We just do not know how time operates at the level of consciousness in

animals where it presumably does not become the object of self-consciousness and where it is submerged in the dynamic process of 'living' itself. "Lived" time may be, and perhaps is, different from the way time is involved in non-living processes. Yet, the transformation that takes place in the experience of time when self-consciousness emerges at the human level, not only brings the distinctions of the past, the present and the future in it but also brings both memory and imagination into play so that the present itself is suffused by them both in a manner that only the literary artists have been able to convey. Besides this, and, to some extent, because of this the experienced time at this level becomes both diaphanous and acquire a stretchable flexibility which normally is not associated with the way it has ordinarily been conceptualized. Meditative consciousness which is only a further development of the reflexive activity involved in the relations of self-consciousness to consciousness brings out this aspect more clearly than is apprehended in the ordinary day-to-day level of human living.

The self-reflexive activity evinced at the level of meditative consciousness consists in stopping the continuously fluctuating movement of consciousness which seems to be natural to it either because of the influence of all the sensory stimuli that pour on it all the time or because of the innumerable desires which emanate from the fact of 'living' itself and the memories it engenders in one's mind. The meditative consciousness as an exercise of self-consciousness itself seems actively to interfere with this seeming

'natural' state of consciousness and is surprised to find that what it considered as natural was not really so. Consciousness can be 'stilled', at least for some time, and when one experiences it in that way, one feels that it has a deeper reality which one had not suspected before.

In fact, between the ordinary day to day level at which consciousness generally operates at the human level and the meditative consciousness there are still other levels which provide an inkling of the state which meditative consciousness brings into being and of which it perhaps gives the first taste to what can be experienced at these levels. All these in-between states are marked by a cessation of ordinary temporality in which consciousness lives along with the simultaneous cessation of the continuous fluctuation which is such a normal feature of it combined with an intensity of concentration where one almost forgets everything else. The one-pointed attention which is such a normal feature of all conscious activity directed by self-consciousness as in, say, intellectual thinking or artistic creation or even action when one is engaged in a 'battle' with an opponent, displays such a feature which comes out as openly as possible and yet, the significance of such an experience which is fairly common has hardly been realized or reflected upon.

The dispersal and concentration of consciousness which occurs at all these levels, however, always occurs in the service of an end which consciousness has chosen for some reason or which

has been chosen for it by circumstances over which it has no control. The meditative movement of consciousness occurs when one begins to realize the irrelevance of the end in the context of which such a state of consciousness occurs and one is fascinated by or falls in love with the 'state' itself believing that this is the highest reality or the most valuable thing one can possibly realize through an activity purely dependent on oneself. The 'narcissism' that it involves has seldom been seen, for it seems to be so existentially real and valuational at the same time that it is difficult, if not impossible, to feel negatively about it, or even to judge it to be so. Also, as there are no 'personal' ends involved, one can hardly call it 'narcissism' or consider it 'self-centred' in any undesirable sense of the term.

By a strange twist, the transcendental 'I' which was experienced to be given in self-consciousness now seems to be existentially realized or actualized in the meditative consciousness as all objects have fallen away or cease to 'be' both in the context of knowledge and action. Not only this, they seem to be 'drained' of all 'reality' and 'value' as in comparison with that which is experienced when all 'objectivity' has fallen away from consciousness, at least to the extent it is possible, the 'world' which was felt as full of life and meaningfulness appears to be totally meaningless now. At a deeper level still, the self-reflection on the experience, if it ever happens, suggests that it was the

consciousness that endowed the world with all the colours that shown so brightly in it.

The varieties, the levels and the depths, both at the horizontal and the vertical levels of consciousness when it centres upon itself, though explored in the mystical literature of the world and at times philosophically reflected upon by certain extraordinarily self-conscious persons, has seldom been critically examined or evaluated as an 'object', as the very possibility of doing so has been denied almost by definition by those who have written on it. Yet, the fact that the 'mystic' is not an isolated, self-enclosed monadic person but 'exists' not only in a community of others who are generally known as his disciples and is himself in a tradition where he learned at the feet of a master from whom he is supposed to have received the discipline and the training which has led him to the experience which, paradoxically, denies the 'reality' of that which was bequeathed to him by others and which he bequeathes to others, attests to something different. The denial of the 'other', both in terms of reality and value which lies at the heart of the 'self-centric' experience of the 'I', is an existential contradiction which the actual life of the so-called masters denies and contradicts at every step.

The deeper question however is: Why was the reality and the value of the 'other' to be denied by the self-grounding reality and value of self-consciousness when such a denial flies in the face of facts known to everyone, including those who deny it. The one

answer perhaps is that the 'other' is seldom conceived as the 'real' other, that is, as one who is also self-conscious like oneself and to whom one is as much an object as the 'other' is to oneself. The denial of all that is supposed to be inanimate and material comes easily to the philosophical mind in spite of the fact that one has a living body with all that it involves. Even the denial of the living object is easy to come by as they mostly occur at the margins or the periphery of one's consciousness. The problem starts occurring in respect of other human being with whom one is, and has to be, in constant inter-relationship which is reciprocally interactive in nature. But, the other human being is first a body and then a mind, and then a "something else". But this "something else" is generally the most elusive thing to one's own consciousness. It is more a matter of inference, or something that is to be postulated, or accepted but which somehow is never completely 'realized' in the same reflexive-existential way as one experiences oneself. After all one 'lives' with oneself all the time. The other is only 'experienced' fitfully; he or she appears and disappears and even when it appears, it is generally opaque and has hardly that transparency which one usually enjoys in relation to oneself. And, normally one misunderstands the other more often than one understands it even at ordinary levels of interactive inter-course.

It is true that there are moments of togetherness when one is 'with' the other, sometimes even in a deeper sense than one is with

oneself. But, these are 'moments' only and one returns back to a lived situation where the other relapses into otherness once again.

Perhaps, the transcendental illusion which sees the self as 'given' to oneself in self-reflexive consciousness also ensures that the 'other' can never be given in the same manner and it is only the transcendental critique which can, at least theoretically, circumvent the illusion to some extent. But as the illusion arises in the context of the 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity' of consciousness, the critical correction results in seeing the pre-supposed subject and objectivity as "given" and the subject that is given to oneself as *really* being presupposed only. The transparency of consciousness on the other hand makes it possible that the 'object', whether in oneself or another may increasingly reflect this transparency so that the subjectivity of the 'other' may shine through the objectivity that is apprehended by oneself. There *are* persons whose 'self' or subjectivity shines transparently even in their bodily subjectivity to such an extent that one can not but feel them as subjects or selves rather than objects. The spiritual personality is the paradigmatic example of such a situation where the 'other' seems more 'subject' or 'self' than oneself.

This may appear paradoxical, but a reflection on the phenomenon would reveal that any static analysis of either consciousness or self-consciousness is bound to be mistaken in principle. Kant seems to have made the mistake of treating the situation in such a manner and even the phenomenologists who

have talked of the "constituting acts" of the Ego have not seen that the relation between consciousness and the self-consciousness is a dynamic one and the self that is given as object is capable of being transformed by a movement of consciousness that is non-cognitive and non-intentional in character. The encounter with another who is an existentially superior person to oneself makes one aware of a "subjective objectivity" which is almost as "objectively subject" to oneself as one normally is to one's own self. What is even more surprising is that in these cases the 'other' appears to be more of a 'self' than one finds oneself to be. The phenomenon occurs continually at other levels also where one encounters human beings who appear to be in many ways more "alive" and more "developed" in dimensions than one finds oneself to be. The other mirrors one's own possibilities and, at times, even the depths or levels to which one may descend oneself or degenerate into.

The situation, thus, demands a framework of analysis which is not self-centred or 'I-centred' as the usual epistemological or phenomenological analysis has done. Some social psychologists and philosophers have attempted to get out of this with the existentially-centred ego-centric predicament, but perhaps it is not in the context of knowledge that one can possibly find the way out. 'Knowledge' is inevitably self-centred even though the acquiring of it may require collective action of a sort that is becoming increasingly a fact, at least in certain fields, in modern times. Instead it is in the context of action that one realizes the necessity

and the reality of the other as a subject that co-operates with oneself for the realization of the ends one seeks to realize with and through them.

Action, however, is also self-centred, though in a sense that is radically different from the self-centricity involved in knowledge. Action, at the human level, is rooted in 'freedom' and a sense of 'willing' where one feels one has the power to effectuate what one desires to bring into being. It is the one point where that which is not is brought into being and 'nothing' is negated not through an act of thought but through the mediation of the body which manipulates the material 'given' to it for purposes that are one's own. The sense of freedom, power and responsibility which this existentially confers on the sense of 'I' makes it see itself in a way that is radically different from the one eternally realized in the self-consciousness of man. Kant saw this and tried to articulate it in his discussion of Practical Reason, but was too much obsessed by the moral dimension involved in it to see that the realm of action is far, far wider than the way he conceived it to be. The relation of action to power and freedom was ignored by him, just as he failed to see that action at the human level is concerned with the realization of values which have little to do with morality in any relevant sense of the term.

The moral dimension is an element in all action, but it is only in certain types of action that it plays an exclusive or even predominant role. Action usually concerns other human beings or

involves them directly or indirectly. It is this aspect of action that brings in the element of morality into it, just as the effect of action on one's own self does it in another manner. The former aspect of action has generally been emphasized, even though it has not been seen that one's relationship to others in any of its forms always transcends the moral dimension in a radical sense even when it continues to be a necessary element in it. The same is true at a deeper and subtler level in respect of the effect of action on one's own self as what one 'is', is shaped by it in a sense which has not been sufficiently perceived or reflected upon by thinkers who have concerned themselves with this subject. The notion of *Samskara* in the Indian tradition tries to formulate this idea, but their almost exclusive emphasis on this aspect has blinded them to the other dimensions of action, particularly those which make a person 'part' of a larger whole where he co-operates the others for the realization of values which can not be realized except with the help of others. This dimension of action which leads to the notion of responsibility on the one hand and a feeling that the idea and the ideal of self-sufficiency is illusory and even harmful to the realization of the 'self' itself. And, though there are aspects of Indian thought which try to base their reflection on this insight, they get submerged and lost in the torrential counter-currents emanating from the *sramana* traditions on the one hand and the *Upanisadic* ones on the other. Strangely, the *Santi patha* part of the *upanisads* where the self is seen as essentially in relation to other selves, a reality connoted by the term *saha*, is forgotten not only by the advaitin but by other

schools of Vedanta also. The same 'forgetfulness' seems to infect the Buddhist thinkers who forget the necessity and the reality of the *samgha* for the realization of *nirvana* and even the emergence of *mahayana* does not substantially change the situation as the *bodhisattva*, though concerned with the welfare of humanity, is as alone and lonely as the jain *muni* or the *kevalin* who epitomizes the isolated, monadic, self-sufficient self in the Indian tradition. As for the analysis of action at the more empirical level as evidenced, say in Nyaya, it confines itself to *ichchha, prayatna, chesta* etc. at the individual level alone and does not pay any attention to the essentially collective nature of action where each individual actor depends upon the actions of others to achieve even minimal ends required for the survival of individual actor himself. The analysis of the Geeta is no better, as it suffers on the same 'self-centric' defects which is found in almost all other analysis of human action in the Indian tradition.

The western analysis fares no better, though it brings the social and the political aspects more into the centre of attention than the Indian one. The reflexive nature of self consciousness somehow makes it impossible for the philosophical thinker to get away from the primacy and centrality of the self or the ego and see it as merely one element of a larger whole or as a member of a community which extends in space and time in a manner that is inconceivable as it is unending in itself. The notion of the *visvarupa* does not help as it is not only too static in character but

even when it brings in the notion of time, it sees it as essentially destructive in character. The structural illusion generated by the fact of self-consciousness at both the levels of knowledge and action are however essentially different as the former lacks the dimension of temporality which the latter necessarily has. Also, the self is felt differently in the two cases which are indicated by the terms *drsta* and *karta*, that is the 'observer' and the 'agent' respectively. The observing or the witness consciousness has been talked about at length in the Indian tradition, but the self as 'agent' has not been much reflected upon, even though the human world has been defined as the world where alone the initiation of new action is possible. The well-known upanisadic story of the two birds misses the action-aspect completely and contrasts between the self that observes and the self that enjoys and thus neglects totally or minimizes the element of activity which is so obviously involved in the latter, that is, the enjoying function. One reason for this is that activity involves not only the out going activity of consciousness or *pavrtti* but involves an orientation towards the future involving intrinsic uncertainity in it. There is another dimension of action which involves two contradictory elements in it and hence gives rise in consciousness to a state which is felt to be unresolvable in principle. These two elements are defined on the one hand by a feeling of power which is almost unlimited in principle as each limit that is apprehended is seen as capable of being overcome and challenging one to overcome it. The history of humanity is the history of continuous overcoming of limitations

which were supposed to be impossible of being overcome earlier. On the other hand, there is simultaneously the feeling that one's essential freedom is being continuously negated by this desire of achieving what is wanted and extending the limits of the achievable as far as it lies in one's power.

This gives rise simultaneously to the illusion of omnipotence of the human will on the one hand and a feeling that something does not let it realize or actualize itself because of intrinsic defects in the will itself. The idea of freedom as power is rooted in this phenomenological experience while the converse idea of freedom as that which is completely detached from the activity of desiring itself is grounded in the realization that the essence of, 'freedom' can never lie in the activity of willing which desires to achieve or actualize something, even if this 'something' be an ideal or a value dear to the human heart. The former gives rise to that incessant activity desirous of realizing values in the human world and even encompassing the whole living world including both the animal and plant world and at a larger remove, even the world of inanimate matter. The latter on the other hand gives rise to that feeling of *nirveda* which is classically represented by the Mahavira and the Buddha in the Indian tradition and so graphically described in the pages of the Yoga Vasistha where the young prince of Ayodhyaya is depicted as turning away from the challenging duties of kingship and leading a kingly family-life. At a deeper level, the conflict has been described in terms of *dharma*

and *moksa* in the Indian tradition or that between *abhyudaya* or *prabhava* and *apavarga* or *nihsreyasa*.

Both, however, are rooted in an illusion that is structural and transcendental at the same time. It is 'structural' because it arises from the nature of self-consciousness itself and it is transcendental as nothing is felt as 'given' except the will that spontaneously effectuates itself in the immediacy of bodily activity. Till one lives, one acts in this way. To "live" is to "act" and when one ceases to act one is said to 'die' or as not being alive. This immediate and spontaneous actualization of will may have quantitative and qualitative variation but it has to be there if one is to feel oneself alive. But beyond the fact of being biologically alive, will has to seek something else, at least at the human level. This is the realm of values and ideals which are sought to be realized by an activity which has essentially a co-operative and collective aspect to it. The essential dependence that this involves is, however, only theoretically or abstractly apprehended even though it is felt at almost every moment of one's life. The contradiction between the felt omnipotence of will without which the will can not function and the equally 'felt' dependence defines the human situation in its dimension of action. The other constraint which action at the human level continuously feels is that of values and ideals and the conflict between them. The constraint from the realm of values is, however, of a different kind as it is both fulfilling and frustrating at the same time. No human action can be felt to be meaningful if it is

not seen as concerned with the realization of some value, even though one may be deluding oneself that one is actually engaged in such an exercise. In fact, interests masquerade as value and as it is difficult to distinguish between the two, it is easy for this to happen. The dual constraint, however, is not acceptable to the will in its purity as it has an essential arbitrariness in it just as there is an element of despotic monism in it. This finds expression in the notion of an omnipotent God who alone is really powerful as it's will knows no obstruction and can, in fact, not do so in principle. Man, in this context, is seen as having no 'freedom' at all as he can only function as an 'instrument' of the divine, whether he likes it or not. It is strange that in both the Theological-cum-Religious perspective and the scientific perspective man's feeling of freedom is considered illusory as he is either the instrument of the divine will or a channel through which causal forces, in whatever way they may be conceived, work themselves out in utter disregard of what he thinks he is trying to realize. Both the perspectives deny human reality in an essential sense and treat the phenomenon of consciousness and self-consciousness as irretrievably illusory in nature.

But, what is this illusion and how is the illusion of consciousness different from that of self-consciousness. If consciousness is an illusion then all that consciousness apprehends is bound to be illusory also and if self-consciousness is illusory then the consciousness that it apprehends and the

object thereof is also bound to be illusory. But can the illusion of an illusion be itself an illusion and ultimately even if 'something' is illusory can it be denied to have a 'reality' at least when it is apprehended and not considered to be so. There are two stages of something being illusory: The first, when its illusoriness is not realized and the second, when its illusoriness is realized. And, as was said earlier, there is the question whether the illusion is transcendental or structural in nature, or it is of the sort that are encountered at the level where they are easily removable and dispensable because of the nature of the factors due to which they have arisen. The basic question, thus, resolves itself into an enquiry into the structure of consciousness and self-consciousness on the one hand and their transcendental pre-suppositions on the other. What is needed therefore to understand the human situation is to undertake an enquiry into the structural and transcendental features involved in it and in which are grounded the foundational illusions that have to be realized as such in order that man may become, at least, relatively free of them.

An illusion is not necessarily something that is undesirable or 'harmful' to man, but even for this to obtain, it is necessary that the 'illusoriness' of the illusion is realized, or at least it is not taken to be 'real' in the sense in which the term is usually understood. The clearest example of this is found in a dramatic representation which in order to be enjoyed has to be simultaneously taken as both 'real' and 'unreal' in nature. If the feeling of its illusoriness or

unreality dominates one's consciousness, one can hardly enjoy it. But if one forgets that it is a dramatic representation of something which it is not, one will take it as 'real' and respond to it in a way which will destroy the enjoyment altogether.

The term 'illusion', therefore, has to be dissociated from its negative cognitive associations and 'freed' from them so that one may begin to understand the role of consciousness and self-consciousness in the creation and apprehension of reality both at the specific and the generalized levels. To talk of the 'creative' function of consciousness is not to overlook or deny its function in the apprehension of 'reality' as it is independent of it. In fact the notions of 'dependence' or 'independence' are themselves a function of self-consciousness and continuously vary in the context of what the 'self' wants to do or achieve with itself and the consciousness that it possesses. There is not, and cannot be, just one notion of 'independence' as would be evident if one reflects on the fact that even in respect of the apprehension of a dramatic performance which one knows to be both 'real' and 'unreal', one has to be 'objective' and see it 'independently' of all the irrelevant subjectivity which may be involved in one's apprehension of it. The impulse to objectivity and the desire for it is an integral part of the activity of self-consciousness itself and is generally denoted by such terms as 'integrity' and 'honesty'. What else can these terms mean except that one tries one's best to be as 'true' to that which one is trying to achieve in the realm of either knowledge, feeling or

action. It has been a mistake to understand the term objectivity in the context of knowledge alone and think that no realms which are constituted primarily by feelings or emotions on the one hand and action on the other need them for an adequate description of the reality concerned and constituted by them. In the realm of action the seeking for 'objectivity' is usually designated by the term morality on the one hand and efficiency on the other. 'Efficiency' connotes what may be called relevant causal knowledge pertaining to the field in respect of which action is being undertaken, while 'morality' may be said to connote that aspect of action which takes into account the relevant values pertaining to the activity which are primarily centred in a consciousness of the other and his or her welfare. At a deeper level still, objectivity in this domain means the governance of action by a consideration of the whole complex realm of values and their inter-relationship with one another in the context of the end which is sought to be achieved through the action one proposes to undertake. The dilemmas in the realm of values are unavoidable and hence it has been defined as the realm where one can never be sure if one has made the right choice as whatever 'choice' one makes, one sacrifices some value or other. The term *dharma-samkata* has been used to connote this in the Indian tradition and the story of the Mahabharata is the classic example of this. Dr. Mukund Lath has written extensively in Hindi on this subject and has tried to explore and unveil the dilemmas encountered and experienced there.

The search for 'objectivity' in the realm of feelings is something that may appear *prima-facie*, to be a contradiction in terms as it is the one realm which is supposed to be 'subjective' almost by definition. How can one be objective about something so subjective as feelings and emotions, and yet the same self-consciousness which seeks objectivity in the realm of knowledge and actions, also 'demands' that one 'seek' objectivity in this realm as well. The term 'seeking' in the context of the 'world' or feelings and emotional may sound strange as it is supposed to be a realm where no ideals obtain which may be sought to be realized by anyone. Yet, as everyone knows, there *are* realms where it is considered legitimate to ask whether the feeling or the emotion aroused is appropriate to the object which arouses it. It is so obvious in the case of works of art where a feeling-response is a necessary pre-condition of the cognitive judgement about the aesthetic value of the work concerned. The aesthetic object arouses the feeling and the feeling, in turn, makes one aware of the aesthetic quality of the work concerned. As there is a cognitive claim involved, one can legitimately be questioned about the 'correctness' of the apprehension, and once one realizes that the apprehension was mistaken, the feeling disappears or changes so that the work is not 'seen' in the same way as before.

The search for objectivity in the realm of feeling extends even to objects and relations where one would not normally have expected it. Who would think, for example, that one's relation to

animals or human beings acquires an objective dimension where one feels that one is not behaving the way one ought to and, many a time, feel guilty about it. Relations of love and friendship are considered to be most subjective of all and yet everyone knows that there is a continuous feeling that they ought to be different from what they are as they do not accord with what one would like them to be. Even in respect of one's own self, one continually feels dissatisfied with what one is and it is this feeling of dissatisfaction that makes one try to be different from what one is.

The point is that self-consciousness necessarily, because of its very constitution, can not be 'subjective' in character. It has to try to be objective as "to be objective" is merely another name of being self conscious. Objectivity is not something given for once and all, but has to be achieved anew continually depending not only on the nature of the object concerned or the activity one wants to pursue, but also on the sort of person one wants become as the personality that tries to seek objectivity is itself changing over time due to many factors which include among them the desire to be as objective as possible. The objectivity sought to be attained also becomes different as the personality that seeks it changes over time.

The search for objectivity in the realms of knowledge, action and emotion is determined not only by the generality of these dimensions, but the specificities of the realm concerned in each of these dimensions. Objectivity is, thus, not the same for example, in

history as, say, in physics. In mathematics, the objectivity is bound to be different from the one which obtains in the study of physics. From realm to realm, in the cognitive field, 'objectivity' varies and each student of the subject knows this, specially if he or she pursues knowledge in more than one field as is generally not the case. In fact, there is a radical difference even in the activity of 'understanding' what has already been achieved in the realm of knowledge relating to a particular field and in trying to achieve or explore or extend knowledge of that domain further. The very notion of a 'field' and its demarcation from others raises problems of a nature which have not been attended to either in terms of the epistemological issue that there is, or the metaphysical problems that they imply. Normally, one does not pay attention to these by comforting oneself with the idea that the demarcation and the division is due to cognitive convenience or division of "labour" in the field of knowledge. It need not be taken very seriously, particularly as the history of the cognitive enterprise of man shows that what was unified at one time became divided later and that what seemed to be divided has again been attempted to be integrated or unified once more in diverse ways. The integration or 'unification' at the end is, of course, significantly different from the one that it was at the beginning, but both show, in their own way, that the demarcation and the division was not necessary either for epistemological or metaphysical reasons.

This, however, is an 'illusion' engendered by the vagueness in the terms used and a deliberate overlooking of the fact that metaphysical unity can always be ensured by using the term 'Being' in such a way as to include 'Non-being' within itself and that the unity at the level of knowledge can always be achieved by saying that, after all, all knowledge is "knowledge". The seemingly impossible 'divide' between knoweldge and reality which appears to be unbridgeable in principle is attempted to be overcome either in the way of the advaitin who denies that there is any such thing as knowledge in case it necessarily involves predication of some subjects or asserting that 'knowledge by identity' is a necessary characteristic of reality itself. Both seem forgetful of the spuriousness of their solutions as both 'they' and 'we' are legitimately entitled *only* to talk of the knowledge that we know of, that is, knowledge at the human level. If one genuinely accepts the limitation which inevitably surrounds all human assertions, then one will see that the attempt at demarcation and division of realms is dictated by the specificities, peculiarities and distinctness of what one attempts to know and the differences in the methodologies of 'knowing' are inevitable results of those differences that prevail in that which is attempted to be known.

The distinction is not unknown to those who have reflected or written on it. Who has not heared of the distinction between 'Geisteswissenschaften' and 'Naturwissenschaften' or between the way one understands nature, and the way one understands the

creations of men. But, while the distinction has been known it has not been seen that there are important differences amongst human creations which demand a differential understanding of them both in terms of content and methodology as the 'realms' themselves are different. The understanding of Society, Law, History and Polity for example, presents problems of a radically different kind than the ones encountered in understanding works of art. It will be difficult to deny that only the latter should be regarded strictly as human creations, while the former are not. But even though one may be forced to accept that they are human creations in some sense of the word, one will have to concede that they are creations of a kind that is qualitatively different from those that are designated by the term 'art'. At another level, human beings who are the source of this creativity present problems for their understanding which is different from both as in this case one tries to understand that which in some sense, is the source of creativity or creation and hence is the "creator", a term which is usually reserved for God alone.

The problem, in fact, is even more complex as those who have drawn this distinction have not paid sufficient attention to the phenomena represented by living beings other than those which are human. The understanding of the plant and the animal world and the 'worlds' within them presents problems which are different from the ones one encounters in understanding the human world and its creations on the one hand and the world of so-called

inanimate matter, on the other. For some strange reasons, the understanding of the latter has become identified with the idea of 'understanding' itself and any attempt to suggest that 'understanding' undergoes radical transformations as it moves from one field to other and concerns itself with different kinds of phenomena, is looked at with suspicion and treated as if it was an attempt to revive superstition and obscurantism which were supposed to have been finally buried with the rise of modern science. The nineteenth century attempt to focus attention upon History as something which was intrinsically not amenable to the type of understanding epitomized in Galileo and Newton in their understanding of nature. But even those who revolted against this unitary idea of understanding did not see that the idea of understanding itself has to be differentiated and distinguished not only in respect of each of the realms that had been attempted to be understood, but also in terms of the purposes for which the task of understanding is being undertaken.

But if this is accepted and it is also accepted that wherever there is an attempt at understanding there have to be 'categories' involved in the act itself to give it a form which has to be transcendental in character as that 'form' can not be 'known' except by a transcendental critique as shown by Kant in his analysis of the notion of understanding in general as constitutive of the cognitive purpose of attaining knowledge at the human level. Then one will also have to accept that there are transcendental a

priori forms or 'categories' specific to each of these realms. It is those categories, in fact, that constitute the realm though one ordinarily does not see, and perhaps cannot see it that way. Kant, of course, did not see that the generalized categories that he had attempted to articulate through his transcendental critique have to be supplemented anew in respect of each particular object, field, domain which is sought to be understood. And, these specific categories will play the same role as the generalized categories do in respect of the enterprise of understanding in general. In other words they will create the transcendental illusions relative to those domains in case they are treated as 'given' and their transcendental pre-suppositional character is not understood. What we, thus, need is not only a transcendental critique of the generalized activity of understanding, but also of each domain where man tries to understand anything whatsoever. And, as these domains belong not only to the realm of knowledge but also to those of action and feeling, the transcendental critique will have to be applied to each and every domain wherein man tries to seek anything at all.

The so-called tri-partite division of consciousness into knowing, feeling and willing raises the question as to how this division is made and what are the grounds for its legitimacy. As the 'division' itself assumes some sort of a prior activity of consciousness, a transcendental critique of this activity is demanded so that its pre-suppositions may be laid bare and the

transcendental illusions generated by them be understood. The use of the term consciousness itself hides the fact that consciousness is an 'activity' that brings something into being rather than a 'state' which passively registers or reflects or mirrors whatever happens to be or, is the case. The transcendental critique thus, is hampered by the way language itself seems to propel it into certain directions and unless it is self-conscious about it, it may not be able to resist the disastrous implications regarding the possibility of 'unity' of consciousness without which its multitudinous forms and multifarious activities are un-understandable. The dualism of "activity" that seems to bring 'realities' into being and the reflexivity that makes it apprehend them as something pre-existently given and hence demanding to be understood is the most foundational duality which, when reflected upon, gives rise to a dualism which self-consciousness has found difficult to overcome when it reflected upon the phenomenon since earliest times. How can that which is 'given' be itself the result of the 'free' activity of that to which it 'appears' as given, has been the unanswerable question posed by critical reflection to itself. How can the self question the 'given-ness' of that which is given to it. And, yet how can it accept the 'alien-ness' of the 'given' when it finds in itself an insatiable desire not only to understand it completely without any residual residuum left un-understood, but questions it in respect of its very being as it finds it imperfect and inadequate through and through.

Kant had talked of the 'unity' of reason and warned against the temptation of thinking that Theoretical and Practical reasons are two different 'reasons' and suggested that they were only two different 'employments' of the same faculty, that is, reason. But, his warning was of no avail as the Critiques themselves proclaimed aloud against the 'truth' of what he had said. Also, Kant never clarified what that third employment of reason was which he was critically examining in the third Critique. At a deeper level still Kant failed to see the problem created by the dual aspect of consciousness in its being simultaneously 'active' and 'receptive' and, being 'unitary' and 'multiple' in nature, combining seemingly contradictory characteristics within itself. At another level, Kant failed to see that the activity of the transcendental critique was itself made possible by the coming into being of self-consciousness whose character had to be understood in both its existential and epistemological aspects if the activity of the transcendental critique were to become intelligible to itself.

Self-consciousness can only be understood if it is seen as rooted or grounded in something which enjoys a 'being' which is transcendent in nature. The transcendentality has to be grounded in something that is transcendent and in case something *is* transcendent, it has a grounding within itself and hence a certitude which has an ontological character. This ontological certitude appears as 'faith' at the level of self-consciousness which can perpetually question everything and has to do so because of its

very nature, as it feels secure due to the faith in which the questioning and the doubting arises. The 'transcendent' that is pre-supposed by self-consciousness and in which it is rooted, is consciousness which provides that firm foundation to thought which enables it to engage in that unending dialectic which is its character at self-conscious level and which is exemplified in all the philosophical traditions of the world. The structure of both consciousness and self-consciousness, thus determine the human situation in a way which we have been trying to understand in the earlier parts of this work along with the problems that had been generated in the perspective of the way Kant formulated the problem and thought about it. But neither Kant nor any of the philosophers in the long tradition of philosophizing has squarely faced the question as to how in case consciousness is admitted, there can be a distinction between illusion and that which is not illusory. The usual terms for these in the philosophical literature are appearance and reality. But 'appearance' is only another name for consciousness which surreptitiously implies that what appears is something 'given' and hence has, at least *prima facie*, an epistemological independence of it and, probably, an ontological independence also. Such a construal of the situation forgets what we just pointed out that consciousness and appearance are two names for the same thing and hence to treat what appears as something given and to superimpose the usual epistemological and ontological interpretation is unwarranted.

Many of the problems here are being created by the way language is being used. The term 'consciousness' suggest that it is a property, that someone is conscious and that consciousness is of something. The very wording here creates many of the problems which have plagued philosophical thinking since its very beginning which could perhaps have been avoided by a little reflection on the situation. If 'consciousness' and 'appearing' go together and can not be separated from each other in any way whatsoever because the two are saying the same thing, then one can not legitimately make a distinction between the 'appearance' and reality and between the 'illusory' and the 'non-illusory' within the reality of consciousness itself. Some other criterion will have to be brought in to make the distinction and the question is from where is this criterion to be brought in and, at a still deeper level, why this criterion should be brought in at all.

The distinction has to be brought in because of two considerations, one of which seems intrinsic to consciousness and the other, in case it is treated as intrinsic, would dramatically change the very notion of consciousness. The first relates to the fact that what appears is 'felt' to be pleasant or unpleasant and consciousness rejects the latter even though it has to accept its reality. This contradiction it articulates in a strange paradoxical way. Something really 'appears' and hence in a sense 'is' and yet it is *not* acceptable to consciousness, and, as it is not 'acceptable' to consciousness it has to be endowed with a characteristic which

makes it simultaneously 'real-unreal' and hence as being something which 'is' something and yet has to be removed from the realm of 'is-ness' which can only be done either through a change in the attitude of consciousness to it or by consciousness undertaking a activity for its relegation to 'nothingness' or 'non-being' where it will cease to be what it is. Ultimately, this all simply means that consciousness has to become 'active' in order to render this situation 'acceptable' to itself. But, the bringing into being of this hidden reality in consciousness by the characteristic of 'painfulness' of that which 'appeared' reveals that the understanding of consciousness in terms of 'appearing' alone was fundamentally mistaken. 'Consciousness' is not that to which, or where the phenomenon of 'appearing' occurs though that is there too also, but a reservoir of power which can become active any moment and change what appears as real into something unreal and bring that into being which was not there at all. Behind the 'given-ness' of appearance, there now is realized the illusoriness of the phenomenon of 'given-ness' itself. The primary function of consciousness is now seen as consisting in the 'acceptance' or 'rejection' of what it apprehends as given and the 'givenness' of the given is seen as being 'maintained' because it is acceptable to consciousness and, in case it is not, the real nature of consciousness is revealed in its power to remove or destroy the givenness of the given by some activity on its part. The 'activity' can take many forms, 'the simplest of which is shifting one's attention from that which appears to be given and thus, denying

its 'being' in a sense where it loses its centrality for the consciousness to which it was the embodiment of reality itself. There are other forms of activity, myriad forms, which the phenomenological analysis of consciousness has not yet revealed. In fact consciousness, to the self-introspective analysis, is continuously engaged in this activity as even in the activity of 'maintaining' that which it 'accepts', it continually shifts its attention to aspects which were not attended to before and which make it more acceptable to consciousness. Not only this, consciousness continually turns its 'attention' to other objects so that it may feel the way it felt when it 'accepted' the givenness of some given earlier.

The point is that consciousness how begins to be seen as having a power or *sakti* of its own which it can bring into play when it wants to do so. The self-consciousness of this power of consciousness may result even in a deliberate arousal of it and its use for diverse purposes at the human level. This is the foundation of all those practices which try to achieve ends by some sort of a manipulation of one's consciousness. The different kinds of yoga or *sadhanas* in various spiritual and religious traditions of the world are based on this simple 'reversal' in one's attitude to one's consciousness. The 'self-centricity' which occurs in self-consciousness in the context of knowledge now gets transferred to one in the context of power. If the former gives rise to the feeling that everything is an 'object to one and that one is the only unique

'subject' in the world, the second gives rise to the feeling that one is the centre of power that can effectuate anything in the world. Both are self-centric and give rise inevitably to "ego-centricity" at the human level as whatever be the metaphysical or ontological reality of the self; at the empirical level it always occurs as the ego and is felt as such and hence even a little movement in the direction of spirituality is seen as giving rise not to humility but to a feeling that one is the centre of the universe and that one is 'superior' to all the mundane beings around one who seek their individual ends determined by desire and worldly ends.

The illusions that self-consciousness generates when it reflexively turns on itself are structurally in-built in the very nature of self-consciousness. But, strangely, they have an internal self-contradiction built in them because of the self-contradictory nature of self-consciousness as, on the one hand, it has the feeling that it is 'free' of all that it objectively apprehends and which it can negate by the withdrawal of one's attention from it while, on the other hand, it has the illusion of omnipotence that it can do whatever it wants or wishes as there is something in it which can bring into being what it desires to be there.

At the empirical level both of these are severely restricted and one continuously encounters the limitations imposed on one by factors which one tends to ignore when one is centred in self-consciousness and reflexively reflects on it. The body, for example, is completely absent, even though it is necessary for both

knowledge and action. At a still deeper level, what is totally absent is the 'other' in its subjectivity, even though it is necessary both for knowledge and action in a sense which, for some reason, is continuously ignored by the philosophical self-reflection centred in self-consciousness on the one hand and the spiritual-meditative consciousness centred in the 'self', on the other. Man 'thinks' as if 'knowledge' and 'action' were not essentially dependent on others who are as much 'subjects' and self-conscious selves as oneself. Knowledge and action both are inter-subjective, collective enterprises, but the philosophical reflection on them systematically ignores this aspect, for if it were to do so, it would encounter a foundational 'insufficiency' in the self which it is not prepared to entertain as its own self-consciousness denies it.

Besides this, what philosophical self-reflection ignores is the fact that the 'thinker' who is 'thinking' is someone who is a biological being subject to birth and death, phenomena whose absence from philosophical reflection should have surprised everyone, just as the absence of the presence of the other in the reflections on knowledge and action should have done. The facts of birth and death are there for everyone to see, as also the fact that they make a substantive difference to both the enterprises of knowledge and action, as the one who engages in them can not really do so till one becomes an adult and normally finds it difficult to continue beyond a certain age because of infirmities and disabilities of mind and body. The point is that the biological

limitations impose an inevitable structural limitation on whatever man does and that all his enterprises are conditioned by this fact, just as they are by the necessity of dependence on others for the realization of any end that he may seek. The maintenance and transmission from generation to generation of all that man seeks or tries to do is, thus, the heart of the matter and yet there is no philosopher who seems to take it seriously into account in the thought that he thinks about things.

This is unbelievable and calls for a transcendental enquiry into it. After all, how could such a thing have been possible century after century or millennia after millennia without its being seen or questioned and if one reflects that the spiritual masters have been as guilty of it as the philosophers, then one would suspect that the roots of this 'neglect' must lie deep within the structure of human self-consciousness itself.

Self-consciousness, by virtue of the fact that it is self-centred, seems to ensure this. Consciousness on the other hand, is object-centred and as self-consciousness has consciousness as its object, there is a basis for the 'transcendence' of all that is object, for in self-consciousness, it is the 'relationship' to the object that becomes the centre of attention and not the object itself. Almost all human sciences suffer from the basic dilemma as what interests them is the 'effect' that the object has on consciousness and the way consciousness reacts to it and 'shapes' it by its reaction. The phenomenologists have called it the constitution of the object by

the constituting acts of the ego and the Buddhists have seen it as the result of an activity which they have called *vikalpa*, a term which hides so much behind it but which has generally remained philosophically unanalysed even though there is substantive phenomenological analysis of what is meant by it. Strangely, the Buddhist analysis somehow got involved with what has been called by some, including Mohanty 'linguisticality'. But language is only incidental to what occurs in consciousness as should have been evident by the fact that the whole of the animal world displays consciousness without the so-called 'linguisticality'. Animals have been totally absent from philosophical reflections as if they did not perceive and did not feel pleasure or pain, or were not moved by desire or aversion.

Language does play a part, especially in shaping self-consciousness and through it consciousness, and through it the object of consciousness. But, ultimately, it is consciousness and self-consciousness that provide a clue to the understanding of experience as would be evident if one reflects on the phenomenon of language itself. Language, if not known, or undeciphered is no language at all. In fact, language becomes 'language' only when some consciousness deciphers it and finds meaning in it and it is this phenomenon which really makes language a language. Strangely, people *can* understand each other without knowing each other's language, if they have to do so. After all, how did language come into being? It must have been born out of the

necessity of communication and hence should be seen as a result of the communicative truncation involved between consciousnesses. A plurality of consciousnesses thus is assumed by the fact that there is language, just as it is assumed by knowledge and action, as pointed out earlier. But a plurality of self-consciousnesses is a different matter and neither language nor knowledge nor action necessarily pre-supposes them, as would be evident if one looks at the animal world. There is knowledge; there is action, and there is communication but no self-consciousness as far as we can observe the situation. Self-consciousness brings something into being as it questions everything including knowledge and action and communication. The question of truth and falsity, of right and wrong, of significant and insignificant, of meaningfulness and meaninglessness arise which did not arise before. This has been known to all philosophical reflection which has radically differentiated the human situation from the one that obtains in the animal world. But, for some reason, it is the moral dimension of the change that has attracted the attention of those who have thought about the distinction. But to see the distinction in terms of *dharma* and *adharma* only is a mistake, as the difference infects everything that was unquestioned at the animal level. The garden of Eden was there and it was self-consciousness that destroyed it for ever. But the fact that it has infected and vitiated communication itself and made it essentially ambiguous has not been seen even by those who have talked about the essential indeterminacy of the meaning and the text. The possibility of

misunderstanding which vitiates all communication at the human level gives rise to a new dimension which has scarcely been seen by those who have reflected on the situation. Falsity begins to be effective in a way that it could never have occurred at the animal level. Beliefs become effective, irrespective of the fact whether they are true or false. They have only to be believed to be true and even when discovered later to be false would have already performed their function in bringing about something into being which is as 'real' as anything else.

The inter-relation between belief, behaviour and reality if seen, would change the very notion of reality as it has been understood uptill now. Reality is not something 'given', but that which has been brought into being by human behaviour which itself has been the result of a belief that has been engendered or entertained for some reason or other. Beliefs are a result of 'believing' which is a spontaneous response of consciousness to whatever it receives as it naturally accepts because of the very fact that it is conscious. Consciousness, awareness and acceptance are different aspects of the same phenomenon and unless there are reasons to the contrary, one does not doubt or dispute or disbelieve what has been received by consciousness. But, one can not doubt all the time and even when one doubts, there may be hardly any time left to defer decision to act and hence, as life can not wait for indubitable 'certainity' to occur, action has to be done all the time bringing something into being which has to be

accepted by oneself and others and 'responsibility' for which has to be accepted by one, whether one wants to do so or not. 'Doubt' is a luxury which thought may indulge in if 'life' allows one to do so, but as philosophical scepticism has shown, its irremovability can hardly stop or even hinder 'action' which has to go on incessently as it is the very condition of living. Zeno's paradoxes about motion never stopped anyone from 'moving', nor did antinomies of space, time and causality ever stopped anyone, including the philosophers who thought and wrote about them, from accepting their reality.

Cognitive doubts are generally irrelevant to action and as far as philosophical doubts are concerned, they are self-consciously so. What really affects action is not the cognitive dissatisfaction about the 'reality' of things or the inter-relationship between them, but the aesthetic or the moral dissatisfaction with what obtains and the desire to change it in the direction of that which is aesthetically and/or morally acceptable. There is certainly such a thing as causal knowledge which affects the means chosen for bringing about a transformation in the situation, but not only dopes this knowledge continuously change but its nature itself has been generally misunderstood by those who have tended to overemphasize it in the context of understanding human action. Causality, in fact, is not as it has generally been understood or explicated in philosophical or scientific literature. The model of causality is usually presented in terms of what have been called

necessary and sufficient conditions, modeled on what has been called in logic 'strict implication', that is, where p implies q and q implies p. Even in the context of inanimate nature, such causality rarely obtains and one is never certain whether it does so or not. But in the realms of life and mind and beings which are conscious and self-conscious, such causality not only does not obtain but can not obtain in principle. Everyone knows that it is so, for the very notions of life and mind and reason and self-consciousness ensure this. The reality of 'freedom' even when intellectually ungraspable in its essence, makes the notion of causality flexible in such a way as to render the usual understanding of it not only meaningless but dangerous. Action, it should be remembered, has to be undertaken in the context of that which is living and which essentially displays this freedom and hence has to have a causal dimension which is essentially different from the way it is understood in the context of inanimate nature.

The point perhaps can be made a little more clear if we look at 'action' involved in, say, the creation of a work of art. What sort of 'causality' is involved when one paints a picture, or sings a song, or dances a dance, or writes a poem, or thinks a thought, or meditates and tries to still one's mind from all activity whatsoever. These are the activities that go on all the time and yet they are hardly reflected upon when one thinks of causality and its relation to action. But even such an obviously simple action as that of 'walking' or 'talking' or 'doing' anything involves and pre-supposes

some sort of 'causality' and yet can hardly be understood in terms of that alone. And, the inter-relationship between two persons, or two living beings can scarcely be understood in terms of a 'casual-interaction' in the way it is usually explicated in terms of models which just do not apply.

There is much talk of symbolic interaction and yet the term, though used so often, is hardly seen as subverting the very notion of causality itself. If consciousness is necessarily symbolizing in character and transforms everything 'given' into something that it is not, that is, as 'standing for' or referring to that which is not itself, and this too not because it has any causal relation to it but purely arbitrarily, then consciousness creates a world out of the 'given' into that which not only is not there, but can not be there because of the way it has been brought into being.

The transformation of the given or even its denial seems to be the essence of consciousness and as consciousness itself is 'given' to self-consciousness, its transformation or even denial seems to be the task set by self-consciousness to itself. Strangely, this has not been seen or realized by those who have talked either of consciousness or of self-consciousness. Consciousness is not a passive, reflexive, mirroring activity whose task is to know, but rather is something which apprehends, as already pointed out, something which is aesthetically or morally in need of improvement, and the same obtains when consciousness itself becomes an 'object' to self-consciousness. Consciousness is found

to be that which it should not be, or even 'ought' not to be, and hence the dissatisfaction it feels is not in respect of objects that the consciousness apprehends, or even in respect of the relationships between them, but with regard to consciousness itself and the way it reacts to the world that it apprehends.

The self-conscious reflection, thus, questions at one level consciousness's dissatisfaction with respect to the world it apprehends, or even the way it builds that world, and at another level the consciousness as it finds it, as if it itself were something 'given' like the world of nature itself. The 'given-ness' of consciousness is as much a subject of questioning as the relationship of consciousness to the world of objects that it apprehends.

The values, norms and ideals implicit in the dissatisfactions that consciousness feels in respect of the world of objects themselves become objects of questioning when consciousness becomes an 'object' to self-consciousness. And, once the values, the norms and the ideals get questioned, one just does not know where the questioning will end. This provides a new dynamism to the story of man's diverse enterprises as it is unending in principle.

The illusion that this unendingness is 'illusory' is generated by that view of consciousness which sees it primarily, or even totally, as cognitive in character whose sole function consists in knowing 'what is real' and whose sole value consists in its being

'true' to the nature of that which is real. There is no reality, if consciousness is real and if self-consciousness is real, then also there can be no such thing as 'truth' or finality not only in the realm of knowledge but in all other realms also.

The subversion, or even the destruction of the illusions of certitudes on which man has built all his beliefs or faiths up till now will, if this analysis is correct, be seen as built on what his own self-consciousness questions and denies. The notion of 'real', in such a perspective, would itself become a valuational ideal to be sought and achieved instead of being seen as something which is already there. Time, then, will be seen in a new way which will be essentially different from the way it has been thought of till now. It shall be the form of human seeking which tries to actualize the ideal in all its dimensions and not as the form of inner sensibility as Kant saw it in the Critique of Pure Reason.

The ideal itself will be seen not only in its intrinsic diversity but also as something that can not, in principle, be apprehended fully and finally at any time whatsoever as each attempt at actualization will reveal not only deficiencies and incompletenesses in what was apprehended, but also open horizons that were unsuspected before. The history of humanity is an evidence of this unceasing enterprise of man and yet the philosophical formulations from the beginning somehow fought shy of seeing things as they were. Strangely, even those who sought the realm of the spirit failed to see its infinite diversity and the unendingness of

the seeking involved in each of those seekings. A backward look at the history of the way spiritual seeking has diversified itself over time and continued its explorations even in face of the contention that what had been revealed or achieved was something complete, absolute and final in nature, would provide sufficient evidence for this. The claim has been repeated again and again and it is astonishing that each new spiritual master who appears on the scene, or has been proclaimed as such, repeats the claim once again forgetting that so many, like him, had made the same claim before. The illusion of 'finality' seems in-built in the consciousness of man as what it apprehends has a 'given-ness' about it which is so concrete that it is impossible to believe that it could be otherwise or that it could not-'be', as to entertain even the possibility of such a belief would be existentially self-contradictory in character. The denial of the illusion is thus bound to be only theoretical in character, and that too because of a critique that, though not transcendental in the Kantian sense, is closely akin to it.

But the illusion of finality is not the only illusion that is in-built in the consciousness because of its very nature. There is perhaps an even more fundamental illusion that the self which is a reflexive projection of the fact of self-consciousness is intrinsically and essentially the only 'real' reality that exists in the universe and that, in comparison with it, the rest is only a derivative reality, deriving its reality from it. This is grounded in the simple fact that

the whole world can be reduced to a nullity the moment one chooses not to attend to it. One need not even close one's eyes for the world to disappear; it is sufficient to withdraw one's attention from it. Yet, though an existential fact, the conclusion drawn from this is foundationally wrong as the consciousness itself is not only constituted by the history of what it has attended to in its past and the way it has attended to it, but the ideals that it persues have also been formed in the context of its dissatisfactions with it. And, at a deeper level still, it is the other 'selves' or consciousnesses which play an essential role in creating those standards of validation which, however tentative in character, determine the standards of quality and validity of what one experiences oneself. One's experience is neither isolated nor monadic, nor confined to oneself alone as the usual analysis suggests. The 'other', in fact, in its indefinite multiplicity, is an essential constituent of the consciousness itself. The fear that this engenders that in case it is accepted one will be necessarily 'bound' and be at the mercy of these indefinite others, is unfounded as they are not only 'objects' in the context of one's own self-consciousness, but one may always withdraw from attending to them if one so desires.

This, of course, only provides the metaphysical foundation for one's freedom and not the achievement of it in actuality. The problem of being caught in the web of the 'other' arises, at a deeper level, from being caught in the web of one's own consciousness and not being able to free oneself from it. However, this 'being caught'

in the web of one's own consciousness is more in the realm of feelings than in the realm of action where freedom arises more from the co-operation that one receives in the persuit of one's ends and the feeling of 'bondage' arises from the realization of dependence on the others, particularly when the co-operation is not coming or it turns into active obstruction. There is also the distinction between the action concerned with the realization of purposes that are personal or private and those that are impersonal or public in character. There is another, and perhaps a deeper distinction, which has not been paid sufficient attention in the discussion on action. This relates to the realization of those ideal values which not only are not clearly apprehended by human consciousness but can not be so apprehended in principle as they concern the nature of consciousness itself. Consciousness, as we said earlier, can not quite realize or even understand the nature of its relation to other consciousnesses; nor can it understand its relation to the whole realm of values which are so diverse and conflicting in character that their nature and the relationships between them is difficult to understand. The problem that this creates for consciousness is two fold: (1) It feels a commitment to the objective ideality of the value so discerned and (2) simultaneously to the value that it creates in its own 'subjectivity' through the attempt at its realization. The situation gets even more complicated as the attempt at these realizations have perforce to seek the co-operation of others and depend substantively on their help and co-operation. That this obtains

even in the realm of the spirit is perhaps more galling to one who believes that this is not only a lonely persuit but also that this ought to be completely self-sufficient and dependent on one's own endeavour alone.

The idea of *purusartha* in the Indian tradition seems to have completely missed the nature of the dependence involved in all human seeking, including the one which is generally called spiritual. The problems of bondage and freedom in these realms are thus essentially different from the ones that one encounters in the realms of feeling and knowledge. The former is more personal and private and creates responsibility and commitment of different kind than those which occur in the realm of action. On the other hand, the realm of knowledge seems to stand in between the two realms as it does not seem to be either 'private' or 'public' in the same sense as the one that is found in the realms of feelings on the one hand and that of action on the other. The seeking for knowledge, though dependent on others, is still 'independent' in a radical sense as, ultimately, one has to think for oneself and it is this activity of thinking which sets apart this realm from all others. Thinking occurs in the loneliness of one's being and though language seems involved in it and the thinking of past thinkers is present in some sense or other, one feels essentially independent of it all as the heart of the activity consist in departing from what had been thought before and, as for language, 'using' it in the way that it conveys the thought as clearly as possible.

The relation of language to thought has been a subject of discussion and seems unresolvable in principle. But there can be little doubt that thinking not only is primary and independent of language as is evidenced by the statement that 'what has been said does not exactly convey what I thought and hence has to be reformulated or, at another level, what translation continuously attests. Not only this, it is a process, an activity which gives rise to that which is called 'thought' and which, at least tentatively, is embodied in language.

The distinction between 'thinking' and 'thought', and 'thought' and 'language' is generally overlooked, just as the fact that though 'thinking' is an activity, it is not an action of the usual kind as it generally has no purpose outside the activity itself. In this, it is more akin to the activity that is undertaken in the context of what is called 'artistic creation' where also the distinction between the activity and the purpose for which it is undertaken can not be clearly made. The distinction, even when made, seems to be forced as it does not seem relevant to the activity itself but is superimposed on it from outside, a situation that seems replicated in a context that seems even stranger, that is, of what has been called '*upasana*' in the upanisadic tradition.

Can *Upasana* be considered an action?, is a question that has been raised in Advaitic tradition and at least Sankara seems to have replied in affirmation. But he seems to have been misled by the usual analysis of it which sees it primarily as a means to

something else, a mistake that he could have easily avoided by seeing it in the context of meditation where the usual distinction between means and ends seems to collapse almost completely.

'Thinking' is close to 'mediation', though not completely so. The former has to embody itself in language even though it is not completely bound by it. Meditation, on the other hand does not result in anything. Nor, does it have to embody itself in anything. It is perhaps the only 'thing' that is self-sufficient in itself as it is an activity that is undertaken for the cessation of all activities. But the activity for the cessation of which it is attempted is primarily 'mental' in character. It is the 'activity' of the mind that is sought to be stopped. Thinking, however, is not an activity of the mind as it requires an active effort of 'something' which is not usual and which has as much an element of creative novelty intermixed with a critical reflexivity as is involved in most artistic creations. Thinking too can perhaps be stopped, at least in that form of itself where it is concerned with a specific subject matter and involves language. Thinking that is trans-linguistic and not oriented to any specific subject matter is difficult to understand. It may however be considered as part or element in the activity of meditation to the extent it involves an active effort on the part of 'something' whose nature is not easy to understand except indirectly through the activity or effort that it undertakes though, it should be remembered that the 'effort' and the activity is so radically different from that which is associated with these terms that they may even

appear misleading if they are understood in the usual senses. Normally these terms are associated with some sort of bodily or muscular activity, though even there that activity is sustained by some sort of an effort of will which is difficult to understand in purely physical or even mental terms. The reason why the act of 'willing' can not be understood in mental terms is that mental activity itself can be stopped by what can only be called as an effort of will. In fact, the term "willing" is itself perhaps mis-leading as what it usually refers to is a stance of consciousness in which attention and intention seem to be equally involved. Normally these result in what is intended to occur through the medium of the body and its various mechanisms. It is only in paralysis or serious disfunctioning of the body that one becomes aware of the distinction between the act of 'attending' and 'intending' and that which results from it. This makes one realize that what is actually in one's control is the act of attending and intending alone which, however also involves the 'freedom' to withdraw one's attention or to attend to something else and not to intend, or to intend something else. This is perhaps the central core where the sense of the 'I' resides, though its relation to the 'I' that is the subject of 'knowing and 'feeling' is extremely unclear. Perhaps consciousness has these three aspects and its essential reflexivity which is revealed in self-consciousness gives it the 'freedom' to dwell in any of them and temporarily identify itself with it to some extent, neglecting for the moment the presence of the others.

The 'identification' with one of these aspects and its relative pre-dominance perhaps defines one's personality and the self-consciousness in respect of them generates what may be called the structural illusions in respect of them which are primarily rooted in the fact that one generally is able to effectuate or bring into being some state of affairs through the act of attending and intending alone. This generates the feeling that one can achieve whatever one wants through the mere act of willing or, as we have called it, attending and intending it. This illusion of almost omnipotent power centered in one's consciousness is tempered by the fact that at the human level one needs the material reality of the body to bring into being what one intends and that one can be and many a time is opposed by other centres where the I-consciousness dwells as much as it does in one's own case. Not only this, in most cases one is forced to realize that the freedom and the power is not, and perhaps can not be, unlimited or absolute; not only because there is some sort of an in-built mechanism of limitation in it but also as one needs 'knowledge' to achieve or effectuate or bring into being what one intends. At still another level, one realizes that even if one is able to achieve what one intends, one is not satisfied or fulfilled by what has been brought into being. The dependence on knowledge on the one hand and the uncertainty about the satisfaction or the fulfilment achieved even if one is successful brings one back to the realm of the "real" which proclaims its independence from the illusions generated by consciousness because of its very nature as it is

constituted in an essential sense both by what it intends and what it attends.

Between the facts of 'attending' and 'intending' which constitutes the 'I', there lies the realm of desire or desiring which is generally regarded as a quality of the mind. Mind is, of course, the most nebulous and ambiguous entity that one encounters when one introspects into oneself. But, ultimately, it is not important what name we give to the phenomenon we find in ourselves. What is important is the fact that both 'attending' and 'intending' are usually governed by what we call desires or to draw attention to its active aspect we may call it 'desiring'. The addition of the verbal suffix, that is "ing" to 'intend', 'attend' and 'desire' is to point out that in spite of the seeming involuntariness in the phenomena observed, there is an element of voluntariness underlying them which provides the foundation for that 'freedom' which is the mystery underlying consciousness. The freedom is both evidenced and realized in the act of withdrawal of attention and that activity of consciousness which stops the flow of the activity of desiring which is the foundation of what is generally known as asceticism in different religions and civilizations. But those who have emphasized this have forgotten that in its capacity to withdraw from what it attends the ascetic, in fact, is not a free person at all, for he is 'bound' to the fact of 'withdrawal' to which he is obsessively committed and from which he can not withdraw as he thinks that therein alone lies the freedom.

There is, in fact, another dimension to this problem of asceticism and its relation to freedom. Asceticism, at least historically, has been primarily a 'male' phenomenon. Women, by and large, have been ignored as the possible 'subjects' to persue the ascetic ideal. It is men who renounce; the story of women renouncers is not much known or celebrated in the traditions. But, if it is so, then asceticism or renunciation can not be the 'truth' of human beings, or the ideal for it as it, almost deliberately excludes half of humanity from itself. There must be some 'other' ideal which would encompass everybody, no matter if it be a man or a woman, a male or female as to define one or to understand oneself in terms of 'gender' alone can not be the truth about a human being. It is surprising that neither the Advaitin nor the Sankhyan has seen this elementary mistake which contradicts its own basic metaphysical insights. Not only this, it is to reject and in fact, basically misunderstand the outgoing movement of consciousness which lies at the heart of the world as it is seen either as a foundational *avidya* as in advaita vedanta or as a result of basic confusion, as in Sankhya. What has been done to the *Brahma Sutra* 1.1.2 by the advaitic commentators is an evidence of this.

What greater *avidya* could there be than to think of the Lord's or the Iswara's creative activity as rooted in *avidya*? But what is even more surprising is to find the same mistake and the similar impulse in traditions which accept the creative activity of the Lord as rooted in freedom for, somehow, it is the return to the "Source"

which has haunted man's consciousness rather than the fulfilment of the task or the tasks for which creation was intended. It is, of course, true that no 'created' being can ever fully know the purpose or the purposes for which the creation was intended, but one can look into oneself and discern, however vaguely, the ends which one's own being seeks and realize at least to some extent the task which was enjoined to one in the vast scheme that 'creation' seems to be.

There is an aspect of the traditional renouncer or the formal attire that he symbolically dons and that is to remind one and all of 'That' from which the creation has emanated. But the 'reminder' could be done in other ways and at a more inner and deeper level than the outward way in which it has, by now, become a feature of most spiritual traditions in the world. It might have had some use at a certain time, but there is little doubt that it has outlives its usefulness, and that it is more a hindrance than a help now.

Consciousness, it should be remembered, is that where "illusions" are manufactured and where it is almost impossible to distinguish between the illusory and the real. "To think" is to bring into 'being'; 'to imagine' is to make something appear and if something appears how can it be regarded as 'unreal'. Yet the distinction between illusion and reality also is intrinsic to consciousness when it becomes reflexively reflective about itself. Self-consciousness can not give up the distinction, even if it wants to, as it is that on which it sustains itself. Normally the distinction

is said to be drawn in terms of the success or failure of the activity undertaken on the basis of that which the consciousness imagines or thinks to be true and through these activities has brought into being. But this is generally possible only in the case where consciousness is somehow linked or enmeshed or involved in what we have called the body which normally carries out instantaneously that which is willed or attended to and intended because it is desired. Yet, as already pointed out, this may not be; the bodily mechanism may fail to effectuate what is intended and the imaginary being that desire creates may be left hanging in consciousness without being actually embodied in that which alone is supposed to give it reality. Take out the body and the whole world of matter that surrounds it and which it shapes and forms according to what it intends and imagines, and you see the distinction between the 'real' and 'unreal' collapsing before your eyes.

Yet, though this may seem to be so it is not "really" so, for even when this takes place, one realizes that one's consciousness as it is affected by what one has brought into being through the act of imagining or thinking is not what one would like it to be. This provides a clue to the discovery that the definition of the real in terms of what is embodied in matter through the mediation of the body was perhaps only derivatively correct and not fundamentally as one had thought. The distinction between the real and that which is not so lies more in the quality of consciousness that

seems to be brought into being by the activities that consciousness itself undertakes. The activity seems to be certainly free as it would not otherwise have come into being but one also realizes that there is something radically wrong with it as what it has brought into being is something that one not only rejects but feels that it ought not to be there.

This valuational indeterminacy at the heart of consciousness which seems to permit that which is rejected by itself points to a paradoxical self-contradiction which appears unintelligible to human rationality which forms an inalienable part of consciousness at human level also. The unintelligibility however is there only because reason somehow fails to understand the nature of that transformational activity which also forms a part of consciousness and is perhaps rooted in it at a deeper level. The paradox, the dilemma and the contradiction between knowledge and action has been known to self-reflective-consciousness since it has reflected on itself. After all, as Kant noted long ago, the pre-supposition of knowledge is that something is there already, finished and final, ready to be known and tat it is determined by causes that brought it into being and which, when known, would make us understand it completely. The pre-supposition of action, specially human action, is just the opposite. There is nothing finished and final these, independently of us, which can not be changed at all. Rather, it 'demands' to be changed, to be completed in directions which are essentially open, challenging one to an

activity which is essentially free in nature. Kant, of course, did not exactly see it this way. He was too much obsessed by the notion of moral action and not of action in general, or human action as such which necessarily pre-supposes freedom. He had the same problem with what may be called the 'ends' of human action, or of human willing which is seldom quite clear about that which it wants to bring into being, or actualize and realize not only in the outside world but within itself also.

The clue to the understanding of the insoluble paradox involved at the heart of human consciousness is thus to see it in its active dynamic aspect and not the static way in which it is generally conceived in almost all philosophical traditions of the world. Reality has been seen in the context of knowing, and not in the context of willing. This is inevitable as the philosophical consciousness conceives of itself as engaged in the task of knowing and seldom sees this as a preliminary to something else, or at least 'seeing' that which it tries to understand in a different way from the one that is presupposed by the act of knowing itself. It is only the critical activity in the Kantian manner which reveals that the activity of 'knowing' superimposes on the real as an object of knowledge, the presuppositions that are involved in the knowing process itself. This, in a sense, is both Sankara and Kant at the same time. In the language of Sankara, it is an *adhyasa* which is superimposed on the real because consciousness is seen as primarily 'knowing' in nature, though he does not see it as such.

On the other hand, if we use the language of Kant, then what is seen as 'given' is actually presupposed by the activity itself, and that this is so, is revealed by a transcendental critique which he explains in his Critique of pure Reason and about which we have written at length in various parts of this work.

The transcendental and structural illusions that are involved in the phenomena of consciousness and self-consciousness are not easy to unravel. One reason for this is that thought here is engaged in an activity which is endlessly reflexive in character and thus has an in-built infinite-regress in it. It is almost like trying to catch one's shadow and though some wise people have suggested that the best way to catch one's shadow is to catch oneself, they have forgotten that the latter is as difficult as the former.

The problem of articulating the structural illusions is even more difficult as nothing is more "changing" than consciousness and it is difficult to know what its 'structure' is. It is the most chamelon-like being which one ever encounters and has the strange quality which modern physics has encountered at the heart of matter. What quantum-mechanics or quantum-dynamics has discovered is nothing when compared to what everyone finds daily in his or her consciousness. There is the added difficulty that there appear to be states of consciousness which, at least *prima-facie*, seem to belie the usual way in which consciousness is known to oneself and with which the 'real' is supposed to be consistent. One need not go to the spiritual traditions of the world,

or the mystics for an 'evidence' regarding this. Even the investigations conducted in the field of what has come to be known as para-psychology amply confirms this if it is seen without preconceived prejudices regarding what the nature of reality is. Hard core physicists, socialized and acculturated in the Newtonian tradition, have had to struggle hard to come to terms with the piling evidence of the so-called spooky behaviour of some atomic particles in the physical realm. There can, therefore, be little surprise if the evidence from other realms is disbelieved even when it stares in the eyes and refuses to go away because of the skeptical disbelief as to how the real could ever be like that. There is, of course, the problem of coherence or reconciliation between the counter-evidence which is equally firmly a part of our day-to-day experience. The physicts' dilemma is perhaps clearer as in his normal working day-to-day life he believes in what can only be called that which is the 'opposite' of what he finds in the quantum realm. He, of course, lives, like everybody else, in the world which defies his beliefs as a working scientist, but such a contradiction pervades all those who 'think' as there is always a chasm between thought and life which can never be completely bridged.

Perhaps, the contradiction is rooted in the very structure of life on the one hand and consciousness on the other. Life contains its own contradiction within itself, that is, death and consciousness contains a two fold contradiction within itself, the one deriving from the fact that everything is an 'object' to it and

hence alien in a fundamental sense; the other, deriving from the fact that it itself is an object to self-consciousness. At a still deeper level, consciousness feels itself both negated and rejected by that which appears to it as essentially unconscious or insentient or, what is generally called matter.

Consciousness thus finds itself questioned and negated by almost everything that surrounds it. There is matter which proclaims aloud that it is impervious to consciousness in its intrinsic essentiality, and life proclaims that its own cessation is an integral part of it. And, as pain seems to characterize life in a way that pleasure and happiness do not, consciousness seems plagued by a feeling that it seems to be essentially involved in something from which pain can not be removed permanently. Both the fact of birth and that of death seem inevitably associated with physical pain of a kind that is both unimaginable and unavoidable.

Pain, however, is not suffering and consciousness seems to find itself surrounded by 'living beings' whose pain engenders in it what can only be called suffering. One generally can not be said to suffer from one's own pain which one undergoes and bears to the extent one can. But to be a witness to someone else's pain is to suffer in a way that can only occur in a being who is self-conscious. Christ's suffering on the cross is perhaps symbolic of this, as in the Christian interpretation it simultaneously symbolizes and atones for the pain and suffering of humanity.

But self-consciousness does not result only in what we have called suffering at the sight of the pain of all living beings, but also a subtler feeling which is akin to it and which is engendered by the sight that human beings somehow seem to create avoidable suffering for themselves and for one another. This perhaps is the ground and the meaning of what has been called 'karuna' in the Buddhist tradition. Here, the Buddha is supposed to look at humanity and feel what has been called 'compassion' but which does not seem to convey what the Buddhist term means.

The Buddhist *karuna*, it should be remembered, is associated with both *maitri* and *mudita*, which indicate friendliness and joy respectively. It is thus that the so-called karuna is not just compassion as it is accompanied by friendliness towards all living beings and a sense of happy relief at the possibility that what human beings suffer from is generally avoidable through their own efforts if they desire and will to do so, and that they can be helped in this by others who can make them see what they are doing to themselves. This is accompanied by two other attitudes which seem to be opposed to each other as the one refers to a natural joyfulness in consciousness and the other a sense of indifference in it. The usual terms for this in the Buddhist tradition are *mudita* and *upeksa*. If one relates these to the earlier pair consisting of *karuna* and *maitri* which are primarily concerned with others, then the complex whole formed by these four designates or defines consciousness in a very complex way. The latter appear to refer to

the intrinsic quality of consciousness which when seen in relation to those that concern others seem to be at variance or even in opposition to them. A sense of joyfulness is certainly not something that one could have if the natural situation in the world is such as to arouse *karuna* or compassion in one and, if there is friendliness or *maitri* which necessarily implies that one is involved with the problems of the other atleast in a minimal sense and which is bound to affect one's own natural state of joyfulness even if one considers it as an essential quality of consciousness. As for *upeksa*, it is generally considered as indifference to the evil in the world which, if taken seriously, will affect one's consciousness in a radical sense and disturb it so as to make the so-called natural joyfulness evaporate into its opposite.

Perhaps the situation may be saved, at least to some extent, by a re-interpretation and a different understanding of these fundamental attitudes of consciousness which had played such an important part in the Buddhist cultivation of virtues as contrasted with those that have generally been pursued in the Vedic tradition. The enumeration of what have been called '*yama*' in the Vedic tradition, that is, *satya, asteya, ahimsa, brahmacarya* and *aparigrha* are obviously different; though one may discover some relation between them. *Upeksa* perhaps, may be understood as that quality of consciousness which makes it "detached" or what has been called in the Gita '*nissanga*' from all that it is aware of, including itself. This, then, will provide that foundation of freedom

without which neither joyfulness nor compassion nor friendliness will be able to function effectively. The idea that consciousness is intrinsically joyful in nature unless there are reasons to the contrary, paves the way for both the feeling of friendliness (maitri) and helpfulness (karuna) which will thus be the natural characteristics of consciousness when it is aware of the other. The other, specially when it happens to be imbued with the qualiy of life, can not but be seen as a friend who has to be helped if the occasion needs it. The term '*karuna*' is perhaps wrong and needs to be replaced by some other that connotes helpfulness rather than compassion. But, what needs to be emphasised still more is something that has been ignored by both the Buddhist and the Vedic tradition alike even though the former is more positive than the latter. And, this is the intrinsic quality of consciousness that is conveyed by the term 'joyfulness' which naturally overflows and creates a happy atmosphere of joy and delight in which 'others' participate, and to the extent that it happens nothing else is needed for the fulfilment of beings who, at least for some moments, feel self-fulfilled.

Yet, as we noted earlier, consciousness seems necessarily tied to a body that, amongst many other properties, has the essential one of being subject not only to birth and death which involve unavoidable pain and the resultant suffering caused thereby but also disease which has myriad forms and which seems to accompany life throughout all its course and which itself may

suffer from accidents whose horrible cruelty is beyond imagination. And, even if one forgets the body, and all that it is subject to, the diseases of the mind seem even worse as any visit to an insane asylum would confirm. Perhaps, there are other diseases such as those of intellect or reason or spirit which have not been talked about, but if one looks back at the history of humanity one may begin to suspect that these are even worse then those of the body and the mind as these can infect millions and result in perpetration of deeds which defy all values and norms that humanity has discovered in its long journey from beginnings that now can only be surmised but never known. Religions are perhaps the best "show-cases" of the follies of humankind as the deliberate pyramids of sacrifices that each of them has built over long period of its history, testify.

Yet, in spite of all these, consciousness proclaims its independence and freedom from them and an essential 'joyfulness' which nothing can supress as unless it were there, there will be neither freedom nor joy in the world. The realization that it is so, in spite of all the appearances to the contrary, is both a challenge and an opportunity to see that the world which is constituted by "consciousness-in-inter-relationship" should also be a world where freedom and joy should be realized to the maximum extent possible. And, this can only be done if all the virtues, that is, the '*yama*' and the '*sila*' are understood and interpreted in the light of this fundamental nature of consciousness.

The difficulties and the impediments in this realization emanate from two factors: one, that it is not sufficiently realized what is involved in the acceptance of the reality of independent multiple centres of consciousness which are all, at the metaphysical level, equally 'free' and capable of peace, happiness and joy in both 'aloneness' and 'relationship'. The second obstacle that stands in the way of the creation of such a world is the lack of realization, or even an active denial, of the fact that both joy and freedom are dependent on and conditioned by the freedom and joy of the other. Consciousnesses, it should be remembered, are both interdependent and in essential communication with one another so that the condition of one affects to some extent at least, the condition of the others.

Unfortunately, both these have been denied in almost all the philosophical and spiritual traditions of the world. Generally, plurality of consciousnesses has been denied and it has been asserted that such a contention is basically based on a foundational ignorance which considers plurality and difference to be real. In fact, the very notion of there being a "plurality of centres of freedom" has been said to be untenable as in such a world the 'freedom' of each will be limited by the freedom of the other and hence no one could be free in the strict sense of the term. But this is to misconstrue the notion of freedom as, firstly, it is not intrinsically involved in the notion of freedom that it will be only restricted and not 'enhanced' by the freedom of the other. The

mistake seems to have been facilitated by the mistaken consideration that consciousness is something 'spatial' in nature, where the idea of limitation of something by another, in case both occupy space, seems to be self-evident. The relation between consciousnesses has to be understood not on the analogy of other kinds of entities as both the notions 'restriction' and 'enhancement' need to be understood differently. One has only to recall the occasions when the 'other's' presence enhanced one's freedom and enriched one in a sense in which 'alone-ness' could never give one either the freedom or the fulfilment that one believes to be the natural state of consciousness. In fact, if one were to reflect on the variegated spectrum of relationships between consciousnesses and the reasons thereof, one may begin to understand why and how the negative element in these relationships has come to occupy a preponderant position in the analysis of the human situation given by philosophers in almost all philosophical traditions of the world. Once the relationship is seen in a negative sense, it can not but inspire fear or even dread of the other and result in an attempt to deny not only its necessity but also its reality to the extent it is possible by an exercise of thought. The samkhyan and the advaitic ideals are well-known in the Indian tradition. The herculean efforts to establish the reality of the 'other' in the western tradition are equally well-known, though perhaps not equally emphasized. The centrality of the 'cogito' in Descartes and his desperate attempt to establish the reality of the 'other' through an act of faith in God's undeceitfulness is one of the classical examples of this. But the

same story recurs with varied shades and nuances in the other great thinkers in the western tradition. The self has to be 'windowless' in order that it can be self-determined or free and one has to establish a relationship with others who have to be postulated for some quantitative reasons which also happens to be qualitative in nature. But this can only be done through the medigcy of 'God', as it was the case in Descartes. The same thing is true of Spinoza where the 'relationship' has to be ultimately established only through 'substance' which is another name for God in his system. There is little difference between the so-called 'mirroring' of Leibtnitz and the parallelism in Spinoza which alone establishes the semblance or illusion of inter-relationship. The case of British empiricists is no better. If we leave Locke's political philosophy aside, there is little awareness of the problem of the plurality of selves or the problem of inter-relationship between them. The self in any case, is a 'know-not-what', a substantum of qualities which alone are directly apprehensible in his system. Strangely, Locke does not even raise the question as to how these psychological properties can ever be attributed to a self other than the 'I', nor does he raise the question whether there are second-order secondary qualities which arise when consciousness itself becomes an object of self-consciousness. It is true that Berkeley valiantly tries to establish the reality of other selves through his concept of 'notion', but he can not ensure their independence except through the postulation of God whose objects of 'knowledge' they have to be in order to *'be'*. Perhaps, only the self or the 'I' is

really existent in his system as it does not depend for its reality on its being known by some other consciousness. The Humean self is so much enclosed in itself, that even if it could think of itself as a flowing stream rather than a frozen glacier, it can not have even the possibility of any notion of 'other' in itself.

The movement of thought from Kant to Hegel and from Hegel to Nietzche and from then on to modern times need not be discussed in detail, even though it has seen many attempts to get out of the solipsistic dilemma which is the inevitable result of any thinking which starts with consciousness as its very starting point which makes it impossible to do what it wants to do, that is, get out of the prison-house it has built for itself. To give but a few examples; Wittgenstein who denied the very notion of 'privacy' had to say that the limits of my language are the limits of my world. And Russell had to build his world in terms of a logical construction out of sense data with the help of logical relations outside which he could not believe in the reality of anything else. The logical relations seem to have played the role of God in his system as they alone provided that universality and trans-subjectivity which could make one get out of the 'private' personal world of sense-data. The problem of "other minds" still haunts the philosophers as if there were no doubts about one's own mind. Not only this, even the movement or the transition from the notion of 'self' to that of 'persons' seems to have presented insoluble impediments to many thinkers in recent times. This is analogous

to the Indian dilemma as to how to conceive of the self with any properties whatsoever, or to distinguish between the *atman* and the *jiva*, or the pure *puṛusa* in its pure state and the same as entangled and identified with the *buddhi/manas/sarira* complex.

The problem, in fact, recurs in the context of 'machines' whose 'creators' claim that they replicate and perform all the functions that the human being does and that ultimately, objectively speaking, there is no difference between the man and the machine and in case someone points to such a difference, it *can* be replicated, in principle. There is some problem about this claim as was pointed out in the well-known article entitled 'Turing machine' and in other contexts, the one deriving from Godels famous incompleteness theorems. But in spite of these objections deriving from very complex considerations which ultimately derive perhaps from self-reflexivity of phenomena most explicitly exemplified in self-consciousness on the one hand, and at another extreme in Dirac's postulate, that physical phenomena may be conceived of as 'interfering' with themselves. Dirac's postulate or hypothesis is well-known to physicists but the phenomenon of self-consciousness is known to every human being as he is not only 'defined' in its terms but also 'knows' its 'self-interferring' character most intimately.

Whatever one may think of these diverse and conflicting pieces of information, evidences and analyses, one thing is certain that one can not escape either the phenomenon of consciousness

or self-consciousness, or the inevitable 'self-centricity', or 'ego-centricity' or 'I-centricity' of reflective thinking which, at the philosophical level, is inevitably 'reflexive' in character. This 'I-centredness' of philosophical thought which necessarily relegates every thing else, including other selves, to an inferior or subordinate position in comparison to itself seems to be the result of an in-built structure of consciousness and self-consciousness which 'determines' or 'super-imposes' this limitation on the phenomenon of thinking itself. These are not the sort of entities about which one can normally think of in terms of structures, but as they lie at the very foundation of all human activities, one has to try to unravel them in terms of this notion whose 'limiting' and constituting character we know very well at the level of the bodily senses which shape our perception and experience of the reality of the sensuously 'given' external world. The understanding of the body and its senses in terms of structure is fairly well understood. But the same can hardly be said about mind or reason of which we are farely self-conscious to some extent. Kant had thought about the structure of reason and articulated it in a differentiated manner in terms of sense, understanding and reason. But he did not seem to have distinguished between the notion of 'structure' on the one hand and the idea of that which is transcendental in nature. He seems to have totally ignored the 'structure' of the senses which would have been easy for him, even in those days to discover. Nor does he seem to have paid attention to mind as something independent of both the senses and reason as perhaps

he was more interested in the phenomenon of 'knowing' than anything else. He, of course, was interested in action but only in the context of morality, and mind which appears to be the seat of desire which hardly cares for morality as it is anarchic in nature, did not engage his attention. But if the senses have a structure which determine, shape, limit and constitute the external world we live in, mind too must have a structure just as, for him, 'understanding' and reason had.

There is, of course, always the problem of treating any of these, that is, mind or understanding or reason as some sort of substantive realities having the same sort of ontological being as the body has. In fact, it is difficult to believe that anything other than the 'body' can ever be said to *'be'*. But, as one has to accept consciousness and self-consciousness as facts, even if one feels uncomfortable in doing so, as they do not seem to have any of the qualities which a substantial reality is supposed to have, so also he may accept the reality of what is conveyed by 'mind' or other such terms. The problem of their relationship of these with the body will have the same importance, even though no philosophical or scientific tradition has been able to solve it. As 'death' seems to be the inevitable fate of the body, one is willy-hilly forced to accept the *carvaka* position which asserts that the body is the only reality and everything else, including 'mind' or 'reason' or 'self-consciousness' or anything else depends on it as with its cessation, everything else ceases also. This, however, is 'unacceptable' to consciousness and,

in fact, has been rejected by almost all the thinking traditions of the world.

Perhaps, this is an 'illusion' that consciousness can not avoid as it is involved, albeit implicitly, in the nature of consciousness itself, something that becomes explicit at the level of self-consciousness. Still, it would be well to remember that the body, about which everybody talks and whose 'death' is supposed to prove the ultimate unreality of consciousness, is a "living-body" whose 'living' principle is not easy to understand and that the body which dies is not supposed to be, in any sense, a refutation of the body that lives. The point is that body is not something like inanimate matter and that, even though it dies, that is not taken by anyone to establish the unreality of that which is 'living', or life itself. No one asks, for example, what does life depend upon and if such a question seems 'meaningless' in the case of 'life', there is no reason why it should not be seen in the same way when it is asked in the context of consciousness. In case, life itself is said to depend on something else, then that very thing would have to be deemed more 'real' than life. But, if so, then reality would have to be defined as that on which everything depends, but that itself does not depend on anything else. This, however, would be a strange definition, as all that we know seems to depend on something else, a fact vouchsafed by the notion of 'origination' or "coming into being" which seems to be an intrinsic and inalienable characteristic of everything we know, or everything that 'exists' for,

to exist means to appear or to come into being or to become actual implying thereby that before its existence, it was not there. This, perhaps, is the meaning of the Buddhist insight which formulated itself in the doctrine of *'pratitya-samtpada'* whose exemplary exemplification is found not in the realm of matter, or even of life, but in the realm of mind or consciousness, which changes almost every moment and where 'something' comes into being and dies away, a fact pointed out by one of the shrewdest observers of mental life, William James.

But if consciousness is the reality which exemplifies both the doctrine of momentarines and the doctrine of dependent origination in its fullness, then it also exemplifies in a strange way the negation of both of these as evidenced in its capacity to control and stop and even annul this activity as claimed in the opening definition of *yoga* in the Yoga sutra of Patanjali.

But, though meditative practices all over the world have been a witness to this activity of consciousness, they do not, and perhaps can not, meaningfully articulate the state or states beyond the ones where at least some minimal movement or activity takes place. It may be well to remember that beyond the ceaseless activity of the mind which perhaps the doctrine of *pratitya samvtpada* refers to in an exemplary fashion, there are still other levels of activity such as those found at the level of reasoning or thinking or imagining or reflecting which also can be stopped, leaving behind only the activity involved in attending which, in

case it ever stops, results in what can only be called 'self-conscious sleep' which is different from the usual sleep as it involves perhaps that kind of awareness which the advaitins ascribed to deep sleep in general and which, in any case, is only a matter of inference for them and not of direct awareness.

Yet, whatever may be the 'truth' or reality of these states, there is no reason to suppose that there are not many others which have not been mapped so far or which are not known to us. There can be little doubt that in each of its functioning and formation consciousness projects that which can only be described as 'illusions', whether structural or transcendental in the sense explained earlier in the course of this work.

The 'structure' of consciousness is hardly known and can scarcely be explored except indirectly as, at the human level which we alone have experience of, it is accompanied by the possibility of 'reflexiveness' which appears as self-consciousness. Consciousness can be, and often is, without any accompanying act of self-consciousness. But, it is difficult to imagine if self-consciousness can be without consciousness.

But whatever may be the structure of consciousness it gets modified or affected in a way that is difficult to specify, when it is accompanied by, or becomes an 'object' of self-consciousness. There is some sort of flexibility introduced in its structure, a plastic, modifiability that allows 'fredom' to emerge in a way that

was not earlier available when consciousness alone happened to function. In fact, the self-consciousness reveals facets and capacities which were there already in consciousness but which were not 'known' or evident as they had not been actualized before. This awareness or rather revealation of the hidden power of consciousness has a 'creative' aspect in it in the sense that it can bring into being 'worlds' whose reality consists in the fact that they can become objects not only to the consciousness which has created them but also to others for whom they are as 'objective' as to the consciousness that has created them. Normally the world of 'dreams' has been given as an example of such a creativity but dreams are confined to the consciousness which has created them and to that alone. Also, consciousness, in dreams, does not feel free with respect to what it creates. Imagination or rather 'imagining' brings 'freedom' first to the fore, though at the level of pure imagining it still lacks inter-subjective-objectivity and is generally governed or shaped by desires as in the case of dreams.

The real creative power of consciousness in the process of imagining is revealed when it forms and transforms the spoken words into something 'inter-subjective' capable of creating a world of meanings which, in turn, modifies and shapes both the consciousness that has created it and the consciousness which encounters it.

Self-consciousness performs thus both a catalytic and a critical function in making consciousness realize its hidden

potentialities whose limits can hardly be known as each attempt to know them challenges one once again to go beyond them, if possible.

Yet, as both consciousness and self-consciousness *are* there and also as they are both embedded and embodied in what we call body and mind and intellect or reason, they must have a structure which is bound to have limits of its own which must further be limited by the limits of these which, at least to some extent, can easily be discerned, particularly at the levels which are relatively more gross in relation to those that appear to us as subtle.

There is also the fact that as far as both consciousness and self-consciousness are concerned each of them has a character of 'given-ness' in them where, strangely, the whole of consciousness appears to be given as an object to self-consciousness which, in turn, seems to have a capacity for indefinitely receding 'self-reflexive' regress. This regress, though indefinite, is not infinite as it is existential in character. Yet, in it lies the roots of that freedom which makes consciousness at least in principle, 'free' of all objectivity as it feels that it can turn away from it, if it so likes.

The given-ness which appears at each level challenges one to find how much of the given-ness or what aspects of the given-ness are the result of transcendental illusion. For, once the idea of transcendental illusion has arisen in human consciousness through a transcendental critique of which perhaps Kant was the

precurser in the western tradition and Sankara, in a different sense, in the Indian one, one can not but suspect that what appears to be 'given' may not actually be so.

The structural and transcendental illusions that are thus revealed to be a characteristic of human consciousness have, it should be remembered, both a positive and a negative aspect. In their positive forms they refer to that creativity that lies at the root of the world and which becomes manifest at human level in all the myriad forms that surround him all around and have accompanied him in his historical journey through the ages. The negative aspect is revealed when he forgets the fact that this all is, to a large extent, his own creation and when he falls in love with it or is obsessed by it or feels bound to it in such a way that he feels that he can never be freed from it. At a deeper level still, the bondage may emanate from the fact that he takes for granted the 'given-ness' of the forms that this power of 'creative illusioning' has taken in the past. "To be free" from the forms that freedom has taken in the past is the real freedom which man forgets all the time. One can recover this freedom only by becoming aware of the roots from which these forms emanate and the source of this discovery perhaps lies in becoming aware of the illusions that are generated by the structure and transcendental character of consciousness and self-consciousness at the human level.