CHAPTER FOUR.

THE LIFE & AESTHETICS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE.
An eminent modern poet of Bengal has described the appearance of Rabindranath Tagore in literature as phenomenal.

Till he reached the scriptural age of three scores and ten years, the description did not exactly suit him. Rabindranath's career as a literary artist saw the light of the highest form in the year nineteen hundred thirteen with the receiving of the Nobel Prize for literature. His faculty to compose songs along with the corresponding lyrics surpassed the entire tradition of Indian light music. The poet's interest in music in particular, was so deepseated that in his Memoir (Jeevansmriti) he has remarked that he could not remember when he did not sing. His prose have revolutionised the modern Bengali linguistics by shortening the gap between the written word and the spoken word without least harm to the powers of the language itself. In the realm of dramatic and other performing arts too like dance Rabindranath proved his mettle to an extent of surpassing all other previous national records. But most stunning and phenomenal event in his life was his change towards painting, at the ripe age of sixty. 'I am hopelessly entangled in the spell that the lines have cast all around me. The sense of poetry has left these quarters for good and all, peeved by my favouritism towards the incommu ....' The poet wrote these lines in the year 1928 to Rani Mahalanabis. Such a quotation is confusing enough for the student of painting for the following reasons. Rabindranath was an excellent literary artist but painting as an artform involves a greater physical strength and a stronger mental aptitude than any other artform. The painting artist has to make up his mind regarding the choice of specific colours. He has to know for himself which of the many blues (cobalt, sky, prussian, ultramarine) will suit the sky painted. The writer may say that the eyes of the beloved are like the bird's nest. But the painter has to know the nest in details before describing it. ........
The latter is always in greater troubles about the external character of things and it was queer to note that a man living at the wrong side of sixty could afford to involve himself, so intensely into formal problems accepting the risk of expressional incompetence due to lack of training.

The entire career of aesthetic exercise and experiences stood in defence of the phenomenal capacity of the poet-painter to make friends with an absolutely alien medium and to work on so massive a scale for no less than ten continuous years.

A bird's eye view of the artist's career is necessary at the outset. Such a view will take us directly into the mystery behind the prodigious extraordinariness of the artist along with the corresponding validity in the perspective of the 'art of the real'. Studies in behaviourist and psychological sciences have nullified the theory of heredity in the making of genius. Attempts have been made by some to prove that the individual man belongs only to himself, he is a monad and thus he is different from everything objective; he behaves and grows according to his individuality which is thoroughly devoid of any outwardness whatsoever. Without disregard to these findings of the modern scientists one may accept the heredity of Rabindranath, the first Indian 'artist of the real' as a preparatory background. And, when studies of the lives of Prince Dwarkanath Tagore the grandfather and Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, the father, are made, one is tempted to give them the status of the forerunners of the new aesthetic concept under discussion. ....

* Exact number of the poet's paintings cannot be known because he never cared to collect them or date them serially. One eminent associate of the poet once told me that the poet's son had sold one trunkful of them to foreigners. This comment invites attention of the holders of the copyright. The number of paintings may range between two thousand five hundred and three thousand. The job of making a chronological catalogue is not included in this dissertation because the purpose of assessing them here is connected only with the purpose assessing them here is connected only with the purpose of an approval of the theory of the 'art of the real'.
Prince Dwarkanath was one of the most eminent Indians to have attracted the deepest attention and regard of the early British Rulers. His personality was a combination of selfhood and self-sacrifice. As a businessman he was tremendously successful and as a man, a humanitarian, he was matchless.

Keeping any critical commentary about the worth of Dwarkanath as a committed individual in abeyance, one may conclude that the pattern of life that Dwarkanath had was oriented by an utter Europeanism. But there is little justice in dubbing him as a self-conscious materialist either. The personality of this great business magnet of the early nineteenth century was reciprocal to the calls of the objective world. Dwarkanath was born to a time when the physical and mental suffering of the countryman due to ignorance and intellectual incompetence was at its height. It was time when an ideal national leader was urgently needed. The life of Dwarkanath was one of a true leader. He spread his intellect and intuition to any quarter of his country as and when solicited without any scruple. The natives almost declassed him when he toured Europe in 1841. But he did not care because he knew that such a visit will brighten new prospects of social and material betterment before the countrymen of India whom he represented. In England he spent most of his time in business places and social organisations. Mr. Kishori Chand Mitra, another biographer of him, has summarised this visit in a befitting manner. From his description we come to learn that in Europe Dwarkanath witnessed the very spirit of progressivism and prosperity to his hearts content. According to Mr. Mitra the return from England was marked by a more sensitive attitude towards life. The grace of English life redeemed his soul so intensely that his mind now got prepared to carve the country more extensively and to make an enlightened India in near future. What impressed Dwarkanath most was perhaps the fact that so huge and so rich a world was no long lying outside the range of his experience. But like all other greatmen including his grandson, Dwarkanath too had to pay the penalty of greatness.
He had been stigmatised as a heathen. He was condemned in public meeting for crossing the black water. Even his wife did not shelter him when he built Belgachia Villa and began to eat prohibited food to impress the nabobs. But these never detracted him from his ideal. Mr Mitra has pointed out the limits of Dwarkanath's intellectual curiosity in this connexion and said that the hedonistic impulse was so strong in him that he little cared to show direct interest in problems of art and philosophy although he was constantly in touch with leading literatetars and philosophers both in India and abroad. This allegation occurred from his headon involvement in commercial enterprises. But side by side with the object of prosperity on material level both on personal and social standard, he had inclination towards religious and moral aspects too. One can trace in the deeper layer of Dwarkanath's consciousness, which was charged with sort of selfish hedonism, the desire to accept and approve the objective events of the world around as an inscrutable reality beyond the self. His personality, so far known from the documents of the biographers mentioned earlier, was pleasing and he was ever curious about things as they are. He never imposed any personal di ssatisfaction upon his countrymen in the name of the social service. What he did was a turning of the peoples' attention to the most practical and basic needs for a better and safer earthly life. He helped individuals definitely and it is known that in his trip to Europe he took a few medical students of his personal choice for higher studies and his own group of cooks at the same time. But an objective view of life is not an escape from the self that way. The penchant for objectification of the ideals was neither so strong as he could, like Debendranath, his spiritual son, forego all ambitions of personal life for a fulfilment of those ideals. He was neither an aesthete. The attitude to life in case of an artist is supposed to be coloured by an inherent discipline that singles the outward with the inward according to the natural law and order of the existent creative force of life.

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Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, a great grandson of Dwarkanath also has written a valuable biography placing this illustrious son of Bengal in the perspective of social and political condition of the century.
Dwarakanath deserves our sympathy despite his lapses because without him the need for materialisation of ideas might have been much delayed to appear in the Indian mind. Rabindranath was never vocal about the personal idealism of his grandfather. There is no reason to connect Rabindranath's aesthetic objectivity with Dwarakanath's ideas of putting specific emphasis upon the outward reconstruction of life through social and not individual means. But the temptation to trace a hereditary link between Rabindranath's idea of desubjectifying the personal aesthetic and Dwarakanath's motto of treating the external world as equally real like the private world is irresistible. Dwarakanath was imaginative to a great degree. But he was not mentally competent to realise the truth behind a conscious fusion of the ego with a world consciousness. The ideal before Dwarakanath was his countrymen. May be it was an ideal of humanism marked by rigid patriotic impulses. But the ideal before Rabindranath was life as it is and as it should be. The discussion on Dwarakanath cannot go beyond the above because the context here is to make out the course of development of Rabindranath's genius as an 'artist of the real'. Dwarakanath infused into the peoples' psychology an element of other-regardfulness. He was too advance of his time. He was a pioneer of bringing the true spirit of Westernism into the social character of the country too. But it was his ill luck that neither of his ideals was consciously observed and appreciated by his time. Rabindranath caught hold of them, although in an absolutely personal way in the true light for the first time in the history. His mission, which was incidentally artistic and thus capable of creating an immediate impression upon the psychology of the masses, was to carry forward the selflessminded mind of the Indians towards an objective sort of world-view and material idealism where necessary. Rabindranath, the first peoples' poet, first practical humanist and the first artist of the new century of science and realism, Dwarakanath provided him a fitting background.
The grandfather’s contribution however pales into insignificance beside what the father Maharshi Debendranath rendered to the making of his artistry. The family set up was rather peculiar and typical of the nineteenth century Bengal when Rabindranath was born. It was customary to keep the little ones of the house at a distance from the normal life of the adults. There was a board of servants who used to look after the children and seldom a chance was available for a child to enjoy the warmth of the elders. Debendranath’s image was abstract in the mind of the child Rabindra because during his early days the father used to stay in the hills in a state of meditation and spirituality. In his Memoir (Jeevan Smriti) the poet has described the image of his father in his early life. The poet has adjudged the father as an apotheosis of a man. Whenever the father visited the Jorasanko house there was, as it were, an alarm among all the family members.

During one such visit the sacred-thread-bearing ceremony of the kids was performed with utter solemnity. Following the ceremony Rabindra was offered a chance to visit the Himalayas by the father. The journey was punctuated by a few stopovers like as in Bolpur and Punjab. This journey is significant for it for the first time the little boy was able to see the objective world of reality from close and to read intimately the personality of his father. The young boy was amazed to find in the father a liberal humanist who never adopted any moral stricture upon others, yet who was a hundred percent spiritualist in life and actions. ’.... every action and imagination of father from the pettiest to the heaviest was very perfect. He could not keep any of his thoughts obscure within his mind. Obscurity had no role to play in his works also. The poet’s description of the father reveals that at the earliest opportunity the new artist-to-be made the father an idol of a man.

Debendranath never imposed any particle of his own ideas upon the boy during the stay in the hills. But the ways of his life (like his prayers in the early morning, day reading of Sanskrit and English texts in other parts of the and so on) inspired the little soul of Rabindranath to a great degree to emulate his ways as the ideal ways...
The reference of the father's early communion with the son is relevant in our analysis of the shaping of the poet's idealism. One may be wondered as well to find the beginning of the poet's career under the direct influence of a spiritualist father which supposed to be anti-materialistic in essence. But the fact is this that with the advancement of age the personality of the growing poet become aware of the inward combination of the practical and the spiritual in the character of the father. This awareness prepared the poet inwardly to a shape an idealism of his own, based on utter spirituality on the one side and deep practical or material outlook towards life on the other. The life of Debendranath as we find from his Autobiography was matter idealized. The life of Dwarkanath on the other hand was idea materialized. The poet saw the father as a recluse who used to spend most of his time in utter dissociation with the material aspects of life. But he gradually knew the father's extreme sense of materialism which lay behind the formation of no less a religious convenant than the Brahma Samaj and its corresponding activities like a literary magazine (Tattvobodhini Patrika), public meetings and some charitable works for the propagation of the new convenant. The grandfather dedicated his life to the service of mankind on practical grounds. The father sacrificed his personal idealism to divine and universal manhood and objectified the same for a cause that will suit and serve the humanity at large. The latter's contribution to the making of the Rabindranath, the 'artist of the real', is greater because an 'artist of the real' aspires to establish a sort of other regardedness in the ingredients he works with. Such an artist wants to (consciously) enlarge the practical necessity of transforming things into an ideal and thus in one making spiritual something. His task is to be oriented by the reality of the earthliness of things as equally as their unearthliness. Debendranath helped Rabindranath good deal by reviving the traditional Upanishadic values of life at the first instance and by placing his own whole career as a humanitarian social rebuilder later,...
The ideas of reticence and of maintaining a respectable distance were at once intoxicating to the creative mind of the son because these ideas were ever coupled with a deep love and warmth.

The process he went through was complex and dialectical to the core. On the one hand there was a deep spiritual concentration. There was a practical and applied life on the other. He married and became a familyman, educated himself in philosophy by learning Sanscrit and English extensively and reading in details the Upanisads and the Western philosophical books including Locke and David Hume. In an interaction of the real and the ideal ways of life there arose in the mind of the spiritualist an idea of rejecting the concept of God as a deity, physically composed. Raja Rammohan advocated this spirit of iconoclasm. He was a follower and admirer of the Raja. But the approach towards antidualy was made by him with an elaborate clarification of the stand taking reference from the Upanisads. There were impediments before the formation of a clear antidual conception of God in his mind because the Tima and family belonged to were not in favour of such a conception. Debendranath’s peculiarity as a spiritual genius and a worthy father of Rabindranath the ‘artist of the real’ lies in his gradual acceptance of the formal life of earth as a rigid reality and the option of his own mind for the realization of a formless and shapeless god-consciousness. What was most striking was the sudden rise of an urge to proclaim to the world without, the truth that he had realised. Amid deepest concentration it occurred in him that an Association, absolutely social in nature, should be opened for a propagation of the divine ideals. The assembly was named as Tatvabodhini which later became Tatvaranjani. The aim of the assembly was to interpret the Upanisad as the Vedantas in a novel way through meeting and prayers. Such an organization was already there. It was the Brahma Samaj, founded by Raja Rammohan. Debendranath soon joined this old assembly and began a combined venture to achieve his aim. A magazine also was published as the mouthpiece of the this organisation.

* A great eighteenth century spiritualist and social reformer and the main inspiration behind the growth of Brahmo movement under Debendranath.

* Tatvabodhini Patrika was first published in 1843.
Debendranath could not continue to remain an active hand behind the Brahma Samaj for a long time because he was ageing and his convenient was constantly challenged by new thinkers on various grounds. But noteworthy is his conscious attempt to unify abstract aims with concrete aims, his urge to equate divine inspirations with the facts of life in an organisational way. Rabindranath had the fortune to get his father at a poised point of the latter's life. The nascent artist was enchanted to discover at the root of the poise a continuous effort to synthesise matter with idea. There is no scope to reject the truth that the life and art of Rabindranath were largely influenced by the worth of the above synthesis. The father appeared with all his potencies when the genius was at a purely formative state. The father's inward indulgence of the son's behaviour during the visit to the Himalayas and his latter agreement to the son's any rebellious stand regarding social service multiplied the son's respect and love for the father. Those who accept Rabindranath as an idealist only attribute to him a deep spiritual poise. It was achieved by the poet through storms and stresses but the initiation to it was made by the instance of the father. Debendranath did not care to orient his own personal life according to the social codes and he never ran after money making. But he realised that the social codes were equally real. His failure as a socially well-placed gentleman inspired him to decipher the truth that the mind of men should be a house of rest for objective forces. God is one such force. It is objective because it has a glaring presence outside the ego of man. The mind when houses it, may discipline itself putting a curve to the peculiar surge of the ego which often sickens the soul. The mind of man is essentially enamoured in gross impulses. There is only one escape from these impulses. It is the urge of man to objectify them. In course of objectification a perfect and finer state of a universal refinement is revealed before the mind. The worship of God is the best form of objectification. Art also has an equal purpose. The artist's major business is objectification.
The artist who begins in a simultaneous practice of worship and objectification, has chances to sound rather devotional. That Rabindranath had a similar beginning has been justified by the inclusion of a sense of god in the entire aesthetics of the poet till Geetanjali. The philosophical tendency to objectify, which was hereditary in one sense, gradually rolled into a state of abstract matter-orientation which rather was an outcome of the continuous effort to signify the external world as a reality. The issue is now lifted to a complex level because here a baffling question relating to the object of art may stand in the way: If the artist is objectifying, if Rabindranath was gradually heading towards a state of objective description of the world outside on sheerly formal level, why should we believe that he had an inner consciousness, a personal way of existing the cosmos? We must believe in his personality and in the corresponding subjectivity because the tendency to describe objective world which was to stretch the hungry mind towards the universe, was complimentary to the inward will to create. The achievement of all great artists lies in their synthesis of the will to create and the reciprocation that occurs between the ingredients of his creation and the will. The ‘artist of the real’ is he who has disciplined the will to create (which Freud has described as ‘mysterious ability’) in accordance with the nature and spirit of the ingredients. ‘An artist of the real’ does not sacrifice the subjective stand. He simply infuses a sort of objectivity into the world of his personal fancies and faiths. He paints the nail by putting the nail itself in its objective state upon the canvas. Rabindranath in his later life has explained this idea of objectification in many ways. He has shown that art has a third stand which is not mine, neither yours. This stand is beautiful to some, benign to others. The artist will have to come out of his own frame and realize the beautiful as it is. Same is the role of the audience. Art like religion exists in the universe as independent of human personality. Both are objective in essence. • • •
The early training of Rabindranath near father in religious ideals helped the later artist to build up an aesthetic ideal of his own on the basis of a spirit of objectification. The benefit of the background was the perfection of thought which was a defence against the provocation to become a materialist, say a political leader, a socialist or a religious teacher. When we will attempt to assess the last part of his career that is the period of his painting we will be able to measure the extent of the impact of spiritual training upon his aesthetics. The last part of the busy life was devoted largely to umpteen social services. He was then constantly involved in commercial difficulties regarding the maintenance of the Visva Bharati University and was to visit different places of Europe and greater Asia more for collecting fund for his institution than for the cause of art. But the Muse of Aesthetics did never estrange him and according to some critics some best flowers of his creation blossomed in this last phase. The ideal that was set up at the beginning of the career under the august influence of his spiritualist father was a source of unending energy unto the last. And, it is unjust to attach greater importance to the contradiction that his strict adherence to an avowed moralistic ideal of personal type was symptomatic of his incapacity to penetrate the world of the objective in proper order. The commitment to the realities of the world was easy and without any risk of deforming the essential values of aesthetics mainly because the artist's early acquisition of an ideal conception of life was marked by a sort of objectified thought process. The ideal of achieving a perfect mental status, as aspired by Debendranath was embellished by a conscious search for the representation of the ideal in the everyday life of hopes and failures, of common human incompetence in securing the bliss of god and the like. Debendranath at one point of his life wrote a book on the new covenant and named it 'Brahmodharoo Grantho'. But the objective of writing such a book was to add an institutional character to his idealism. He wanted to include treatises on specific scientific problems besides the abstract devotional articles in the house magazine of the Brahma Samaj.
He wanted a separate establishment for the sanaj and a separate constitution for the proper running of the sanaj activities. Debendranath deliberately tried to be careless about material possessions but he never wanted the life of a recluse. He was careful about the education of the children and the right discipline in domestic affairs. This is why Rabindranath refers to the alarm that was generally raised among the housekeepers regarding the maintenance of domestic peace and discipline whenever the father returned for a short while. The major cause of this may be found in the will of Debendranath to see his own household as a replica of discipline and peace which he was trying to establish as an ideal. To this will of him perhaps the inmates of the house submitted. Debendranath had another side. He never liked the idea of securing the divine bliss enacting himself into the static state of a yogi. Debendranath's Autobiography sounds like an itinerary because the author's mind was always burning for an expression of and a contact with the diverse currents of outer life. This may be placed as another instance of the new spiritualism that was to be set up by this new rebel of the nineteenth century Bengal. The Brahmoism does not allow idolatry or any sort of physical ritual. The argument in favour of iconoclasm was that the emphasis on physical rituals is an impediment before the spontaneous growth of spiritual kinship with God. But Debendranath never moved without a concrete image of what he thought about the Divine. He searched the image in the outward world, toured extensively, spent time in the scholastic atmosphere of Varanasi, went to the solitude of hills, sometimes again attempted to become a pantheist in his own introvert way. The objection was in the preparation of a formal image as a finale to the quest. The actual reason was to free his mind from being swayed by the outsidedness of the image. To him the knowledge and identification of God were nothing except an intrinsic connection of the mind with the object that is god. The tendency of man to formalise is a barrier before the acquisition of this inner knowledge.
But Brahmoism does never deny the existence of a Maker of all things as an object independent of human mind. And to this extent the god is an idol, abstract or concrete as one may interpret it. Rabindranath was highly influenced by this spirit of apparent antidualism in the inside of which lies a strong inward tendency of the mind to idolise. Rabindranath's aesthetics was directly dedicated to this idea of forming images minus external formalisation. The secret of his art was to see objects in the manner in which his father saw them and to build an image of the seen and felt realities by way of connecting them with the inward urge to create. The aim of the artist can never be same as that of the yogi. Debendranath was not a yogi but his behaviour particularly when the son was mature, was rather yogic. He placed an instance of yogic idealism oriented by peace and poise, coupled the same with an awareness of things of the utterly material level. He always insisted on the son's rebellious attitude to life and his creative exercises without least objection for he realised that the true purpose of life is not renunciation of the will to create images and construct a formal ideal. Though he was an abstract idealist, he never brought his idealism or antidualism down to the level of impairing the human will to create the world in different concrete forms which is the sole business of the artist. Rabindranath's idealism was based upon the formal imagism typical of the artists on the one hand and the conscious rejection of the priority of form as the final means for the understanding of the actual process of life on the other. As he proceeded to a state of utter disillusionment having been caught in the sandstorm of materialism that was threatening the traditional idealistic force of his artist mind, there arose a necessity to reorganise the activities of mind. The two fold conception of his life which he achieved through his earlier association with Debendranath's life and ideals came readily to his rescue and one is amazed to see how brilliantly he began at one point of his life to invent a new way of assessing the entire business of his art.
The way was a conscious acceptance and inclusion of outward forms as they are without least orientation except a sort of commentary on them during the narration. He would have been a misguided cynic had he not used his inward strength of tranquility and faith in doing so because the objects, say, for instance, the wars and their macabre impacts upon the values of human mind, had a dangerous tendency towards chaos and commotion which often makes artistic expressions desultory if not antiartistic. The training in Rabindranath's case was arduous and so much philosophically valid that there was little difficulty in synthesising the gross material spirits with the aesthetic spirits. He is an 'artist of the real' because this synthesis of matter with idea, being with nothingness, image with ideal is 'art of the real'. Our age, the age of later Rabindranath was badly in need of it. He is the first 'artist of the real' because most fortunately he alone had a long preparation and it is he who had for the first time consciously realised the worth of the new method of objectification. The training in philosophy turned the poet into a poet-philosopher and the result was a composite philosophical art. 'An art of the real' is essentially philosophical because it narrates the artist's specific seal to philosophise the objects to which he commits. Rabindranath's aesthetics attract further attention for a clear understanding of the synthesis made by the poet between poetry or art and philosophy.

Other than the ancestry what influenced him most was the environment to which his aesthetic conception was greatly indebted. The affairs around him inside the Jorasanko house were interesting and inspiring so much so that he had grown a tendency to apply himself to them at every early opportunity.

In this connexion the other members of his family beside father arrest our chief attention. In the boyhood days of the poet an air of cultural enterprises was passing through the domestic atmosphere and almost all the members of the family (including women) were integral particles of the same.
Jyotirindranath, his wife Kadambari Devi, Dwijendranath and all others were earnest devotees of art and all of them were liberal enough to include young Rabi in their aesthetic exercises without any stipulations whatsoever. The scope of the young mind to apply itself to the spirit of the objective world was enlarged when at the age of seventeen a trip to England was arranged. Santyendranath, another brother took the boy to Ahmedabad enroute to England. The house of the brother in Ahmedabad was a world of utter solitude with one exception. It had a huge library of books and the holidaying boy was at liberty to explore books at random. The stay in Ahmedabad was significant because here for the first time the young artist was able to transform loneliness into solitude. And, it is here that the boy could become the soul guardian of himself. The guardianship helped him a good deal to take things he liked. A sense of superiority was already on the grow when he was being headed in the house as a budding artist after the return from the Himalayas. The self guardianship added to the sense an extra colour. A true artist mind is necessarily conditioned by an inner sense of superiority over situations which instead of melting into egotism, makes the foundation of the expressive side of the mind strong and adoptable. An artistic sense of superiority is a personal recognition of the strength of conscious mind. The artist becomes conscious of the distance between his own purpose and the reality of the rest of life by the strength of his personality. There is no personality without the strength of certitude about the ideas formed and (in case of an artist) the type of expression chosen. Rabindranath cannot claim any superiority over other artists in this respect because such a confidence which we call a sense of superiority is there in every successful artist of the world and this sense actually saves an artist from lapses like disinterestedness. The achievement of this sense in his case was rather exceptional. He secured it through others, rather the guardians. The early lives of the artists are often blighted by haunting sense of loneliness like as in the case of Lamb, Keats and no less of Sartre. ...
But the origin of such loneliness lies at the continuous exposition of mind to frustrating circumstances like poverty, lack of guardianship and above all the dearth of care and compassion on the part of the near and dear ones.

Rabindranath's self-confidence was contrarily inspired by an excess of strictures and a sudden exposition of the growing self to an objective situation of which he was the master.

In the year 1878 the nascent young artist went to England for studies. The visit is significant from any aspect. The greatest significance is the association of the young mind with facts that were contrary to his conception. To the Indians the image of the West was always greater than the reality of the native life. The young artist's image had no definite shape but that it was very big in proportion had been confirmed by his disappointment of which he had spoken in his memoir. 'I imagine any great sight so greatly that the real sight does not seem very great to me'. Europe Probashir Patro (Letters of a Visitor to Europe), an anthology of his first experiences of the land of the Rulers, documents the above comment and many such comments bearing the proof of his disappointment. The difference between the ideal and the real England however did not pose any obstacle before the imaginative mind of the young boy.

* For Keats the case was different. The failures of earthly life due to lack of friendship with fellow human beings and an incurable disease made Keats an abstract idealist with a soul burnt in the passion for what is not achieved. Keats could not substitute agony by any concrete spirituality. His poems are always suggestive of an arbitrary spirituality to which a sensitive soul clings out of tension. The case of Lamb too was same. The outlet in Lamb's case was an abstract humanism the foundation of which too was a sort of godlessness due to pressure of circumstances. Sartre was more of an intellectual and rationalist thinker. Sartre's early psychological disunion with the love and care of the world in the private level (as described in his autobiographical work 'Words') was compensated almost equally coincidentally by his association with books like Rabindranath. .... continued.
But hops deferred now made the mind restless. Seldom a bookshop was found in streets, although a large number of tailoring, butchery and specially bars were lying at all points of the town. We were to buy one book of poems of Shelly. Having found no bookshop near by we had to order one toy seller to get us that book*. Most striking aspect of the social life in England was the utter velocity in every human affair. People were all very busy. They always posed to be busy. There as it were, was a strict vigilance of Time. The struggle for sustenance was the most vital factor of life. But the distaste was not of prime importance. The anthology of letters gives an idea of the young poet's fresh selfprojection before a new world of values. Every expression emits an intense sense of wonder and enthusiasm for entering deeper into the new fabric of life with a critical eye. The letters reveal that his temperament could not suit the atmosphere. But unquestionable is the young man's new will to criticise which could never emerge without his conscious associations with objects beyond personal choice. In an essay titled 'Bilet' in Memoir Rabindranath has categorised the letters of Europe as a sort of juvenile delinquency. 'These were, as it were, an attempt to create the fire works of creation through disrespect, allegation and argument'. The letters are really overshadowed by this mental obscurity. But as he proceeded ahead in age this obscurity was gradually diluted into a sense of amazement and delight. .....

continued * .... But his existential literature did not omit any sort of elemen­tally emotional faith upon life and the whole bulk of it is impregnated with a spirit of intellectuality which, has almost inevitably reduced the scope to reap any golden harvest of art that embalms and nourishes the frustrated heart.

Rabindranath cannot be compared with any of the Western artists in this respect because his involvement with the external forces of loneliness was crowned by a typically oriental confidence in the positivist current of life.
Rabindranath's physical recreation to a juxtaposed state of objective life replete with rest and run, hope and fear, gimmicks and inward spirit developed in him an urge to express the joy of touching the unknown without any primary necessity to catch hold of it. The recurrence of this urge became a guiding trend in his later artistry. It shall however not be accurate to attribute to the sojourn the actual clue to his early commitment to the abstract concept of wonder and joy typical of aesthetic business. Before he left for England he already began to write and took to public speaking on subjects like music. The earliest writings of the budding artist were mostly book reviews and critiques. In the Nov-Dec issue of Tattvabodhini Partika (1874), the mouthpiece of Brahmoism, he wrote a poem* which was rather drab for the readers. But he could impress the readers as a book reviewer when his reviews were published in the above-mentioned magazine and other such magazines. This little fact of his early life is an instance of his greater capability to criticise than to exercise his faculty to imagine. The tendency to see things in an analytic way had been his early possession. The visit to Europe inflamed his power of criticism because the whole bulk of his new experience was a contradiction against his earlier experiences and was thus astonishingly evocative of analysis.

Rabindranath's visit to Europe was also significant for the opportunity it gave to the young artist to assess the oriental temperament of sobriety and calm in proper light. Such an assessment was urgently needed because in this temperament lay the inward Indian inactiveness which paved the way for the foreigners to come and reign for centuries. The conservatist will say that the spirit of apparent inactiveness was the result of the spiritual poise of the Indian national mind. But the history of mankind began to turn over a new leaf with the widening of the area of knowledge under the august assistance of science. Science was spreading its fabulous impact upon the Western mind and there began an unprecedented growth of interest among Western men for matter which is in natural opposition to the very concept of idealism. ....

* which the poet had identified as his first published art later in 1939.
Side by side with this change many demerits of the materialist Western mind too were exposed to the greater world. Through the eyes of the young artist the extent of these demerits were reflected and one cannot miss the inward critical tendency of the artist’s mind in the discovery of them. To the average Indian the English nation was an Eldorado with its higher social status and the apparent perfectionist mentality. But to the young tourist English mental make up was too full of inhibitions and moral debauchery and the whole attitude of the West towards materialism was angular in approach. In 1890 the poet again went to England. The second visit added an extra dimension to the poet’s thought by way of exposing the inward inactiveness of the Indian masses in an elaborate way. The life in the West was full of discipline. The poet exposed this valuable secret of the Western life in the introduction of the diary. The condition of conflict that lay between his knowledge of the motherland and the alien country haunted his out of his subjective shalldon a tendency to suggest wayouts began to crop up in his mind. The diary bears an intensely critical note which is suggestive of the growing artists tension of mind at the face of experiences of the objective and the subjective facts.

The visits to Europe and the early days of loneliness preceding the visit along with the association of his personal ideas with those of his family members and the spiritualist father prepared him to launch a search for the combined reality of life in the final analysis. The return was followed by a profuse creativity which he maintained till the last minutes without any hindrance. A few major obstacles like the shattering of his hard earned idealism and the decadence of health seemed to thwart his artistry when he reached the wrongside of fifty.

These obstacles had posed a sort of disillusionment before his aesthetic searches for an ideal reality of life that operates art. But these never minimised his potency. In the face of oppositions he became rather increasing rigid.

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It was published as Europe Yatris Diary (The Diary of a Sojourner to Europe) Introduction in 1891 second viz in 1893.
To the utter amazement of his readers and listeners, external factors of opposition recreated his faith upon life in a unique manner. By making an assessment of his art following the receipt of the Nobel Prize we shall call him the maker of a new modern art or ‘the art of the real’. Till Nobel Prize there is nothing to invite particular mention because the genius was then flowing along an abstract idealist channel although the tendency to infuse the external reality of things into the sphere of objectivity was already prevalent in the artist’s mind and a conscious attempt to render art absolutely purposeless was always made. The Nobel Prize was offered for Gostanjali which was the document of an avowed idealist’s searches for a final truth of life. All aesthetic commitments were fashioned by a sort of spiritual craving for justifying the ways of God to man (which apparently was a purpose, but which were expressed in a joyous manner. This joyous manner reduced the purposelessness). The basket of art was filled with flowers of romanticism, spirituality, patriotism and to mention the most important, the fragrance of a typically oriental faith in the beauty and goodness of these flowers. A meticulous approach towards his art till Nobel Prize would have unearthed the secret of his progression into an ‘art of the real’ in a befitting way. But the ultimate purpose of his dissertation is to focus particular attention upon the impact of the change in the mental make up of the artist which came due to the inclusion of the truth of objectivity into the aesthetic consciousness and which was reflected in a unique form in his art only in the later half of his creative life. The consciousness till Nobel Prize was complete with an illusion of art as joy. But there came a change in the choice only when he reached a state of disillusionment and there is no justification to conclude that the changes towards abstract drama, dance and finally painting were a natural consequence of his repetitive artistic exercises only. They were, on the contrary, accepted as a stronger vehicle of expressing ...

* His prose, mainly novels, were not without a purpose. Sometimes a kind of patriotism influenced them. Sometimes they became the records of an artist’s ideal concept of human love and understanding. But the general tendency was to refresh and rejuvenate.
the mental turmoil that cropped up due to a continuous widening of the area of objective experiences and an imposition of the objective realities of existence upon the tender subjective reality of pure aesthetic quests. The necessity of laying an extra emphasis upon the beginning of his career is to unearth the origin of his ultimate rebellion against idealist artistry. Throughout the middle of his career he had been swinging over the two poles, one is idealism, the other realism. The major influence was of the former like as in his earliest phase. The situation began to change as he repeatedly visited the West and came in closer contact of the materialist flourish of the West. He read the spirit of Time, irrespective of the geographical boundaries, as anti idealistic with its manifold currents of selfishness, mutual deceitfulness, egotism, obsessions for a safer economic status, political security and the like. The reading was outrageous to the tranquility of his artist's mind. It hampered the appreciative spirit of his mind to such an extent that he became almost blindly critical of every human behaviour around him. The more the ideal was shaken the greater was his urge to recreate a fresh ideal. The ghost of anti artistic forces was present inside his own country too in the shape of patriotism, perverted pedantry, religious orthodoxy ad an intrinsic interest for material completeness. His growing into maturity both in age and experience was suddenly transformed into an utter derangement when he detected serious irregularities in the ideal ways of life in Santiniketan*. The Visvabharati was a newborn university nourished absolutely by the spirit of Rabindranath the artist and the glorious tradition of the country to which the poet was almost conjugally related. ....

* The situation was to an extent similar during his early contacts with the West. But the mind then was not prepared. The letters and the diary of Europe had an air of adolescence. The poet himself pointed this out in Memoir. The experience of translating objective values in art was almost nil at that phase. But the poet of Geetanjali, and of the following phase was no longer in a position to admit of the inevitable incongruities, existent between his own idealist mind and the universal mind, between his own country and their country.
A time came when this ideal institution too had to forsake its ideals for want of money and mutual understanding between its inmates. The poet's dreams for making it an international institution failed to come true in many ways and at a high age he had to run from door to door both in India and abroad with his cultural troupe for maintaining the essential costs of the institution. These cultural programs were not against the idealistic temper of his artistself but there was an element of compulsion in these arrangements which was antiidealistic. The poet had the courage to accept the challenge of materialism in good spirits. But he was so long a stranger to such a hugeness of material wants. His early convictions about a synthetic reality of life now shattered under the pressure of the ghastliness of the physical or sheerly sensuous side of the reality. The greatness of his artistry saved him narrowly at this juncture and not a single piece of his art of this final phase is charged with absolute antiidealism. But a sort of nonchalance, a deliberate setting aside of the perfectionist and imaginative attitude is marked in the art of this phase. There had always been a critic in the artist. The art of his last twenty years of life became divorced from everything except selfcriticism. The criterion for the criticism became an approval of the outside from where the inner values were revalued. The result of this approval sometimes damaging for the metapsychological idealism of the poet. Many a piece of his later prose and even poetry is imbued with a sort of outsideness which, some critics believe, were resorted to for a compromise with the spirit of time. The height of it is his paintings. In painting a deliberate dramatisation of facts and distortion of the materials were done. The motive of the artist had clearly been to move away from the early conviction that art is a subject of unconditional joy and that art is for art's sake. The painter-poet did not reject the earlier concept that art is rooted deep in life. The difference is that he believed in the earlier phase that art is a rectification of life's crudities. The success of Geetanjali was achieved at the cost of the above conviction of the poet...
His communications with the changing spirit of time rendered him a new belief in the reality of life's crudities which the art of modern time propose to accept without any major rectification. The opponent may place here the instance of his later songs which are equally abstract in aesthetic fervour like in his early music. One has to agree to this view. This was possible due to the poet's flexible handling of many media from the early phase of life. Songs were to him a kind of pastime and the way they came were mostly casual. There always was an imaginative individual in him whose chief function was to stimulate the nerves for the combat with various events of the practical life. But for a perennial source of stimulation which came directly from his subjective state of mind, the progress of his art could have been otherwise. He never violated the inner subjectivity even when he was to accept the external realities of life as they were in his art. To describe Rabindranath as an artist of the real is never to disapprove this essential link of the poet with the personality. What happened was a digression, a sort of imposition of the external upon the internal which changed the entire aesthetic pattern of the poet's life into an objective character. The height of this change can be marked as said just a few lines above, in his choice of a formal type of art viz painting.

Before we analyse his paintings for a valuation of his change from one art form to another as a means of communication a few words are necessary regarding his philosophy of life as a whole. This will set us in proper base a for a launching into the controversial sphere of antidealistic artistry of the greatest idealist of modern India. Attempts are often made to classify him as a poet philosopher. His lectures and articles on philosophy both in India and abroad, specially in the years following Nobel Prize give one ample scope to conclude that there was a perfect philosopher in his post self. The arguments begin from the elemental link between poetry and philosophy particularly in the perspective of Indian tradition.
Philosophy is seeing in Bengali meaning. Poet adds one extra tone. He narrates what he sees. The seeing of the poet, unless it has a quality of penetration and wholeness, is subject to the flaw of wrong narration because a poet's seeing is that of a philosopher's seeing is other than common human sight. The development of philosophy in the West has been towards a culminating point of analysis and understanding. Indian philosophy developed not a single step ahead of what it was at the beginning. It began with a few pious men who attempted a straightforward discovery and identification of a divine process behind the quality of seeing into the things of life. The philosophy in India has been an attempt at the realization of a certain unbreakable link between the eternal and the temporal, between the ideal and the real. Early Indian philosophers, say those of the Upanisads or other holy books, decorated their realization with a staunch faith which did not flag in course of seeing more and more. Most notable is the early Indian philosopher's tendency to narrate as well as realize the problems of life in poetic terms. Same was the pattern of the Greek philosophy. The essential purpose of the Hellenic philosophers was to attempt at calling philosophy to be the highest music. The early man wanted to believe in the existence of an eternally harmonious pattern of life. All early attempts were directed towards a discovery of this harmony in a lucid poetical way. The term 'Ananda' which is joy in English was chosen by the oriental philosophers to describe the meaning of life. They said 'AnandadhewaKhalliraani Bhutan! Jayante'. It meant that the purpose of earthly life is to seek a perfect state of joy. Such a joy is poetical in nature. Rabindranath was bathed deeply in the spirit of oriental philosophy and one can unhesitatingly say that his poetry was born in the very light of a philosophy that sweetness life with a sense of joy of the eternal kind. The aim of early Indian art was to create unconditional joy. The houses of religion were the main breeding ground of early Oriental art.
The Rajahs were interested in decorating their temples and mosques more readily than the decoration of their own palaces although the focus of aesthetic interest was no less upon the royal buildings too. The literature under the early Indian kings, say of Harshabardhan, Chandragupta or Akbar, too was the result of the court poets' adherence to a spiritualisation of the royal majesty. The kings were joyed to learn about their own royal status from imaginative literature and it is interesting to note that the artists of the kings' courts were not in a position to depict the drab matter-of-factness of the everyday life. They worked on the contrary upon an ideal which was religious rather than archetypical. Most remarkable instance of the flair of the royal personage for an ideal interpretation of life can be found in Dara Shikoh's successful attempt at translating the Upanisads verse to verse from Sanskrit to Persian. Another instance may be found in the composition of a new Muslim religious creed named Din Ilahi by Akbar getting it written as a literary document.

The necessity of citing the instances of the Muslim rulers is to point at the early Indian tendency to equate philosophy with poetry, any aesthetics. The main aim of all other rulers of early India was to keep their enthusiasm for art and culture in the philosophical line and not in any way in the nonphilosophical dramatisation of the urge to live through the imitation of what happened around. The artists were absolutely dependent upon the kings and there was no scope for them to work upon anything that did not reveal the essential human urge to cling to an abstract philosophical joy of negotiating with the eternity of life on the side and the king's majesty on the other side. The situation had been same during the Renaissance in Bengali literature and art of the nineteenth century of which Rabindranath was the best offspring. But the appearance of a group of masters in literature who tried to assert their independent thinking in the early nineteenth.

* the first son of the great Mughal emperor Shahjahan.
The century was a pointer to the fact that art still had to remain a matter of ideal philosophical understanding of life as a whole. The novels written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay who was the pioneer of modern Bengali literature and the guru of Rabindranath, are full of the artist's conscious search for an abstract aesthetic ideal. The reader of Bengali literature of the nineteenth century will agree to the authors' poetical search for a universal pattern in an elaborate way. It was marked by a conscious attempt of the artist to identify art with philosophy which was done upon a strong base of idealism. The field was ready for Rabindranath to reap a golden harvest of creation because by the time he arrived, the literary firmament of Bengal was lit by stars like Bankim Chandra who might not have lucid in expression but been absolutely convinced about the necessity of rendering literary art with a definite philosophy idealism. The tradition of Bengali literature of the era immediately before the appearance of Rabindranath can be called 'non-poetical' because the central literary figures of that phase were Bankim Chandra, Dinobandhu Mitra and so on. There were poets but they were not worth mentioning beside the huge potency of the poet-laureate Rabindranath who followed them. Rabindranath however of course did not start from the zero. His poetry was rooted deep in the philosophic tradition of his country and in the idealistic spirit of the literature of his forerunners. He learnt from the lives of his father and all other elder members of his family the art of living philosophically. He found in the early literature of his country (as early as the Vedas and Upanisads) the tendency to equalise poetry with philosophy....

* The administrative authority of the British masters did not control the poets and the artists.

* There of course was Michael Madhusudan Dutt who died when Rabindranath was already born. But the pedantic poetry of this disillusioned artist was not a direct source of any of the latter poets' inspiration. The poets of the late nineteenth century were trying to simplify their diction and to liberate poetry from all sorts of pedagogy. Rabindranath pioneered them.
..... In the literature of the immediately early phase too he found a conscious attempt at philosophising which, though not formally poetical were stimulated by the artist's awareness of an ideal base of life which stood as the only reality before the artistmind. This ideal is manifested either by the introduction of a saintly character in all the stories as in case of Bankim Chandra or by elevating the human foibles and frailties to the height of an abstract moralising situation as in case of Dinobandhu Mitra.* This kind of manifestation of the ideal may be possible in case of poetry in an easier way. The early poets did not enter into the social fabric in details. They suggested a solution, which is a sort of escape of the readers' mental troubles, if any, by developing an airy state of high imagination. (As in case of the Vaishnav poets whose main aim was to dramatise human passions for love to the extent of a spiritual enfranchisement.) Their art was their philosophy. Their objective was to see in details what life should be. Rabindranath inherited this tradition by delving deep into the typical oriental trend of synthesis between art and philosophy. His tremendous power bore the best fruits of poetic philosophy or philosophical poetry as one might call it. Life itself meant to be philosophical from the early phase of his chequered career. The poet attained an absolute philosophic contemplation when he came of age. This is natural because philosophy develops, it does not appear in the thought-process of an artist one fine morning. The development of Rabindranath the philosopher was a matter of later date. The artist had crossed all avenues of sensuous experiences and had examined all the realities of earthly life with the carefulness of a true analyst. He had seen every atom of life in course of objectifying his personal reactions to the corresponding experience. ....

* Bankim's 'Ananda Math' & Dinobandhu's 'Kiltaran' may be cited as instance. These stories are apparently political in essence. But the authors are inclined mainly towards an apolitical solution of the problems of the individual and social levels through philosophisation and not intense probing.
The keynote was an ideal, a greater-than-life conception which operates all sensitive souls. The reward of opening up the subjective emotions before the world and collecting the spirit of the objective world was the attainment of a philosophical status. The poet had not acquired a philosophical mental make up as a legacy or divine bliss. He attained it for his sincerity to stick to an ideal that remains above all material hopes and fears of life.

There are other factors too. Rabindranath himself has explained his philosophy in many ways. Dr. Saroj Kumar Das, an eminent professor of philosophy of the University of Calcutta, has described his personal experience of the poet's meeting with Dr. Sarvepalli Radha Krishnan, when the latter visited him in 1925 with an invitation for accepting the President's chair in the Indian Philosophical congress. The poet was then sixty four years old and was clear about a poet's role in a Philosophers' Meet. At first the poet declined to enjoy the honour of occupying a chair as such with his characteristic modesty. But the professor too was not unprepared. He pleaded the case of a poet's competence as the president of a Philosophers' Meet with reference to the tradition of India where no essential bar had ever been set up between poetry and philosophy. The poet readily agreed by saying - 'The only thing which encourages me to overcome my diffidence, and give expression in a speech to my unsophisticated mind, is the fact that in India all the Vidyas - poetry as well as philosophy - live in a joint family. They never have the jealous sense of individualism maintaining the punitive regulations against trespass that seems to be so rife in the West'. The poet then referred to the philosophical fragments and devotional lyrics of Kabir, Dadu and also the Bauls of medieval Bengal which reveal nevertheless the historic continuity of the philosophico-religious culture of India. 'Plato, as a philosopher; the poet continues, decreed the banishment of poets from his ideal Republic, ....

But in India, philosophy ever sought alliance with poetry, because its mission was to occupy the people's life and not merely the learned seclusion of scholarship and on intimate contact with people at large we do 'realise how philosophy has permitted the life of the people of India, how it has sunk deep into the subconscious mind of the country'. Dr. Das in his article 'Tagore the poet philosopher' has summarised what the poet said in a befitting manner. Dr. Das: 'As a matter of fact, the literature of a people is just the medium for the democratization of the aristocratic achievements of its representative men. The poet's address was on the 'Philosophy of Our People'. This address has achieved the high water mark in the artistry of truth because the main theme of it was emerged from the poet's analysis of the spirit of an aesthetic understanding of the eternity of life pervading Indian mind for centuries. Numerous other instances of such synthetic analysis of the philosophy of Indian life on the basis of a poetical or artistic understanding may be recalled in connexion to establish the philosophic angle of vision of the poet. The poet was trying throughout his later life to establish a thesis, on Personality which is nothing other than an attempt at unifying the progression of life with the harmony of creation as a whole. Dr. Kjærna, the erstwhile President of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee has coined the expression 'aesthetic theism' for the religion of a poet-philosopher. This expression suits Rabindranath best because he was consciously endeavouring to create an aesthetics based on a religious idealism and even when he was insinuated by an engrossing obsession for materialism at the closing phase of life, this theism did not forsake him. The poet has a prolonged training in the concrete religious idealism of his father. The essence of Brahmaism was the surrender of the human soul to one non-descriptive god who creates man and allows humanity to move independently. The Brahma faith remained with him till he described the world of personality.
Great Master plays; the breath is his own, but the instrument is our mind through which he brings out his songs of creation, and therefore I know that I am not a mere stranger resting in the wayside inn of this earth, on my voyage of existence, but I live in a world/life is bound up with mine. The poems of Geetanjali breath a this air of the poet's togetherness with a 'Great Master'. The poet's realisation of this togetherness was voiced forth in his art. He said,

Thy words in weaving words in my mind
and thy joy is adding music to them.
Thou givest thyself to me in love and
then feelkest thine own entire sweetness in me.*

The feeling of closeness reached an apex with the poet's knowledge of the forces that threaten to minimise the scope of the Divine upon human life. One of these forces is the poet's ego which the poet confuses to be his personality. Another is his failure to find satisfactory explanations of the spontaneous workings of Nature. He cried out 'why you give me prestige end keep me aloof?' Drag me to your feet at the cost of my prestige'. He lamented the loss of a true contact with the Maker. 'The breeze is blowing in a decent manner. Do not hold the boat any more. Come into my heart crossing the stream.' 'Nature never did betray the heart that loved her,* but the poet's incompetence poses a baffle between the two by blocking the path of the Maker's coming into the poet's heart. The poet is proceeding along an eternal path of creation, but the road is shrouded by barricades. Now there is a cry 'give me more suffering. I shall bear it'. Then there is an assertion that suffering purifies the soul. Looking at the overcast clouds in the sky now the poet is restless with the thought of a lonely staticism of sitting beside the strange door. ......

* Personality.
* Geetanjali.
* Wordsworth.
..... At the next moment there comes contentment out of the realization of a movement of the weeping soul in the stream of the natural air. Almost all the pieces in Gitanjali are replete with the hope of something, somebody beyond the ken of suffering. There is an invariable objectification of the sense of helplessness through the acknowledgement of a power beyond and above. To quote Alexander, The philosopher, 'the world is pregnant with deity'. The ambitious poet is sitting at the desk with a burning forehead and perched lips in such a world. The Gitanjali was awarded Nobel Prize for its loud human cry for a meeting with the Divine. It does not record any negative trend. The apparent negativity, as in the above cases, is the actual confirmation of the poet's unflinching faith in the Divine hand behind all creations, including the world of personality. The approach is absolutely aesthetico-teleological in nature. All attempts are non critical of the oneness of a formless god. Rabindranath is a poet philosopher in the sense that he designs his art by an intense urge for bringing into an aesthetic shape his knowledge of the divine. This urge finds worthy expression in his pathos-laden lines like as in 'Abar jadi iccha karo abar ashi phiray'. (If you will me to return, return I will once again).

But the tragedy developed much later. The philosophy of the poet had become an abstract notion and it deserted him at the critical hour of his last phase when materialistic limitations were fettering his spontaneous urge for an identification of the self with a greater-than-matter power whom he had regarded so long as the Master. The old poet was philosophical when he delivered the Hibbert lectures in Oxford in the year 1930. He was cut and cut a philosopher whenever an invitation was offered to explain his stand as a poet. But when he sat to write or, to speak of the worst, to paint, philosophy abandoned him in the most naked way. ....
The Western art critics, say William Archer, have found in the painter Rabindranath an egoist who decided to describe the woes of life in all their nakedness or wanted to satiate an almost libidinal curiosity for colours and forms through painting. This is too much of an opposition because the acceptance of this will demerit the reality of the philosophical observations effects that were made by the poet during the phase to which his paintings belonged. The problem lay in the poet's disagreement to the earlier means of spiritual meeting with the Brahma. His last life with all its sick and hurry did not turn him an outcast in the world of devotion. He had chosen on the contrary the theory path of progress.

Such a change generally does not take place in the lives of great souls. The conception of an external world remains present in the artists as a static reality. Shakespeare's heroes knew that they shall suffer in the hands of circumstances. They believed in objectively aroused oracles and ominous forces. The Tempest, which is the last of Shakespeare's creations, too has a deep philosophical yearning for synthesizing the ideal with the real. Ariel represents the former, Caliban the latter. They come close to each other under a master who is an entity distant from the human world. Prospero's magic island does not seem to be like the Rome of Caesar, or the Venice of Othello. The great bard has elevated the story of the unearthly woman Miranda to the height of an abstract philosophical understanding of the inward synthesis of the human ideals with matter by bringing her gradually in close contacts of the seafaring young man Ferdinand who is a complete stranger to the entire island of Prospero but who is the symbol of the vertical man. Miranda's humanization however had nothing unique for a Shakespeare reader except her existence in a distant island under a magician father. She has her counterparts in Desdemona and Ophelia who too suffer a big setback in the realization of acute earthliness of things.
The greatest similarity between the two is their maker's conscious attempt at their humanisation. They all live in a world of morals and they embody the ideal human sentiments of love. Miranda's life was turned into a comedy because the mature artist had to choose between the protagonist and the antagonist. His philosophy of life reminded him with the realisation of an ultimate positivity of things. This was a natural result of his communications with the external world. A bird's eye view of Shakespeare's creations reveal the truth that the poet was analytic about all human impulses but he was not devoid of an inner faith in the reality of a positive current that keeps human impulses alive and that transports these impulses from one generation to the other in a cyclic order. His focus of attention was shifted from the castles of the kings to the streets and market places packed with ordinary people. His characters range from the emperor to the money-lender and the burlesque comedian. There apparently is no spiritual splendour in his characters. But they all are imbued with an extreme Renaissance humanism. The main aim was to enter into the deeper recesses of human mind and to be assured of an ultimate positivity of life. Prospero's magic is the symbol of the perfectionist ideal which Shakespeare had reached in course of his close contacts with the world outside. At one point Prospero realises that all magics are worthless beside the impending reality of decay and extinction. But instead of getting downcast he turned towards the passionate business of love that her daughter was engaged in. Rabindranath began with the same aim. He continued to live upto the half of life with the same purpose of searching an affirmation of life through the dialectics of the subjective and the objective forces. But the situation suddenly began to change and a flood of new realisations about the existence of a negative aspect of life as equally forceful came to sway him towards a new illusory artistry. The same negativity is palpable in Shakespeare's art too. But that is subordinate to the basic aesthetic conviction. Shakespeare is regarded as the father of Romanticism in English literature. He belonged to the age of the Renaissance.
The mastery of Shakespeare lay in an understanding of the interior craving of men for romanticism. Human souls dedicate themselves to an ideal, to something above the reality of earthly existence. This dedication had been direct and without orientation in the age of the Renaissance. The age was one of sensitivity towards all finer values of life. It belonged to those who worshipped individualism as the sole ideal of life. The master caught this spirit of the age at the right point. He discovered the basic human urge to explore newer horizons on the emotional level. He felt the human passions for existence from close and he was convinced about the elemental necessity of propagating a positivist view of life through art. His heroes when they are antipositive, fall flat and are done to merciless death by a deus ex machina. The waning of Macbeth's resolute genius as a warrior king instills in the audience of Shakespeare an awareness of the life's essence. The death of Macbeth releases the mental tension of the audience and eases up situations into an healthy set up dipped in a fresh will of the people to live under a sensible authority. Othello's suicide reconciles the audience with the dialectics of the Moore's mental suffering due to elements life credulosity, love, betrayal and the like. Same is the case with all other minor characters. The theory of all Shakespeare plays is one and that is 'reward for the goddoer, penalty for the sinner'. This theory was not rendered null and void even in the last play. The development that the artist had was towards an abstract expression of the above faith in the goodness of life. Says Miranda at one point, 'O wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here'. How beautiful mankind is. O brave new world. That has such people in't! His plays accommodate numerous whores, morally debauched royal personages and various incestuous affairs. Compliments often opine that Shakespeare did not care for any such spiritual awareness and that he belonged to a time when the audience bothered least about anything beyond fanciful visual entertainments. Such opinions are right. But the dramas reveal their author's urge to explore and describe certain deeper ideas that were lying hidden inside the life of the age. One of these ideas, for example, is to see life as mere subordinate to Time which the dramatist had inherited from the Greek.
But the spirit was essentially human and the poet's commitments to the contemporary demand for vulgar entertainments were largely balanced by this innate humanism. The tragic souls undergo redemption in our understanding of the reality of their almost mechanical commitments to the Nemesis. Even Prospero's intellectual splendour ('to whose potent art even the graves are obedient') gives way to an unimpressive recognition of the baseless fabric of life. But his turning towards Miranda's love affair is redemptive in a symbolic way. 'Tempest is fundamentally poetic more than musical. In it we finally meet no negation, but listen rather to a vast breathing, a rhythmic pulse, the surge and sob of a great ocean'.

The last plays of Shakespeare import the audience to the other side of the sea of imperfect life. Shakespeare of the Tempest or the Winter's Tale, is an ascetic who has been content to leave the world (of art) with the conviction that the business of life is to live and to live in joy and wonder. The complexities behind the understanding of the above truth had been many. Shakespeare was fully informed about it all. His dramatic art had offered the great advantage of keeping the world outside himself and describing it in a detached manner. The art of drama has ample scope to objectify the experiences of the objective world because the artist here gets other living individuals (the dramatis personae) to convey his say. Those individuals are given permission to move about within the range of a maximum independence. Shakespeare's dramatic genius does not come to the level of Rabindranath's poetic and musical genius. The last works of Rabindranath may be cited in this context to prove that the poet also had objectified the impulse of evaluating life on a basis of completeness and perfection at the final point. But the poet's last works include a huge number of paintings. These paintings are the documents of a sensitive human soul who fails to clarify his own vision of the life and the world he lives and gropes futilely for a perfection that can never be reached through any objectification whatsoever.
The art critic will supply arguments in favour of the poet's failure to objectify by showing his lack of training in the art of painting and his encounters with the grotesque realities of life which made headway in his possessive nature. But the real trouble lay at the cessation of the poet's will to portray illusory character of the worldly experiences in tender poetic terms which clashed head on with his enormous background of aesthetic exercises. The clash ensued the more his idealist poetic passion came in closest contacts of the realities of life replete with various anti-idealistic experiences. Shakespeare's consciousness too had been reciprocal to the frailties and foibles of life. But Rabindranath's conscious mind entered deeper into the problems of his age. The age of Rabindranath was complexer than the age of Shakespeare. Added to this was the spiritual training of the former which forged a solid base of idealism. The shattering of this base had been done outwardly with the growth of a universal human will to pursue materialistic perfections. The result of this pursuit was disillusionment because such a perfection never materialises in the human mind and there lies beyond and above all human aspirations to live perfectly, the truth of the characteristic upwardness of mind, mind that is never content to the perfect on a particular point of achievement or a series of achievements as such. Another great difficulty with Rabindranath was that he belonged to a time when art was no more for art's sake. Shakespeare wrote for an audience who had consciously been trying only to heed the entertainment values of art. But Rabindranath's audience had been alert about the need of an assessment of aesthetic experiences as per their personal experiences of life and they had been active in passing opinions about their tastes of the aesthetic experiences from a personal level. The trouble with the modern man is that he does not want to dispense with his personal likes and dislikes for the sake of entertainment. The world of personality now is full of independent inwardness and an awareness of the limitations of unconditional and true rapport with the world outside the self. .......
The world had seen a great war and the impact of this universal massacre had been strongly felt inside the cage of every human heart. Bertrand Russell has, in his Autobiography, analysed the spirit of the age in many ways. A few quotations from the philosopher will not be out of place here because although Russell spoke as a European, what he said were the words of humanity at large. Rabindranath belonged to the same generation and he too along with his countrymen was caught in the whirlwind of modern human selfishness, mutual hatred, horror, and hunt for the material perfection as a result of a continuous contact with the battle-weary West.

Russell: 'I had supposed until that time that it was quite common for parents to love their children, but the war persuaded me that it is a rare exception. I had supposed that most people liked money better than almost anything else, but I discovered that they liked destruction even better. I had supposed that intellectuals frequently loved truth, but I found here again that not ten percent of them prefer truth to popularity.'

D.H. Lawrence, the author of the fabulous *Lady Chatterley* and many other sparkling novels, once wrote to Russell: 'There is another seat of consciousness than the brain and nerves. There is a blood consciousness which exists in us independently of the ordinary mental consciousness. . . . By blood knowing is overwhelming. We should realise that we have a blood being, a blood consciousness, a blood-soul complete and apart from a mental and nerve consciousness.'

Such discoveries by no less a man of distinction than Lawrence are symptomatic of the human eagerness for getting deeper into the absolutely physical side of life. This was unknown to Shakespeare and it shall be unwise to find in the blood-conscious attempts of Lady Macbeth to find for her husband a worthy throne a similar spirit. If we are to accept Lawrence, the consciousness was there in the age of Shakespeare too.
but the discovery of it was made by he modern men at a dear cost of losing the refined spirit of mutual understanding and peace of the physical and mental kind. Russell: "Not only have millions of valuable lives been lost, not only have an even greater number of men been maimed and shattered in health, but the whole standard of civilization has been lowered. Fear has invaded men's inmost being, and with fear has come the ferocity that always attends it. Hatred has become the rule of life, and injury to others is more desired than benefit to ourselves.... Terror and savagery have become the very air of our breath. (Extract from a letter Russell wrote to President Wilson of America). The above words of no less a person than Russell are representative of the modern man's encounter with the hitherto unknown realities of the human life. The tune of the passage is pregnant with a note of utter helplessness due to a new realization of human values in the background of a macabre war. The entire impulse of belligerence of the twentieth century is dissimilar to the impulse of war of the Barbarians who toppled Rome or the mythical Greeks who conquered Troy for a woman. The will to war with the fellowmen is evoked by a sense of possession in all ages, but the enforcement of the will to action is unique in the modern age with an inner urge of men to cut off all sorts of outward reasons from the passion of self love. The were used to take place on earlier occasions to settle political problems only. By war now is meant a continuous demoralization and devaluation of existing values. The second great war ended in 1941 with the explosion of the atomic bomb in a couple of Japanese towns by America. The matter was settled by the international council for peace termed as United Nations Organization. But the malady of the bomb had spread a contagion of sickness to a vast part of the world and the effect has still been lasting even after the lapse of thirty long years. The horror is over and Japan has emerged afresh from the catastrophe. .....
Ho»_3..9,
• ••«, But the sense of horror of an atomic bomb still threatens humanity. No
one is yet free from this sense. This continuity or lingering as one might call
it, was not there during the reign of Julius Caesar. The hopes of recuperation
is still a far cry and the mania for war is now stronger even after the shock of
the two great wars had already been felt at every corner of the human civilisation.
The rise of democracy all over the world has let loose a reign of mutual disbelief
and loneliness and the original instinct of man to save his own skin has now
become prominent with the ideas of self proclamation and self support on all earthly
levels. The values now differ from father to son, wife to husband, community to
community and from the administrative authority to the people. The network of
social life is now absolutely weak because of this defiance of the objective forces
by the subjective forces.

Russell visited Russia and China after the war. His impression of Russia dozes
us. In a letter to his wife in June 1920, the philosopher wrote : 'Lenin with
whom I had an hour's conversation, rather disappointed me. I do not think that
I should have guessed him to be a great man but in the course of our conversation
I was chiefly conscious of his intellectual limitations, and his rather narrow
Marxian orthodoxy.....' Russell's views of Marx had never been positive. Such
an impression of the maker of modern Russia might have been evoked by the philoso-
pher's personal apathy for Marxist way of life. But what he wrote about Russia in
July 1930 is worth mentioning. 'This is a strange world into which I have come,
a world of dying beauty and harsh life....... It is ugly and brutal, but full of
constructive energy and faith in the value of what it is creating. In creating a
new machinery for social life, it has no time to think of anything beyond machinery..

... we have no time for a new art or a new religion'. They tell me with a certain
impatience'. In 1931 Russell spent the Christmas day on Atlantic. He was returning
from a lecture tour in America. ......
In an article captioned 'Christmas at Sea' for a local newspaper the philosopher wrote, 'Time, they say makes a man mellow. I do not believe it. Time makes a man afraid, and fear makes him conciliatory..... I am thinking of the fear that enters the soul through experience of the major evils to which life is subject; the treachery of friends, the death of those whom we love, the discovery of the cruelty that lurks in average human nature'. In a separate treatise on modern physics the mathematician-philosopher wrote, '..... No dungeon was constructed so dark and narrow as that in which the shadow physics of our time imprisons us, for every prisoner has believed that outside his walls a free world existed, but now the prison has become the whole universe.'

In May-June, 1931 Russell dictated to his secretary a short autobiography. The Epilogue is included in the work under discussion. '.....When Rome fell, St. Augustine, a Boechist of that period, could console himself with a new hope, but my outlook upon my own time is less like his than like that of the unfortunate pagan philosophers of the time of Justinian, whom Gibbon describes as seeking asylum in Persia, but so disgusted by what they saw there that they returned to Athens, inspite of the Christian bigotry which forbade them to teach. Even they were more fortunate than I am in one respect, for they had an intellectual faith which remained firm......I do not believe that the constructive efforts of present-day philosophers and men of science have anything approaching the validity that attaches to their destructive criticism.....'

In June 1931 Mr. Will Durant wrote a letter to Russell and sent copies of this letter to many great intellectuals including Rabindranath Tagore. Mr. Durant's purpose was to convey his personal philosophy of life in the contemporary set up to the philosophers. A few lines from the letter may be quoted here as relevant to our understanding of the postwar Western life. Durant's 'Astronomers have told us that human affairs constitute but a moment in the trajectory of a star; ....'
Geologists have told us that civilization is a precarious interlude between ice ages. Biologists have told us that the will and the self are the helpless instruments of heredity and environment, and that the once incorruptible soul is only a transient, incandescence of the brain. The Industrial Revolution has destroyed the home, and the discovery of contraceptives is destroying the family, the old morality and perhaps the race. Love is analyzed into a physical congestion, and marriage becomes a temporary physiological convenience slightly superior to promiscuity. Every invention strengthens the strong and weakens the weak; every new mechanism displaces men, and multiplies the horrors of war. God who was once the consolation of our brief life, and our refuge in bereavement and suffering, has apparently vanished from the scene; no telescope, no microscope discovers him. Life has become in that total perspective which is philosophy, a fitful pullulation of human insects on the earth, a planetary eczema that may soon be cured, nothing is certain in it except defeat and death, a sleep from which it seems, there is no awakening. The above is one of the most brilliant approaches to the disease of the age. The entire western hemisphere went crazy for a mechanization of life on all fronts. The impact of it spread a contagion of fear and sense of self protection among the people of the world. The Orient, despite its spiritual splendor, could not remain a silent spectator at this juncture. The greater was the knowledge and the contact with the West, the larger was the scope to rectify life's policies in material terms. The instinctual affinity of man with the prospect of perfection at its maximum began to draw human mind to the conviction that life on earth is subject to perfection. What slipped out of the process was the infallible truth about the narrowness that this apparently buoyant conviction carries with it. The state of perfection can be achieved only on the physical level and, no science was ready, at least in the period between the two great wars, to gauge this one sidedness of the approach. The mental life of man was, in the turmoil, getting utterly decrepit. ....
The result is summarised in the above passages of some finest representatives
of the age.

The mind of man was groping in the abysmal darkness of achievements. There was
no holiday, no escape from the responsibilities that an individual had to run as
socially committed creature.

Subjective forces were suppressed to an extent of the absolute loss of orbit.
Objective forces were too obscure to grapple with. The result was an intenser
probing into the depths of the personal behaviour which was now fundamentally
eccentric due to a continuous hammering from outside. The more the probing the
greater was the human urge to enter deeper and deeper into private (and instinctual)
decisions and reactions. The elemental human response to the social forces which
were originally created by the urge of man to live together securely upon the earth
for a particular period of time was proved to be a matter of mutual difference and
selfishness. The world war taught men to live as individuals on the one hand and
to restrict the individual passions for a secured existence within personal limits
on the other. The disturbances in the social systems and the clashes of individual
values gave rise to a sense of loneliness in man and the war was a pointer to the
truth that the objective world of social and moral values were enveloped by a thick
smoke of negative forces of death and destruction. The progress of human civilisation
was towards a rational achievement of the mind over the original abysmal
volitions. The human mind was developing into a breeding ground for decency and
balance and it was, through centuries of untiring efforts, trying to refine itself
as per the necessities created by the growth of an increasing volume of social
complex. But the war let loose a feeling of the futility of such a progress. It
opened up a queer feeling of mutual disdain to such an extent that the developing
human mind was at once suspended between belief and scepticism, between the
subjective and the objective realities.
The artist at this crucial hour of human history had to suffer most. He had no alternative but to accept the evil as his subject and the toughest task that he had to perform was to kindle the flame of his aesthetic ideals with feeble fingers and awestruck heart.

Rabindranath is an outstanding example of the derangement that the artist of the new age of belligerence and demoralised values had suffered. His contact with the Western world was not the sole factor behind the derangement. What he saw in his own country too was depressing. The greatest evil in his country was a maddening human flair for patriotism. He was amazed to see that the countrymen were making a big show of their patriotic sentiments by confining themselves into the external devices and haphazard protests against the British exploitation. They were turning to the spirit of their motherland for a spiritual support on the one hand and clinging to the spirit of dynamic material development of the West with all its limitations on the other. They showed rebellion under an impression of compromise and acceptance of the tendentious ... dynamism of the Western life. The God in Geetanjali thus was but an abstract idea and it was in a majority of cases substituted by the idea of Nation. There is an innate sensuousness too in this apparently holy book. Critics often assail this coexistence of utter sensuousness and spirituality as unreal and say that the poet's lyrical capacities were throttling his spirituality. Even if it does, the reason lay in the poet's growing contacts with the sensory world in a unique and hitherto undreamt of way. The sensuousness is marked elaborately in the Nature poems of Geetanjali. But there lies the stamp of an inner restlessness of the poet's mind in these Nature poems which was coupled by an awareness of the evil in the world of the good too. Geetanjali was the document of the poet's continuous efforts to chalk out for himself a way to meet the ultimate reality of existence. This book is abstract in spirit and it emphasises the reality of a third power or god (the Prabhu which is 'the Master' in English) beyond and above the material realities of life.
What is most striking about this book is an acknowledgement of the evil beside the good followed by a note of ecstatic joy at the indirect realisation of a synthetic state of equality between the ideal and the real, between the ugly and the beautiful. Little before the composition of Geetaanjali the poet was busy dictating a series of morals to his students in Santiniketan which was later published under the title 'Santiniketan Upadesha-shala'. The main trend of thought in these sermons was to impart to the students a few codes of conduct on the basis of a moral understanding which the poet believed till now could build a comfortable social set up. The poet's inward yearning for equating the good with the beautiful too was voiced in these sermons. He wanted to dedicate his life and his ideals to the worship of beauty with an eye to instilling in fellow human minds a sense of light and joy that defeats darkness and death. The encounter with the evil was voiced in Geetaanjali by way of an interrogative expression of the wonder at the experience of the third power or God from the disorderly state of earthly life. The poet was still not certain about the invalidity of didacticism in the perspective of the present time. The aesthetic faith of his early poems (in Naivedya and Ksheya) was staggering for the first time in Geetaanjali. The case can be argued as a normal human seeking of shelter of the poet in a religious authority during distress. The poet's conviction that the 'master is standing at the other side of the sang' towards whom 'I have to row my boat in the fair weather' is preceded by his incompetence to accept the present as the real. The sentiment of patriotism intruded into the otherwise smoke-filled atmosphere of the Geetaanjali. What was more agonising was the poet's expression of helplessness in the face of circumstances. Clive Bell in his famous book 'Art' has drawn a similarity between art and religion. 'Art and Religion are two roads by which men escape from circumstances to ecstasy. Between aesthetic and religious rapture there is a family alliance.'
But Rabindranath's artistry bears testimony to the opposite of what the great art critic has suggested. The poet could escape from circumstance to ecstasy in his Geetanjali. But this escape was soaked deep in an intense agony of parting and was narrowly hallowed by a faith in the ultimate reality of the maker or the maker of the intelligible world. The helpless state of mind found a shelter in the political turmoil of the country and a few poems on patriotism were strangely included in the book. (The something happened in Natvedya as well)

The spirit of patriotism was also given vent to in Gora, a novel written immediately before the Nobel Prize winning anthology. But the poet was already clear about the semantic explanation of the term 'patriotism'. 'I love India but my India is an idea and not a geographical expression. Therefore I am not a patriot - I shall never seek my compatriots all over world.' He said elsewhere. But he could not avoid nationalising his literary sentiments at this phase. The conflict was on the grow and the greater was the disorder the greater was his will to ideate upon an ultimate universal reality. An affinity can be found between his monotheistic religious sense and his art in the poems of Geetanjali. A poet's religion is always humanistic and is charged with a physical sort of responsiveness to the workings of nature and other earthly forces. The difference between an ascetic and an artist lies in the former's unwillingness to respond to the commons side of life which supposedly limits human yearnings for the unattainable into a futile bodily frame.

The artist knows that everything is insubstantial on the earth but he tries to fetch pleasure from the narrow physical level by crying aloud for an imaginary cosmism that can never be reached yet dreamt of almost instinctively by man. Rabindranath fell in the category of the artists but his inclinations towards a spiritual crossing of the bodybar was exceptionally strong. The fusion of the body with the state beyond the body was rendered possible due to the poet's simultaneous attachment to both the standards. ....
In Geetanjali there is no disillusionment about the vital purpose of art because the poet was still confident about the possibility of elevating circumstances into ecstasy in aesthetic exercises. The inner melody that flowed along this book lay in an unconditional offering of the poet's bruised soul to a larger-than-life Master.

The spirit of evil stood at the poet's door in the form of doubt and a sense of incompetence. Its main source was the poet's growing contacts with the circumstances of life, which threatened/drag him out of his range in an indirect manner.

Mr. Abu Sayeed Ayub, an eminent critic of Rabindranath has written a few valuable treatises on the poet's encounter with the evil, 'Adhunikata O Rabindranath' is an collection of such treatises. In the first chapter of the above selection Mr. Ayub has discussed the perspective of time to which the poet of Geetanjali and the following phase belonged. The chapter is captioned as Amongolboch O Adhunik Kabita. (Modern Poetry and the Problem of Evil).

Rabindranath was a Romantic poet with a lofty idealism. He was in the line of the Romantic poets of English literature with a zeal for reviving the past in art and displaying in it sharpened sensibility and fervent emotionality. Beside his human craving for an understanding of the reality existent behind the imagination and the object imagined there lay a super human idealism of a larger-than-life power.

Mr. Ayub detects a soft note of pessimism in the poet's encounter with the two states, but the pessimism could not drag his idealist self towards the evil yet. The poet is alert about the chance for commitments to grosser antiartistic realities. He sings out 'O bird, please do not fold your wings just now, although the evening is casting its spell upon the world' (a piece from Kalpana). The Upanishadic ideal is to discover the 'adiitva varana' (the matchless light) in the tamasa, (darkness). The bird has no hopes. It has to embrace disillusionment. .....
But it has to proceed still. This however is at least a problem of the subjective level. Whether an artist shall stick to abstract images and console himself is to be decided by the artist only. On another level lay an objective issue. The artist was coming in close contact of a thoroughly material life. The poems begin to include the details of everyday life and the women gradually grow into the type of Ranjana and Krishnakali who live and move on the mother earth with human volitions and not in abstract idealistic spheres of the poet's mental world. The accumulation of various cross currents upon the creativity of the poet gradually gave birth to an antiromantic trend in his art. A huge flow of antiromanticism was sweeping over the contemporary literary sphere of Bengal. The spirit of it was originally Western. The Bengalees imported like many other intellectual borrowings, this spirit of counterromanticism from French and English poetry of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century. The contemporaries of Rabindranath, when the poet was nearing his sixties, became critical about the supremacy of the poet with particular distrust for his romantic idealisation of all the problems of life. Mr. Ayub has brilliantly summed up the state of things that followed the receipt of the Nobel Prize of the Indian poet. Within fifty years from the publication of *Manas* in 1887-88 the entire approach to Rabindranath had changed. Even Yeats, who wrote in the valuable preface to the English version of *Gitanjali* in 1912 "these lyrics display in their thoughts a world I have dreamed of all my life", lived, the last decade of life in absolute separation from all that was Rabindranath. The avantgarde poets of the West viz. Charles Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Gaumburg, Vallery and others made an approach to art that was new in many ways. The chief aim of these poets was to explore an almost underworldly state visited and dictated incessantly by an evil composed of sorrow and sin. Rabindranath could not dream of such a world. •••••

*They are heroines of two exquisite lyrical poems.*
He has been fittingly compared with Baudelaire in particular because this French poet's (who was according to T.S.Eliot, 'the symbol of morbidity') counterromanticism surpassed all others. But the digression of Rabindranath from Romanticism did not introduce him with the Evil in the naked Baudelairean manner. Baudelaire's apathy towards a Romantic image of life originated in his personal distrust for all earthly refinements. His sphyilitic early youth, his mother who preferred to stay with a second husband, his stepfather's company, his unrequited love for a whore and similar other trying circumstances of life turned Baudelaire a symbol of morbidity. As a poet he created a strange world of his own where 'The devil has snuffed the light at the windows of the Inn', and where, to break away from the tradition was the very pulse of life. His attack on Romanticism found expression in his introduction of the Evil in poetry. One of his outstanding creations is named as Les Fleurs du Mal which means a number of lotuses or the flowers of the mud and filth. The search of his aesthetics was from flower to the filth and Mr. Ayub has described him as a poet of a particular mood. That mood is the root of his negativity. That mood led him to see god in the fullest vision of hell.

Baudelairean pensiveness springs from a numbness of the sense of wonder in the poet's soul. The poet's encounter with the fog and filth of life was mainly a matter of his connections with the underground world of nineteenth century world. He had a peculiar zeal for portraying the objective world in his poetry without caring whether such a portrayal shall wound the ethics of traditional poetry or it shall remain aesthetic in the general sense. His frustrating experiences of life rendered him ignorant about the Romantic ideals of all descriptions. He is a glaring example of the intrusion of exterior forces into the private world of idealism. His sense of gloom must have been a personal discovery. But the credit of this poet lay in his exploration of a new world of poetry where woman is 'an abominable creature', man 'created for the whip', .......
which is opposite of Tolstoy or Rabindranath's Eldorado but which is a class of art in itself. Mr. Ayub however has not agreed to believe that Baudelaire was intolerant of this gory mundane world. His deep love of life and god on the contrary made him so naked. The poet's deprivations, his failures to maintain a strict ideal as the springboard for his creation were the causes of his apparent apathy towards Romanticism. His counter-romantic approach was the symbol of a sick and deranged man's urge to reestablish himself upon the track of earthly life. He was intolerant of the old ideas of tender words and skybound sights because he acquired the conviction that any imagination about earthly life should go at par with the darkness and limits of life as well. Death haunted him. The stuffy atmosphere of the brothels irritated him. The poet cannot be blamed for going without an ideal poetic health. Mr. Ayub has compared Rabindranath's poetic health with that of Baudelaire. Rabindranath was never incapacious to maintain his basic poetic clarity of vision. The frustrating experience of life did not drag Rabindranath down to the dismal flair for naked description of the blemish and the soar. The poems of Gostanjali have an agony of the poet's becoming habitual to life (which is a danger signal for the poetic soul), but they never speak of the numbness of the poet's sense of wonder. The greeks said that philosophy began in wonder. Poetry also necessarily begins in it. But the world is not limited to any specific range. The problem of evil means a combination of sorrow and sin. This problem was there in the earlier history of literature and life. But the recent art, mainly literature has been affected to a great degree by this sense of evil of the creators. Man's sense of wonder can never end. Baudelaire too did not cease to get joyed at the wonderous instance of nature and life. His tragedy was his fixation for a particular side of the objective world and his subordination to this side from a personal aesthetic level. The poems of Baudelaire still remain because of their maker's inner struggle for existence through art. The deprived soul was hankering after a relief, a rehabilitation...
Negativity rendered the soul morbid. From the hospital he wants to go where? - 'Anywhere, Anywhere. As long as it be out of the world.' Same note is present in 'The Voyage'. 'This country bores. O Death let us set sail.' But where can he go? Can anything benign await such a negativity? Mr. Ayub's opinion about this tendency to set sail is that it was born out of an escapist impulse. The darkness of life incited this impulse. Had it been a world of light, like that of Rabindranath the impulse could have been one of commitment. Rabindranath tried to see life as a mixture of the light and the dark. Baudelaire saw it dark as his comrades Sartre, Kafka, Narkar Kailor, Faulkner etc. The darkness remained at the core of Western aesthetics which developed more into a matter of material level than anything spiritual. Life for an artist of the East is tapasya of the Brahma. Art here is self-culture. The art of the West has developed into an intellectual probing. The frequent access of the objective realities rewarded Western literature with a moribund Baudelaire or an existentialist Sartre. The type of Baudelaire was suitable for the Western aesthetic temper of the following phase. Rimbaud, another rebel in poetry described Baudelaire as 'the first seer, the king of poets, a true deity'. Mr. Ayub has quoted from James Maritain's book, 'Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry' a few lines to suggest in a precise way the philosophy of modern Western poetry. 'Modern poetry has undertaken completely to set free the poetic sense. In the double signification of the poem, intermediary signification, this definite set of things whose presence is due to the sovereignty of the logical requirements of the social signs of language, and which is, as it were, a kind of wall of separation between the reality to which it points. The poem is intended to have, not a double, but a single signification - only this flush of reality captured in things'. But the modern Western poets could not capture the reality of things. The poetic status of Rimbaud's works was beyond the cognizable reality. Kierkegaad too agreed that the poet should abandon the outerworld. Eliot has said that the modern poets use the ordinary meanings (that is the meanings of the

* In the discussion on Western philosophical thought in the first chapter the development has been pointed out in brief outlines.
The poetry of modern age is not impressive to the average reader, including the educated, due to its lack of communicativeness. Sometimes it is surrealistic in impression. Sometimes it is a deliberate attempt to cross the cognizable state of consciousness through intoxicants. The sweetness and light of the poems of bygone days are desirable now. But the poets' freedom mongering (as in case of Baudelaire) have neither been able to shape a definite state of counterromanticism, nor been able to elevate the mental health of the reader (which was its primary business). The enjoyment of poetry is still possible, but the kind of it is tendencious. The greatest misery of the modern artist is his entente with the Evil. The description and the very inclusion of the Evil in art is symptomatic of an iminent misconception of the actual purpose of art in life. The artist says that he wants to maintain an abstract state of distance from the everyday order of life which is utterly infected by the Evil. But he fails to objectify his say. The case with Rabindranath became one of such helpless surrender to the hands of the Evil. He too admitted umpteen times that he could not keep the distance from the objective reality anymore and that the influence of the antagonist is inescapable for his art. The spiritual foundation of his aesthetics however was too strong for the modern trend of negativism. The damnation of this pious soul was complete following a slow process. The first thrust was felt in Gitanjali. He was soon vigilant about the imminent loss of god and the chopping of the divine light from the terrestrial life. The interest for the eternal process that binds time into a cosmic frame yet did not become the guiding principle of his life and art and while proceeding forward towards the drama viz Raja, Acharyabajan, Dakshar etc. the poet came to realise that he had seen only the half truth. The Indian poet's encounter with darkness was provoked by his objective connections. The Objective incidentally was burning in the flames of war, death and a worldwide devaluation of traditional values.....
Mr. Probhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, one of the most diligent biographers of the poet, has, in his discussion on Dakghar quoted a note from Sri Pronotho Bhad, another eminent Rabindrite which informs that no photography of the poet’s face is so healthless and so pale as the one available of this time. The poet wrote from Santiniketan 'I used to lie insensible upon the mattress on the roof at Santiniketan. A tremendous impulse was born within. Go out. Before the departure you have to travel around the world. I was otherwise disposed amid the business of the school. But what had happened all on a sudden. At the dead depth of night when I came to the dark roof top, the mind spread its wings. I was apprehending that something would happen – May be death. As if I have to board the train in haste. Such a joy was rising in the mind. As I am going away from here, I am saved. When he is calling me so warmly, I do not have any more responsibility to perform. Impressed by the call to go somewhere and the prospect of death, and by the gusto of a strong emotion I put in black and white the mental unrest in Dakghar. I had to express the mental reaction in terms of a message. A peace prevails if the incomparable and the inconsistent finds an expression. I wrote Dakghar in an inner inspiration. There is no story building in it. This is a lyric in prose... Geetanjali came to a close with the note that the Endless was present in the core of the end, that, again, the lyre would impart melody in silence when the melody is over. But the poet did not know how. As he chased the cause, a very strong urge cropped up for the exploration of the new horizon, the new meaning of the music in silence, the ray of sun upon the cactus, the fear of God in the goddamned human heart. But the little boy Amal, who is the hero of the one act play Dakghar(Postal Office) is a patient (perhaps of Leukemia) from the beginning. The play develops into a narration of the boy’s slow death. The ray of sun upon the sickness of the boy fell in the form of a faint hope that the king would write to him one day. The king heard about the little boy’s aspiration and himself arranged for the treatment of the boy. ...

Rajah was written in December, 1910. Geetanjali in August, 1910. Dakghar & Achalayatan created respectively in January, 1912. (The dates available from the biography by Sri Probhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay.) A letter of the poet written to Babu Manilall Ganguly with the postoffice date stamp of 17th Sept, 1911 has recently been published in a leading Weekly (Desh, 2nd Oct, 1976) of Calcutta. In his discussion on the date of creation of Dakghar Sri Gour Chandra Saha has tried to prove that the play was written in September, 1911.
But 't was too late. The king's physician ordered for the opening of all the windows of the patient's room. The flowergirl who used to bring the boy garlands did not appear at the sickbed of the boy. Despite most hopes for a recovery, the boy died, leaving the audience, perhaps for the first time, in a mood of intense despair following a realisation of the futility of the physical life. The heroine of Rajah (The king of the dark chamber) whose name is Sadarshana (the beautiful looking) is desperate in love for the veiled king. But she fails to meet the king in person. Her failure builds a superhuman image of the king in her aspirant mind. She refers to her maid that she loves the king for his cruelty. Her creator was no more sure about the image of her beloved. At a final point Sadarshana sees the king in the midst of fire and destruction. Achalayatan too is a document of the groping poet's mental unrest at the face of such cross currents of the beautiful and the ugly.

Rabindranath was lucky enough to maintain his creativity during the phase of frustration. His brooding soul found solace in the realisation of an eternal dialectics of life. He realised that the honour which Gitanjali had bestowed upon his artistry was but a flash in the pan. The poet of Gitanjali had ultimately become an object of criticisms in the West. The younger generation of artists and art lovers too finally decided to restrict their respect for the poet who according to them, had been living too long in the literary firmament. The poet responded to the people's call for a rejection of his art sometimes by criticism, sometimes through an expression of utmost agony of being taken amiss. But what strikes one most is the fact the the poet was gradually learning to feel the limits of a purely idealist view of life. The above incidents of discontent about his hackneyed artistry took place when already the poet was prepared to change his opinion of life. The story of Baghjar has no feasibility as a cognisable reality and there is no chance to believe that such a boy can live in the material world in such an abstract environment amid absurd hopes.

* 'Before going, let me offer regards to my master of darkness, my cruel and my terrible.'*
A king in reality is not supposed to found a postoffice near a dying boy's house the way the poet shoved it except in a fairy tale. But as a modern audience sit through the performance, a closeness with the incident of the boy's slow death at once gives rise to an almost cathartic joy. Such stories of slow death are there in others' writings too. The tragedies of Shakespeare too suggest a process of slow death of a glamorous personality. But this had never occurred in an artist's mind which was otherwise convinced about the victory of life over death. Those who say that Dakghar is a story of eternal life should note that it is basically a story of morbidity embellished only by a futile urge to live eternally.

We look before and after and pine for what is naught/ Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught/ Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought’— says Shelly, the Romantic. This is a poetic vision of life of life not suitable for the modern age in the sense that it emits a sense of aloofness and nonchalance of the poet about the elemental rapport between the sweetness of songs and sadness of human thoughts. Rabindranath, as we learn from the poet's words a few lines earlier, described his Dakghar as a lyric. But the entire perspective of the poet's creation supplied herewith reveals that the lyric in Dakghar was soaked deep in a commitment of the poet to the frailties of existence. The secret of the seer's satisfaction in this case lies in an identification of the seer's urge for aesthetic pleasure with a sort of sentimental involvement into the negative current of sickness and slow death. The song here is more sad and than sweet. The definition of lyric here is not sadness overcome by sweetness. There is no laughter around the agony of the boy's life. The boy realises that he is but an insipient observer of the progression of Time. Macbeth could have retorted to saying 'Tomorrow, tomorrow, or tomorrow, creeps in the petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of a recorded time' at a moment of utter dejection due to the death of the controller. But how a boy of fifteen can afford to realise the temporariness of human life in the hands of Time unless his maker has a hand in it? The makers must have their hands in every creation. .........
But Rabindranath was a votary of compromise between the characters and himself. He was in the habit of jumping at respectable settlement of all earthly problems of his characters by virtue of his aesthetic idealism. He was always against the independence of his characters. Whenever they are wrong doers one final censorship had been forced upon them by their moralist maker. The king of the dark chamber comes out before his ladylove nakedly amid fire and thunder at the cost of the apparent loss of moral balance of the lady. The poet of Naradnya should have raised an opposition against such a deromanticised scene of union. But by the freedom of the poet's mind from the burden of romanticism was not meant an averness of the evil only. The poet was never equal to Baudelaire or another modern western artist in his characteristic aesthetic-spiritual understanding of a synthetic flow of goodness, sweetness and light from over the meanings of earthly life. He was getting morbid due to a constant pressure of the outside upon his personality. The pressure can be felt directly by the reader of his mature works because he himself had been little overexpressive about the role of an aesthetic personality behind any creation. He also believed that the personality of an artist is a combination of the objective and the subjective. But the way he behaved in his art now was a sort of depersonalization from the audience stand point. The poet was already convinced about the role of death and darkness in earthly life. But he was never sceptic about the transience of life's actions. The universal exists at the core. It will lead one generation to the other. Transience is the cream of life.

* We have already discussed him as a poet philosopher. Rabindranath's art was founded upon a philosophic vision of life: by philosophy of course he meant a clear seeing into things. The modern philosophy of existentialism means seeing especially into the falsity of things. The existentialist dictum is 'to philosophize is to learn to die'. Rabindranath was an alien to this dictum before the creations of Dakghar, Rajah and the poems of post Geetanjali phase.
For a human soul who had been so clear to himself about the presence of a
Universal life force, any overzealousness regarding the importance of the reality
of a particular aspect of life is somewhat uncommon. The artist transforms pain
into sincerest laughter. This is common to him. The artists of the twentieth
century did not find any such responsibility in their business. They narrated pain
as it is. In his introduction to the translated poems of Baudelaire, Sri Buddhadev
Bosu had delved deep into the modern poetic artists' romantic inclinations towards
an ideal that will never materialise but that stands as a seducer between the artist
and his creation. Sri Bosu, has described even Baudelaire as a romantic. 'By
Romanticism I mean, not only a historic movement, but an elemental, permanent and
invisible mentality of man. That which frees the individual man, acknowledges man
not only as an ironed social animal, but also as an inimitable and absolute person-
ality without fear is Romanticism. Romanticism is the greatest force to stand face to
face with all that is illogical or beyond logic, uncertain, illicit, dark and mysterio-
scret, sinning and inexpressible, divine and inestimable'. Baudelaire was a
Romantic in the sense that he had been, according to Sri Bosu, the first artist to
wed poetic expression with the reality of the above force in toto. His Fleur de Mal
was published in 1857. Sri Bosu has ascribed to this year the birthdate of the real
modern poetry. Poetry in the modern age is essentially Romantic in the sense that
it tries to express in synthetic terms the skyhigh image of a perfect state in man's
mind and the rough and tumble to which the mind belongs in actuality. Wordsworth
wanted to free poetry from the drabness of intellectualism and he clarified his view
in his famous Preface to the Lyrical Ballads by showing that poetry should come down
to the level of common human understanding. His characters are the leach-gatherer,
the solitary reaper, the winsome sister of himself and etc. His language too was
simple because of his above aim to popularise poetic art. He naturally had no
difficulty in setting the situation of his poem in an order of high idealism by the
strength of which he could rediscover the dancing daffodils within his inward eye
during moments of .....
... pensiveness and solitude. Keats was the last artist of the Romantic order. His romanticism was greater in degree because he tried to include the gloom and glum of the earthly existence in the Ideal and he was less pretentious about an expression of the sense of impermanence and death. At a moment of ecstatic joy he could afford to think of death easily as it occurred in his mind. 'Dunkling I listen/ For many a time I have been half in love with careless death'. Keats was sure that the bird's song is a teasing only. It left him all of a sudden leaving him suspended between scepticism and faith. 'Fled is that music, do I wake or sleep?' Baudelaire drew a conclusion to the search of the early Romantics by changing the entire edifice of Romantic faith. He wanted to withdraw from the shackles of Romanticism. He hated a cut and drier theory of Idealization as the regulator of Romanticism in literature. His sight penetrated deep into the bleeding soul of the modern man who cannot escape the darkness and doom that occur in life without and that shakes life within. Sri Bous in his appendix has quoted a few prose lines from Baudelaire which the poet had written in connexion with a poem Dance of Death. This poem originated from a sculpture 'Dame Macabre' by Earnest Christophe, a contemporary sculptor. Wrote Baudelaire: 'Imagine a huge female skeleton, ready to move towards the arena of entertainment. It had a flattened face......; it is without lips, without gums, but it has smiles. The vision is a shadowed hole...... This terrible image which had once been a beautiful woman, is searching as it were, that tender moment of union or that divine hour in the hazy void which has been painted in the invisible clock of the eternal Time. Its breast, which has been eaten up by Time, has sprung from the brassage, like a dead bouquet torn from the thread,......! This is Baudelaire. Sri Bous has defined this approach of Baudelaire as an instance of high Romanticism. According to him this unabased Romanticism had been present in a crude and raw form in poets like Blake, Keats, Coleridge in England, Poe, Whitman in America and many others in Germany and France.
But Baudelaire applied an integrated maturity to the Romantic concept of poetry by bringing in its fibre whatever had come into his experience of the objective world. The Evil in Baudelaire has overtaken the Good. But in Srinivas's opinion the soul of Romanticism should be discovered in the conflict-tortured, self-piercing consciousness of the artist. The beginning of Romanticism was in a sense of wonder of the artist at the sight of the mysteries of world and nature. The path of its progress had been staided by the discoveries of new vistas of ecstasy and agony, sometimes separately, sometimes together. Romanticism has reached a new meaning in the hands of the modern poets by focussing its light towards the fog and filth of human mind. The deprived human soul automatically yearns for the unattainable. The impact of deprivation reached an apex in the twentieth century. The more was the flourish of human capacities, the greater was the wonder. The greater the wonder the stronger was the urge to know. There grew a huge gap between the known and the unknown. The very concept of life was rebuilt upon a superstructure of knowledge on all fronts with science and technology as its main pillars. The refinements in intellectual capacities of men had made men sensitive towards his circumstances of life in a unique and somewhat depressing manner. Baudelaire only pioneered the search for an art that suits the Ideal-Unknown-oriented reality of life with all its frailties, foibles, sound and fury. He had been an ideal himself. His poems breath an air that was lacking in the material world. It is Romantic in nature for it really pines for what is naught. The difference is that it does not say with those smiles on cheeks that hide the tears. Rabindranath was Romantic like the French poet to a great extent except that he said everything suspending the tears. The concept of counter-Romanticism applied to Baudelaire's poetry by Mr. Abu Syed Atyub is erroneous if the author has wanted to assess the Frenchman in the light of the nineteenth century English Romanticism. Baudelaire was a Romantic. Rabindranath did not approve any sort of ordinariness as the guiding trend of earthly life in the realm of his art.
His Romanticism was more like those of the Blake School of poets and was on the side of hopes without fears. In one of the pieces of Gitanjali, the poet wrote about a sudden sinking of his boat while rowing. The boatman does not know the cause of such a catastrophe. But the poet's mind was still fresh in the hopes. Had the boat touched a stretch of waterflowers? The hopes were of a Romantic who does not want to stake the faith upon life while playing with pangs.

The hopes however did not last long. The Romantic who was born in the nineteenth century could not stand the wear and tear of the twentieth century. The poet's Romantic passion was apparently ameliorated by his religious convictions. In the meantime he was made the editor of Tattvabodhini Patrika. The Tattvabodhini affair, as has already been mentioned in connection with Debendranath, was utterly spiritualistic. The biographer of the poet Sri Pratap Mukhopadhyay has supplied a background of the poet's interest in Tattvabodhini affair. Post Napoleonic and Victorian era in Europe gave rise to a complacency in the life of literateurs, scientists and philosophers lent their respective services to usher in this new era. But the spirit of this new modern age met with an head on collision with the old religious ideas which once kept human life complacent. Though at the first instance the impact of science and philosophy was not sinister in anyway because it helped man to widen the scope of religious knowledge and shrug off puritan orthodoxy from religious concepts, but as time rolled on, the Western people turned over-zealous about the explanatory side of religious concepts. The tie between philosophy, religion and science instead of moulding life into consistency, let loose a chaos. The chaos gave rise to a complex in the philosopher that anytime the moral teacher would knock him down. The moral teacher too began to suffer from the same complex. Religion used to mean a unity, an integration of many faiths into one faith for the early man. It no longer meant so. Western philosophers and intellectuals were giving formulas for the recovery.
Rabindranath’s contact with their thoughts turned his artist mind pale in an impending dread. As he learnt about this state of decadence in human thought, he dreaded that his country too would have to face this moral insinuation. He knew his countrymen. They were already losing faith upon themselves continuously. A spate of material complacency arising out of scientific and philosophic probing into the depths of worldly mysteries would carry them towards unknown horizons had they caught the stream of Western thought. The poet determined to adopt a new religion of India by renewing the old values in the new languages of the age. The task became a challenge when it was found that no sane Indian was ready to sacrifice religious orthodoxy. The older school of Brahmees, that is the Adi Brahman Samaj was still assentant about old ideas and that any synthesis between scientific thought regarding religion and the traditional concept of religious harmony among races was at all possible was strictly discouraged by the traditionalists. The poet wrote a number of essays on religion and asserted that an ideal religion was a unifier. The Western mind was trying to reach a philosophical contentment by satisfying physical appetites of all sorts with the help of machines and analytic devices. This was like a death blow to the eastern idealistic temper that wanted, through centuries, to supersede the physical for an attainment of the psychophilosophical contentment of thought. Rabindranath deemed it necessary to make use of his artistry as a weapon of criticism at this juncture. He advocated the cause of a formless and imageless religious system in his prose of this phase. He made it clear that true religion should never be imprisoned into this or that idol or cult. He was indebted to his idealist father in this respect. The advancement that he had done from his father’s religious idealism was that he had imposed an antidual religious concept now in aesthetic terms. He tried to show that the imagelessness of religion did not collide with the image in art. ‘Rupa’ or the ‘image’, the visual shape, is essential for art because through a shape the aesthetic emotion of the artist is conveyed to others.
Image in religion meant a system, a specific sentiment or an idol. This becomes fatal for religion because as soon as you cage your religious emotion into a system, it will lose its force. It will no longer help you to proceed spontaneously with your heart and head towards the person or the image or the idea you want to meet going beyond your physical existence. Any system has its identity. Your free will to serve the system may not always be favourable for the survival of the system. But in art, an image or a system means flexibility. As soon as the artist catches up the image, suppose of a bird for representation, the bird is made an object of delight for others. The artist's consciousness of this objective delight and the user's will to be delighted transforms the bird into a mobile object. The conception of a bird, say a crow, of both the parties might have been one of fickleness and cunning and darkness. Both want to revalue this conception upon the canvas, one by making it, the other by seeing it. Now, in the process of revaluation, the aesthetic side of the painting gathers a force. May be that the painting opens up a scope for seeing the darkness of the crow as a symbol of serenity. May be that the painting of the bird statisically reminds the viewer of a jealous vulture which is a symbol of horror and death. On either side, the image can be led. Same is the artist's stand, he too can catch the crow's image as a coybird or as a 'ballkite'. Religion has no chance for such movement. Brahmas for example believed what they had firmly established. They believed that god was unique and benevolent and that god was invisible and beyond anthropomorphism. They did not want to move a single step aside of this belief. Rabindranath's imageless onegod theory was harnessed by his aesthetic faith upon the movement of images. He did not confuse between religion and art. Neither did he believe that art had little to do for religion. Any image has a mobility of its own. Rupa is alluvory in essence. To avoid idolatry is not to deny the image for there is a wide difference between idolatry or institutionalism and image. An image is an idea that moves, that runs from subjective to the objective, ...
The religious image originates within subjectively and it does not objectify itself. This is why the religious organisations are unitarian. There is an objectification in religion. Christians find Jesus, Hindoos find a thousand such Jesuses in gods and goddesses. But this is limited to the extent of a subjective interpretation. The god is as we see him. The oriental religious system of the past tried to see god as an independent power. The Christian mystics too believed that god is a super power beyond human range. But essentially, all religions stick to a personalisation of their idols. The society of Rabindranath including the Brahmasamaj was worshipping a static god who nursed men in distress, but did not allow him to nurse himself in his own distress. The Western influence of religion was aggravating this religious one-sidedness of Indians, mainly Hindoos. According to Rabindranath the static and the dynamic were coupled into one and this combination brought forth the force that moved life. The truth lay in the pursuit of human mind for a non-worldly achievement from within the activities of the world. Human conception about the ideal for which he is hoping of going to religion or art must be static in the sense that it has a concreteness of its own. God, for example, is a concrete idea and it does not lessen or increase in human mind in the sense other material ideas like a good social position or a good domestic life do. But there is on the other side the movement. In every idea there is a scope to be mobile. Particularly when we perform any act in relation to the ideas, just as when we sit to pray, or to paint or to watch a movie, we are moved by our psychic towards a state of constant transformation. As we work for the idea of our mind we invite movements of this and that kind and get involved into them. As we discover ideas in the mental level we rather try not to accept any fluctuation regarding them. In the interaction life moves forward. The elixir of life this is a match forward. Rabindranath believed that above the Bergsonian conception that every atom was a force, lay the reality of movement through a path of half idealism and half realism. .......

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The static in human conception is the ideal that once forms, it remains all along same. The dynamic in human consideration is the fact that we as human beings try from the physical level to develop our ideas about things into something other than what we have. The poet could not appreciate the idea of the Western philosophers to scan and reorientate philosophy in terms of evolution only. Man certainly evolves the more he matures in the psychophysical sense. But the truth of his existence is infinitely permanent.

The poet's interest in the Tattvabodhini affair stemmed from a social sense of responsibility as well. But this background of his thoughts about the jeopardy of religion is worth remembering in the context of his gradual moral backwardness. He involved himself with the current of antireligiousness that was swaying the then West and came to realise that the root cause of the disintegration of values lay in the developing interest of men in materialism. Life in this new century, he realised, was a nexus between the ideal and the real, between subjective staticism and objective dynamism. The race of living materially was not conducted by the faith in the permanence of the static truth that life is a universal cycle and that it is there beyond and above the flux of Time. The poet was haunted by the oriental conception of peace and poise the more he was caught in the excited pursuit of his fellow human beings for ephemeral ambitions of infinite variety. He was shocked to realise that by way of chasing material complacency, the people around him were losing the inward peace of living. What added to his shock was the misuse of the national culture by his countrymen. He showed that the fall of Greece and Rome was caused by the distortion of life. History has revealed the truth that there is the force of an eternal life cycle with its epicentre in an unchangeable and immovable reality of existence through destruction, affirmation through negation. But the modern man did not care to heed this truth. The poet did not assail the zeal of the Western man to live actively. But he added that activeness did not mean estrangement from the ideal, and that for a sensible soul some idealism is a reality.
He continued to say that a world religion was necessary. Seas make a
distance between the East and the West. But the force of life is bereft of
discrimination. The poet was getting confirmed about this hypothesis from art.
If the ageworn architecture of ancient Greece has been an object of utter delight
for centuries, if the poetry of Heine or the dramas of Moliere have encouraged a
reader of all times, if his own poems crossed the vast ocean that separates his
land and culture from the Western spirit of life, why not a common human will to
unite the ideal craving for a perfect power that guides life should be reverberated
in every human heart, everywhere, equally palpably?

To the above conception of an undivided world was added the poet's frequent journeys
to the West after 1912. The outside was making a smooth headway into the lyricist's
beauty-hungry heart. The world without began to render him aware of the reality of
the objective world as an abiding force. But the nature of his experience, as we
understand from the above observations, was not in the line of Baudelaire. Mr.
Ayub in his book has raised the point of difference between the two poets in a
befitting manner. Baudelaire could not maintain the requisite poetic health because
he was not able to annihilate his subjective sense of nothingness. The French poet
had a creative limit of his consciousness of the Evil. Of the two streams of
attitudes, the good and the bad, the light and the dark, the liberal Western artist,
chose safely the latter with a firm conviction that it is the expression that matters.
Even when the idea is one of mental decrepitude, the effect of art can be brilliant
and lasting by an worthy expression. Baudelaire's magic words have inspired the
reader to accept invalidity as health. Mr. Ayub has contradicted this point/saying
that this is an instance of the poet's incapacity to communicate the ideas of
mind authentically. Morbidity governed the artist mind in some earlier phases
of history like as in the days of the Jacobean dramatists. But the artist should
never indulge a deliberate falsehood by carefully evading his own duty to the world...
He cannot see half of the game and conclude that there shall be defeat in fine. This is a feat of sheer subjectivity. In Baudelaire's case this subjective reprise of nothingness stemmed from the poet's personal revolt against the tradition of Romanticism, his personal life, his awareness of the decaying values of existence and finally his personal discovery of darkness along with its corresponding pleasure. The last point, according to Mr. Ayub, had been of prime importance. One who is intolerant of the world on a subjective level cannot supply to his fellowmen any such impetus as we may call art. It was never possible for the Indian artist to cling to negativity, oriented by extremist sentiments of death-wish and morbidity. The biographer Mr. Mukhopadhyay, Mr. Promothanath Bishi, Mr. Buddhadeb Bosu and many other Tagore scholars opine that the poet retained his idealism all through. Not that he cared less for the diversities and it was also not true that he wanted to remain aloof from the trend of materialism. He readily revised his views in accordance with the current trend of matter-of-factness. In his last twenty years the poet did never lose the lyrical spirits. He never stopped from creating songs, nor did he fail to respond to the usual calls of the Unknown. His extraordinariness lay in his conscious avoidance of subjective influences in his creation. Much it grieved his mind to realise the utter falsity of existence on many points. He responded to them, but he never rushed into seeing solace in falsity by translating his mental distress in negative terms while at work. Baudelaire committed to the to the fallacious aim of making artistic expression (if a Freudian expression is allowed here) sadistic. Mr. Ayub has glorified Rabindranath as a much greater artist beside Baudelaire for the above standpoint of the latter. Mr. Ayub's arguments are true, but one cannot either miss the point that Baudelaire did not belong to a time so much negativised in values. The Frenchman died in 1867, exactly six years after Rabindranath's birth. The worldwide moral bankruptcy was brought to light only after the first great war including its preparatory phase during the early days of the new century. • ••••
The Europe of Baudelaire was stranger to the state of universal melancholy and complacency as one may see it and it can be unhesitatingly commented that Baudelaire's descent to the lowest depths of life was inspired by his private experience of grief and horror. His vision of life turned angular due to his incapacity to penetrate deep into the inner dialectical reality of life where the sunlight is an equally strong element like the starless night sky. But no less remarkable is his association with the France of Louis Phillippe (1831-35). It was the France of typical dandyism. The neoFrench people had enough money and they were suffering from a titanic hunger for liberty. Their appetite for freedom gave rise to various corruptions in the society. The poet's huge burden of personal failures could not help leading him to voice a sort of repulsion to this recklessness of his countrymen. A flow of Romanticism was prominent in the French poet's creations from time to time, but this element was the result of the poet's attempt to aestheticize discontent and other negative forces as such. Rabindranath wanted to be reborn as a tree. The Frenchman, as Sri Buddhadev Bose says, wanted to re arrive in a stony and foliageless Paris. Rabindranath's Calcutta too was sinking under the spell of dandyism. But the Bengali poet did not negate his vision of the society. Baudelaire said 'In each man two temptations work simultaneously, one towards God, the other Satan'. He wanted his poetic self to be responsive towards the loathsome life of a whore equally consciously like its response to Christ because his visions were beyond the general illusion of a poet. The objective that he had experienced was not the ideal as it was in case of Rabindranath and several others. Even when he conceived on unquestionable Almighty, he fondly avoided attributing to Him the quality of a healer. His treatment of death bears testimony to it. He wanted men to learn that death is a truth and God too is a truth. Man will never be able to escape the former. He will never be able to question the latter. Death is a physically felt reality. God is mentally felt. Both are real. Sri Bose has stressed the point that Baudelaire like Dostojevsky accepted death and God as direct realities. ....
In rejecting romantic illusions of life, Baudelaire has lowered the common human standard of aesthetic experiences which is established upon idealistic faith and not on any blatant representation of the objectivity only. The seen world of Baudelaire was absolutely contrary to the felt and realised world of Rabindranath. What Rabindranath saw was a sky overcast with clouds of human despair and mutual distrust. Baudelaire saw the same sky. The former dug deeper and discovered the silver lining that outshines the glamorous darkness. The latter did not care for any silver lining. The way of Baudelaire's expression was unpretentious but such unpretentiousness is not desirable for art. Such an expression is subject to an elemental confusion between the objective and the ideal. Whatever is beyond the self is objective. The self is constantly inclined towards an 'Other' which is ideal. But there cannot be a conclusion that whatever is outside the self is the 'Other' or the Ideal. The world of art is not necessarily spread to the objective realities without restrictions. The artist must know the art of restricting his vision before he plunges into the world without. The artist does not possess this knowledge by instinct. He acquires it from his experiences of the dialectics that governs life on earth. He must realise that the search for the good and the beautiful is a reality inasmuch as human life is bound by the nakedness of negativities like death. Baudelaire did not care to restrict his vision to the brighter side. He rather liked to see beyond the darkness with an eye to quenching his thirst for an aesthetic expression. Abstract holiness and an unqualified sense of affinity with the good and the beautiful that either surpass or transform the non-aesthetic experience into an idealist art of symmetry and balance, was no longer sought by Rabindranath when he came to realise the ugliness of things. He achieved success by chalking out a religion of his own and termed it as the 'religion of man', the implication of which is nothing other than a firsthand acceptance of the human world as a whole. Such an acceptance is destined to be preceded by a rejection of the particularly private world. The poet of the last twenty years grew malicious, sceptic, interrogative, somewhere obsessive of the gap that exists perennially.
between men's desires and achievements. The agony of his realisation
should never be identified with the joys and even the melancholy of his romantic
past. His conception of God too now changed and he said 'whatever character our
theology may ascribe to him (God), in reality he is the infinite ideal of men
towards whom men move in their collective growth'. In the works of his final phase
there remains an intense sense of helplessness in the face of dismal objective
situations. But the poet never loses heart. His impetus is in general and men
in particular. He gradually took up the challenge of the mimetic ways of his
own experiences by associating his personal artistry with humanity at large.

In May 1912 a journey was made to Europe. This journey was planned by the poet to
expose himself to the flood of anti-religious or antspiritual forces that was
passing over the West in the wake of the great war. The poet was overwhelmed at the
tumultuous reception given to him by the European intelligentsia. In 1913 he went
to America too. He gave many invited lectures in America. The subjects were world
consciousness and similar other spiritual observations. One does not find any
absence of care in the poet's selection of spiritualism as his subject because the
poet had come this time to the other side of the globe to learn how the people
outside India reacted to his observations. Meanwhile as the creator of Gitanjali
he was introduced to the major artists of the West and he was able to exchange his
well built aesthetic idealism with them. Sir Earnest Rhys wrote a biography of the
poet from which an impression of how the poet was treated in Europe during the visit
can be formed. Sir Rhys wrote 'Rabindranath Tagore has that unexplainable
grace as a speaker which holds an audience without effort, and his voice has curious
impressive penetrative tone.... which you never hear from an English speaker'. The
author described the poet as 'a new conductor of the old wisdom of the East', who
'had turned a London hall into a place where the sensation, the hubbub and the
actuality of the Western world were put under a spell'.

* Lectures given by the poet at Gaxton Hall, London.
The poet was a spell-caster not only because he preached Upanisadic ideals but also he had a sober personality, an aesthetic bearing to which the Western eye was a stranger. The titles of the lectures were 'The problem of Evil, The problem of Self, Realisation of love, Action of beauty and the Infinite.' These lectures were later published in a book titled Sadhana.

But why the poet did not care to discuss poetry in particular is a pertinent question. This is the clue to the intense philosophical crisis that he was suffering from during this phase. The crisis originated in his artistmind when during Gostunjali days he detected that the force of an eternal life was cutting its way through human existence including in its range both the good and the evil. He was to equip his own artistmind and to build up artistry along the channels of this life force to do which he was to restrict the perfectionist idealism of the Upanisads along with the private tendency to get involved into the temptation of the matter-of-fact a major part of which is vulgar and nonsensical. Poetry was to enter into this mysterious truth of life in death, this black light of eternal human existence through extinction. The number of songs and other emotional writings reduced remarkably. The poet was now more keen on bringing out translations of the Books like Rajah (The king of the dark chamber), The Post Office (Dekghar) Chitra and so on.

The announcement of the prize however was made immediately after the poet's return to India. The country was then suffering terribly from many socio-political troubles. The Capital was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi. A bomb was hurled at Lord Hardinge. A wave of malicious and vituperative opinions about the stunning popularity of the poet abroad was forced among the intelligentsia of Bengal and it was opined that at a critical hour of political struggles against the alien rulers, the Romantic poet has no reasons to convey abstract spiritual messages and accept foreign honours. The poet was simultaneously joyed at the recognition abroad and shocked at the devaluation at home. The floods of public applause taught him to yield/subjective complacency which is a great impediment for any artistic creation. The knowledge...
***** of the world inspired him to think that man had a propensity which could lead him in one single life time to the pinnacle of a blissful mental stratum where he could equate himself with the Divine, where his imagination about a perfect and complete and infinite life would prove to be as concrete a reality as the light of sun of the limbs of his own body. The centre of the poet's attention now was man. The artist has to show man the way to the above synthesis. He has to be much more careful than all other social workers. The public appreciation and criticism affected the poet to a great degree despite the poet's intense awareness of the merits and demerits of the both. He did not commit to the crosscurrent and quite tactfully kept alive his penchant for healthy artistic creation but the conflict grew fast. The greater was the urge to synthesis the opposing poles the deeper was the pang. The secret of his success as an improviser of a new art of the time lay in this continuous pricking on sense from both sides.

Rathindranath, the poet's illustrious son has raised a very pertinent question referring to the fact that the poet's early creations were hemmed by a solitude and aloofness from the bustling life. But his later creations were born in an environment of peoples, if not, too many people. Santiniketan was getting thickly populated as it was an educational institution and the growing popularity of the poet was drawing more guardians to this school to get their words admitted. If he maintain Rathinda's opinion and question, 'did the poet aspire to get back the solitude of Stellidah at the closing phase?', it becomes easy to assess the poet's psychological incapacity to respond cordially to the call that the world of his conscience were giving him from far and wide. Was the poet feeling fatigued and was it a fact that the bustle of creation was threatening his old familiar mood of mind which once used to order even bailiffs: not to disturb during creation in the days of Padma? The phase under discussion does not bear the proof of any imbalance that was supposed to appear due to the loss of old poles of the artist's mind. Values were changing and the poet began to realize that the worth of the self had to be proved in the perspective where the self is not the controller.

*Pritishmriti (a biography of the father) Rathindranath Tagore.*
The artist would have to enter into the hustle of life as and when necessary. He is not an hermit, neither a stoic philosopher. In his reception at Santiniketan, the noble laureate poet philosopher declared indignantly that the value of his honour (if any) lay in the Westerners' heart and not in the sceptic and envious hearts of his own countrymen. In the message sent to Swedish Academy the poet said 'Grateful appreciation of the breadth of understanding which has brought the distant near and made a stranger a brother'. One may sound sceptic at this remark and show that the necessity of making a stranger a brother arose from the behaviour of his own brothers as strangers. The poet's mental make up had one permanent colour and that was concentration. His concentration as an artist was embellished by an inward spiritual bent of mind. When he decided to launch in aesthetic project be it poetry or prose or music, he was absolutely under control of the self. The self of course was a combination of the universe and the self and the separate book published in 1917 under the little 'Personality' the poet clarified his opinion about an artist's personality in the perspective of an objective universal order. '....the reality of the world belongs to the personality of man and not to reasoning which, useful and great though it be, is not the man himself'. The poet's approach to concentration was purified by his focus upon the worldly realities. He had the power to see that the personality of an artist or human beings in general, is made of the exterior and the interior at the same breath. When he sat to concentrate he difficulty about the inclusion of the other forces into the was not in any fabric of his mind. And from this standpoint it is easy to decipher his reactions against the unfavourable conditions in which his art had to exist.

The comments that he made and the suffering he had due to the untowerness of things relating to his fame abroad, were, however, not at par with the theory of aesthetic concentration about which a few words were said in the previous pages (chapter NO (b) Consciousness & Concentration). Had he solved the issue of objective interference by digging deep into the personality of his own artistmind, the poet would not have been downcast and angry by the loss of his mental poise following the Nobel prize and the preceding visit abroad. .....
The illusion however did not mature to an extent of expressional incapacity as it was at the phase after 1930. A host of fresh flowers came crowding following the return to India leaving the readers in great difficulty about a positive assessment of the aesthetic bent of the creator's kind. Naming each of these new dew fresh creations would sound disproportionate in the present context. We would cast a bird's eye view to only a few of them and see how the artist tackled the dialectical movement of personality till the last of his life.

Balaka and Falguni, the former is an anthology of poems, the latter a drama, appeared in the following years. The philosophy of the author of these written words can at once be described as idealistic and charged thoroughly with emotive contents. The poet's mental affinity with a static positivity was coordinated by his experiences of various counterracting forces. The poems betray a deep speed of existence at the core of which lay an inward affirmation of the truth of extreme continuity which poses to be static and which is palpably static. The poems of Balaka were written amid extreme social involvements, but the air they breathe is cosmic and pantheistic.

In Falguni too the approach is noteworthy. About this drama Rabindranath said - '... When I look at fact there is sickness and death, when I look at truth there is an imperishable life, a bulging youth. Sitting through the winter the whole treasure of the wood seemed bankrupt when suddenly the affluence of spring was spread through and through. What is sickness from behind is youth from the front'.

The way to a new art of the age was still overshadowed by various dissaying doubts. The reality of life was seen, as it were, through a thick veil of faiths in traditionalism and unwillingness to cater to the neomaterialistic impulses born as a reaction of his close contacts with the Western world. By truth the poet was not yet able to mean anything really specific. Now he believed human idealism to be true. There was the reality of human decadence at the other moment. The creations however continued in an otherwise slow pace.
In May 1916 a journey was made to Japan, on way to America. The politics of this huge Asian country was suffering from an irate ambition of ousting the German nation from the face of the world. The poet criticised the bellicosity of Japan in unambiguous terms and said in his lectures in Japan that the flames of nationalism were provocative of a sort of barbarism because it enkindled no less a savage motive than war and obscurantism. The poet was drawn to Japanese art too and he found a silver lining in his experience of this visit when he valued the stupendous progress of Japanese art. A number of artists like Kakuzo Okakura and Aral were imported to Santiniketan as teachers in the following years as a result of the poet's particular interest in the developed techniques of Japanese art, mainly painting. The biographer, Mr. Nishiprasad has drawn the reader's attention to the poet's particular interest for fine arts quoting a few relevant letters of the poet. In one of them the poet said, 'Coming here I have learnt that your Art is yet to become hundred percent true. For a revival of our Art, a communion with the lively Art of this country should take place.' The poet never tried his hands in fine arts earlier but this proneness to the art of painting was a symptom of his involvement with the art of painting later. Various social responsibilities however deterred him from thinking seriously about painting at this phase. His visit to Japan was otherwise fruitless because the people of this flourishing country were not cordial to him after he had dubbed their attitude towards nationalism. The lectures in America were marked by the same critical attitude towards the postwar Western nationalism. The poet pointed out that nationalism was a vague term and that it minimised the scope for a greater mutual understanding between men. A major part of his American audience did not naturally like his view. But he was rather nonchalant. On the other hand he drew the listeners' attention to a correlative subject viz personality to establish his say about the limits of nationalism in the contemporary society. In 1917 two books were published, one on Nationalism the other on Personality. ....

* which was expedited by the efforts of the Japanese politicians to resist the German claims for a superiority over China.
The choice of the above subjects proved that the poet was trying to give an explanation of the disorder that was lurking in the objective world of human beings. His interest for humanizing his view of life in a fresh sociopolitical perspective too is notable in such a choice. The key to this humanization was to approach the entire issue in a twofold manner. On the one side there was the physical complexities that was nationalism. On the other side there was the mind that was personality. Individuality, he said was acquisitiveness which was the philosophy of the capitalists. The business of life on the other hand should be creative. There was a natural contradiction between creation and construction. When a country like Japan which belonged to Asia and was so long culturally aloof from Euro-American ways of life, wanted to assert nationhood and committed to the titbits of mechanical devices that would make the heaven of a material life, things must have been extremely wrong somewhere. The poet entered into the problem so much so that he began to clarify the difference between 'society' and 'nation' and showed that the former was self preservation and the latter was self aggrandizement. In the book Personality the poet drove his enquiries further. He said 'the reality of the world belongs to the personality of man and not to reasoning, which, useful and great though it be, is not the man himself'. The book included a chapter under the title 'What is Art?' Personality finds its best expression in art. This theory was preceded by a very valuable observation of the poet on the role of art in human life. There is no chance to underestimate the poet as an emotionalist who jumbled a veritable social cause like nationalism with art which has no direct concern with anything of the social or physical level. The poet was trying for an intrepid defence of his own existence because he was constantly attacked by haunting sensations of war and tragedy of human values all over the world. Art was a shelter for his subjective self and there can be an opposition to the effect that the choice of personality as a subject for discussion was inspired by an urge to feel safe in the shelter of subjectivity. .......
But the post did not supply any formula for synthesising art with human personality, neither did he vote for a nationality of the individual kind. His argument ran, 'Art, like life itself, has grown by its own impulse and man has taken his pleasure in it without definitely knowing what it is .... Therefore I shall not define art'. He was in favour of keeping aesthetics out of conscious purpose. Like many Western art philosophers he believed that purposefulness would direct aesthetically aroused mind to the search of a concrete beauty. The purpose, if any, is to unfold human personality. He continues, '...In Art, man reveals himself and not his objects.' This himself is obviously inclusive of the world around. In his argument the poet admitted that an artist can delineate his aesthetic urges if in his personality there is a taste for the right and the good. This taste is a virtue which the artist is naturally interested to obtain in the best form.

The return from America gave rise to a deep sense of isolation and sadness again in the poet's mind. In a letter to Sri Pranrao Choudhuri, one of the ashramites, the poet wrote 'A time came in Arjuna's life when he himself could not lift his own gandiv (the bow). Do you think sucha day will not come when I too shall fail to hold the bow?' The poet's horror of an existential breakdown found a better expression in his desperate bid to cling to freshness as he rejected a plan to visit the hilly regions of Upper Bengal. Said he, 'I do not need cold breeze that much as I need the wretched meadow, the free sky and the piercing light of Bolpur.'

There was a scent of senile emotionality in the frame of mind. The creator could not outgrow it and there arose, from within the tension, an intense urge to make a more direct approach to life through art involving himself with the intricacies of human society and human mind at large. This urge became the conductor of his aesthetics. Physical emanation was so long not a point to bother. But as he was ageing fast and parts of his body failed him (like the disease in the ear), be...

'They try to make you believe that the fine arts arose from our supposed inclinations to beauty of the world around us. That is not true.' Goethe(this quotation has been supplied by Mr. Mukhopadhyay from an essay on Man by Ernest Cassirer.)
he became aware of the limits of physical capacities to a great extent, sometimes to the extent of clinging to an utter self-rejection and stagnancy. The perennial force of life of which he had been learning constantly was supplying his mental steadiness, but the demon of death too was looking at the human poet with bloodred eyes. The bodily limits are a part of the mind but the mind has little or no control over the inevitable decay of the body. This realization was a veritable disturbance to his aesthetic will to life through art. The theories of transformation of mind and transmigration of soul too were no longer sound enough to replenish the loss that the poet’s avaricious fear of death and human limitations had incurred. The brooding poet wrote short stories for a flourishing magazine, Sabujpatra. In the articles, he wrote for the same paper, the poet gave a feeble call to his countrymen to respond to the inner consciousness of freedom, forsaking the passion for individual wishfulfilments. But this time there was no poetry, no harmonious madness to flow. In 1918 he wrote 'The inside of my mind has grown so weary that I do not feel like doing any job anymore.' A few translations were made from his past works.

What of course saved him from a complete degeneration this time was his quest for and achievement of a new aesthetic realism. This new realism included an approval of the direct human business of life where the hopes for an abstract, ideal finale and perfection were deferred as a result of a continuous hammering of the contemporaneity of time (which may be defined as a time consciousness of man to some, an escape from time for others).

The poet took up painting as his vocation in nineteen twenties. There is room for a defensive argument about the poet’s slow but steady adoption of painting as the ideal form of expression in any assessment of his aesthetics.

* In May 1918 the poet’s beloved daughter Bela died. The shock was tremendous. Out of this shock was born of lyrics which breathed an air of escapism. But such an escapism could not linger long because this too, as the poet realized, results in an ultimate mysterious barrenness. The anthology of these poems was named Palataka which means a female escapist.
The 'Other' for which he had always been in a position to sacrifice the melancholy of his life, and the 'other' which had been the unending source of joy hazards. But now he was amazed to notice that the subjective was so long the poet's ultimate resort in all cases of objective/sufferings of his mind were in direct clash with the Other and his personal reactions to things negative, as well as positive, were making his artistry miserable by obstructing the Other too from playing its role. The poet's health was, quite strange as it was, the moniter of the poetic health. He was turning critical and fastidious about the sociopolitical set up, was trying to explain life in accordance with what it was like and no more with what it would have been like. The poet's shifting to painting was indirectly influenced by his craving for a direct sort of expression as he was in need of such a directness for a recovery of his debarmonised artistry from the impact of the balliconity between Time and Life.

The change of form however did not occur quickly. He was busy delivering lectures in favour of a rigidity in people's mind for an combat with imperialistic forces. He foresook the honour of knighthood in protest against the human massacre in Jalianwala Bagh. He wrote the play Raja (The king of the Dark Chamber) and named it Arupratan. A comparative estimate of the both reveals that the recreation was based on an intention to put an extra colour of abstraction and symbolism. Some old songs also were recomposed. Although the basic sentimentality of the poet about song compositions did not undergo any vital change, the tendency to change is worth noting. The poets involvement into a business of a reconstruction reached an apex when in the midst of chequered commitments the Visva Bharati began to work from July 1919. The poet stressed the point that this new institution shall be the place where the definition of teaching shall be upon an aesthetic edifice. He was able to realise in course of practises that art and man are twins, one is a replica of the other. Training in music and painting became an integral part of the new curriculum. Teachers were advised to put particular attention upon these aspects of studies. In May 1920 a fresh trip was made to the West...
The purpose of this visit was to communicate to the people of the world the message that lay behind the formation of Visvabharati. The message was charged with a deep aesthetic idealism but the need to express his concept of such an idealism afresh was based upon a loss of contact with the same on an objective level which left a deep impression upon his subjective mind too. The bird was no longer eager to sing. He was no more enthusiastic about the prospect of a new definition of life through his art. On the contrary, he was inquisitive about a reorganization of the existent materials of life. But the reaction of the West this time was thoroughly depressing. His attack against nationalism was an object of extreme apathy for the nationalistic Western mind. The receptions arranged for the poet in England were no longer much cordial. For a sensitive mind like his, the reaction of such a lack of warmth was heavy, but he did not withdraw from his object yet. The poet went to Sweden via Netherlands. His American audience too was rather callous about his importance. He wrote in a letter, "How to convince them the utter vanity of their pursuits! They don't have the time to realize that they are not happy. They try to smoother their leisure with rubbish and dissipations, lest they discover that they are the unhappiest of mortals." But the poet did not apparently lose heart. He was still pondering over the possibility of a union of the East and the West. To make the meeting a success, as the poet thought, the West should have to inspire the desire of man to flourish." But except in Germany, he was not at all responded to by the people of the West. The Germans were suffering terribly from the hangover of the war. They were not yet in a position to feel the extent of the spiritual bankruptcy of human mind. The poet returned in July 1921 with a heavy heart and a head full of new ideas about human behaviour which were nowhere near the ideas he had in the past, particularly before Gita and the Gita. The apparent cause of the poet's fresh loss of mental balance was definitely a frustration of the personal level. But he was now open to a deeper mental agony due to a revaluation of his hard-earned aesthetic values upon the changing frame of human situations.
The biographer, Mr. Maktodhara, opines that the poet was very sceptic about any further necessity of trying hand in emotional literature and art with the visions of an idealist. The letters of the poet are never depressing. But those of this phase bear an extreme disorderliness of thought which occur from the poet's mental imbalance. The poet's inner mind was in direct connexion with the eternal harmony of existence. He said in one of his lectures in America: "... a man's life but the outer mind of man was the very symbol of high anarchism, must be his own creation, a work of art. It was too full of intellectual stipulations and pragmatism. Politics and Economics, these two were the gravest danger signals for the civilisation. But the poet was absolutely at his wit's end to convince the people about his ideas. His tenacity to cling to idealism thus went in vain and whatever he decided about the future of his art was now marked by a deep sense of togetherness with the current of anti-idealistic forces that abided human life of the present century.

In 1922 he wrote a drama named Path (The Road). Path became Maktodhara (The Independent Stream) later. It also was the remake of an old story. But it is better to call it a new art and it really was the beginning of a new objective art with two new points. One is the urge to create a full-fledged prose drama and the other is its handling of a conscious purpose to objectify the personal attitude towards life in the manner that conducts the objective state of life outside the poet's personal idealism and convictions. The story of this drama has a new kind of directness. It centres round Bibuti, an engineer, Abhijit, the king's idealist son, Dhananjoy Bairagi, a choral good-doer and the king who is the very symbol of demonic forces. Thoughts that pricked the poet's mind in relation to society and individuals, individual egoism and nationalism and finally matter and idea found expression in this remake play. Abhijit was swept away in the current of broken dam. His was a life of sacrifice. The fatal defeat of Abhijit, the idealist is chosen because the poet knew that his defeat in the hands of destiny over which the machine had no control would give the audience's scope to identify their own...
idea of the mechanical perfectionism of the age and would offer a cathartic contentment to them. The diction adopted is very simple and the poet was now confident that the art of drama was most down-to-earth as an art form for it involves the social creatures in their own temper on a representational basis. He was also able to find in dramatic art a profitable scope to make use of his personal reactions to the behaviour of the created characters on a restrictive basis. The art of drama had an aspect of visual consistency and an entertainment value too. For the sake of both the playwright is always conscious about the restrictive use of personal reflections upon the situations handled.

One notices in the enthusiasm of the poet about drama and short stories the growth of a reconstructed mind and what is most significant is the fact that the poet was now getting extremely interested about the unprivileged classes of people around him. In February 1922 a centre of rural reconstruction was established in Surul, Santiniketan with Leonard Elmhurst as the proprietor and a lumpsum financial assistance from an unknown American well-wisher. The poet was now dreaming of an ideal peoples' republic in India with a renewed zeal for an overall reconstruction of the Indian society through a proportionate attention upon the village and the city alike. The poet's musical mind suddenly became active as he was trying for a socialistic upliftment of his countrymen. But the music did not last long. An element of playfulness may be marked in the poet's mind and the reflection of it is available in the drama Sarodotosab written in September 1922. One noticeable point here is the absence of dance in all dramatic performances. He has a good number of splendid dance-dramas to his credit. But none of them was composed before Sarodotosab. In this play there is no dance but the poet is found to be exclusively interested in dance numbers for his song-oriented plays immediately after the above composition. In 1923 'Basantu' was composed with many songs and some dances. The poet was now consciously trying to reorientate his entire approach to aesthetic forms and he was not sure...

* Short Stories were written for local magazines. The number of them increased during this phase. The Stories also involve humanity at large and a majority of the characters drawn in the stories belonged to the downtrodden people who were the subjects of the poet's Shaleelah zamindari. The poet acted as a landlord from time to time and stayed at this native place in Bangladesh. The memories of these people were used in his short stories. Citybred characters are also there in his short stories. But that is a different debate.
..... of what form should actually substitute the disorder that had made headway into his aesthetic temper. Basanto has many old songs. The use of dance invites our particular attention because dance is an exercise of the body. The immediate effect of such an exercise is a visual playfulness and a sort of deliberate and direct search for an optical consistency. The need for dance of course sprang up from the passion of the poet for change. But so long dance as an artform has a direct relatedness with the physical movements one must assimilate the poet's choice with his searches for more direct method of operation than poetry and song. The poet was in search of a real that will suit his ideal now because he was certain of the limits of pure idealism in the contemporary context of things.

The next successful attempt at humanisation was Raktakarabi (Red Glassworks). Written in 1923, this creation can be described as a perfect 'people's drama.' We must keep in mind, as we approach this new drama of the poet, that the poet was now passing through a phase of acute financial stringency and a trip was already made to Ceylon to raise funds for the VisvaBharati. The responsibility of maintaining the institution was so heavy that the scope of lyricising his itinerary this time was nil and the poet had not documented his inward feelings about the journey to Ceylon any more in a luxuriant way as he did in previous cases through letters and songs and poems of infinite variety. The fund raiser and the singer were at daggers drawn at each other, but the result of the combat was unique. The focus of attention was shifted towards the difficult task of mass communication through art. Hence the play Raktakarabi. The play has a peculiar set up. It deals with a group of gold miners among whom there is an exquisite young woman Nandini. This Nandini has a lover named Ranjan who belongs to her class. But the girl for some mysterious reason is known to the king too. The king does not come out of his chamber ever, but expresses the vigour of his love for Nandini from the other side of the iron curtain. The king's men ultimately kill Ranjan. The girl wants to know about this injustice. ....
One day the king appears before her and confesses that taking chance of his voluntary imprisonment the Devil has exploited the miners so long, so atrociously. This simple plot has a thousand chords. It has an inner suggestion of action, an unending flow of action that pervades human life through love and mutual fear.

It deals with an abstract concept of the ideal that the poet was still standing for. It also holds the tension of the poet's struggle with his own artistry that had to make from for the weal and woe of the universal humanity. But what strikes one most in Raktakarabi is the turning of its creator's attention towards a society of ordinary human beings who have an intense urge to live in love and destiny but whose voices have been throttled by an inscrutable destiny. This destiny exercises an odious power over the masses through the king and the masses are drawn as the playthings of a machine-governed civilization. The characters are named as numbers like seventy five, sixty nine etc. The problems of their existence seem like a hydra-headed monster which force them to reap up no less a valuable than gold from under the earth but of which they do not have any taste. The labouring miners are handling gold but they suffer from an acute material insufficiency. The poet's interest for the toiling masses in their own frame of life is the main point to note in this drama. It has songs and it has Nandini, the woman who stands for the eternal human urge to live in defiance of Time. But the audience of this new drama is at once drawn to its creator's deep empathy for the characters drawn which culminates in a rebellion against the existent social order. The language is rather stiff and uncommon for a play. But language is no bar as the poet is able to establish his empathy for the human agonies in the face of existential circumstances where the main problem is a gap between the ruler and the ruled.

Mr. Sankho Ghosh, a professor of literature of Jadavpur University, Calcutta, has written a very valuable book on the dramas of Tagore. The book is titled as 'Kalera Matra 0 Rabindra Natak' (The measure of time and the dramas of Rabindranath). In his dissertation on the above drama the author has discovered a three dimensional feature.
The first dimension is action, the second is the memory and the third is the soul. From the flux of life and from his own memory of the past actions man learns the secret of a spiritual permanence of life in the world. The king is the symbol of time. The girl Mandini symbolises human memory that conducts the human mind. The third dimension is the eternal human soul. This dimension is not embodied in any character. This is to be traced in the mutual relationship existent between the unseen king and the girl, between Bishu Pagel and the girl, between the girl and Ranjan, the unseen and unheard yet much heardof lover and finally between the king and Ranjan. The above explanation is justified from the philosophical standpoint. And, the secret of this dimensionalism, of which the poet himself has given hint elsewhere is the poet's deliberate attempt at synthesising Time with Life. The king's atrocity and his nonchalance about Nandini and his deep involvement in life through her love and her association with the miners, finally turns into a self-discovery of the king. He gathers mana in the melee when he breaks forth the barrier of his palace and comes face to face with Nandini's thirst for life. The king becomes a victor and a contented human individual as soon as he forgoes his materialist passions for a safe position as the head of a miners' state. By toppling the king's distant personality the poet has recreated him with a new personality that exists on the strength of a conscious collaboration with the world without. The depressed soul of the poet found a shelter in the synthetic assimilation of the elements of Time with those of Life. The vision of life was remade the poet saw human craving for success on a physical and personal level. In Raktakarabi, art is found to be an attempt at opening up the whole panorama of Time and Life before the artist and subsequently before the lovers of Tagore art.

* There is a character named Bishu Pagel. He is an extra in the society of miners. He goes on singing up to a finale when he is found missing. Nandini had an intimate contact with him as well. She gets extremely restless learning about his absence. Bishu too may be taken as an insignia of the march of Time.

* Vide Kaler Matra O Rabindra Natak.
In March 1924 a journey was made to China. The young China reacted adversely to his idea of soul seeking and his spiritual disapproval of the so-called fun for perfection in the name of progress. China was then throbbing in Marxist ideology and a new wave of change was passing through the hearts of the Chinese people. It was that crucial hour in Chinese history when the whole Chinese race was bent upon a revolution of the traditional values of existence. It was time when the people were conducted by the young political talents like Mao Tse Tung. It was time when the illusion about the supremacy of the warlords was passing off from the minds of the Chinese people and a rigid political system was being designed. The three years between 1924 and 1927 were full of revolutionary achievements of the workers, peasants and soldiers. The tension that culminated in revolution in 1927 onwards, was obviously a reckoner to the agitated state of the people's mind. The lectures of the poet in China were not aesthetic. He was trying to explain his stand as an exponent of exchanges between idea and matter. The last address at National University went in the following manner: "There is a discontentment in the mind. I have not been able to do a thing, as if my aims are not fulfilled. But the fault is not mine. This is the fault of the present age." The poet concluded the speech with following words, "I can give them hope and say with firmness that till now I have not been able to make a single disbeliever believe that he has a soul or that ethical beautifulness is more precious than inert power."

The hopes that glittered in the golden light of an idealistic rebellion in Raktkarabi were repelled by the sporadic incidents of socialization inside the boundaries of the East. The poet was disturbed to a great extent at the end of his visit to China. Not the he was personally affected by the distrust that the Chinese audience had shown to the contents of his speeches. ...

**translated from Maitreyee Devi's Bengali rendering quoted in Mr. Mukhopadhyay's biography.**

* It was 'Yakshaupuri' in the original form. In 1926 it became Raktkarabi.*
What haunted him was the very idea of a rationalist rebuilding of life upon a particular political cause which is by all means relative and temporary beside the necessity of the perpetuity of the life force through humanity. In 1926 the play Raktakarebi was made finally ready for the press. The play was published in Prabashi, an important local magazine. In an apology the poet clarified his own attitude towards the growth of the machine age and the corresponding crisis in civilisation. In October 1924 an invitation was offered to him by the Peruvian government to visit South America on the occasion of the celebration of the Centenary of their Independence from Spanish regime.

The poet could not reach Lima, the capital of Peru, directly because he had a heart attack in ship. This heart attack had changed the entire attitude of the poet so greatly through a confinement in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in the house of certain Madame Victoria Okampo that one is tempted to conclude that the poet was at this mature age nothing other than a sheer subordinate to the physical conditions of life. We cannot enter into the character of the change unless an acquaintance is made with the hosters in whom the poet, at the state of waning faith and intense mental derangement found a real healer, a solver and a revitaliser of his aesthetic energy so to say. The depression of mind was aggravated by the physical indisposition. The shelter this Argentinian lady had offered was contrarily double the sign of the 'tragic sense of life'. Most significant achievement of the poet during this phase was his absorption in the art of painting. The calm and quieture of this distant South American town offered him the final scope to rearrange his artistry even though it was at sixes and sevens and was no longer in an agreeable position to bear the wear and tear. Mr. Sankho Ghosh has recently translated in Bengali a book named 'Tagore en las barrancas de San Isidro' (1961), written originally in Spanish by Madame Okampo. This book is a gateway to the understanding of the poet's aesthetic temper during this phase under the cozy shelter of a young Argentinian woman and a trouble-and-anxiety-free congenial atmosphere.

* The English name is 'Tagore on the peak of San Isidro.'
..... From it we come to learn about the poet's fresh zeal for writing poems and his interest for painting. As a matter of fact it is in Buenos Aires that the poet's first series of serious drawings were born and from this standpoint the stay bears an extra significance for the student of the poet. The earlier attempts at drawing in lines were casual. Madame Okano's inspiration regularised the poet's practice of playing with lines. In his introduction Mr. Ghosh has attempted an explanation for the poet's exact relationship with the foreign lady by drawing our particular attention to the elemental affinity of the poet with a strange person who is described in his art as a feminine character. This stranger was discovered at the earliest phase of creation in the lyrical flood of Sonar Tori. It was there even in Geetanjali where the poet was on the look out for a definite solace and shelter during the sleepless night of storm and stress. It might have been somebody (a lady?) from the exotic lands of dynamism with a message of action tagged on her shoulder. In his Memoir the poet himself has described the apparition as a female who haunts him from the other side of the sea of mystery. But Mr. Ghosh picks up the point that had it been so definite, the poet would never have struggled so hard to aesthise it throughout his life. It is, according to Mr. Ghosh, something that can be compared with the common human experience of an attraction for a strange spirit or force. It is like that moment, which often occurs in human world, when the earth does not seem like earth, sky does not look like sky. At its presence we are startled. We are awakened as it were. This feeling often drags us out of the daily tonor of life. It often beguiles us with an unheard music, an undreamt of story of perfection. Mr. Ghosh proceeds further with his argument to the source of poet's attraction for the stranger. According to him the concept of a foreigner was born in the poet's urge to deal in music which is a combination of words and melodies. It so happens that when the melody is poured into the world of words, the words transcend the limits of the circle of intelligence and meaning. We then want to connect ourselves with a sort of joy, an inexplicable complacency which is our inner mind, our soul. .....
..... It is that soul which is mingled with our memories, our hopes, with our
pasts and our futures at the same breath. Such an experience is not ordinary.
It is mysterious. Its mysteriousness gives it the description of a woman.
Rabindranath was constantly haunted by this experience. He described it as a
foreign lady, a strange woman so to say. This tendency of the poet to find the
source of a perennial joy in an unknown woman is nothing but his conscious will
to find shelter in an ideal. This idealism is not identical to the imaginative
faculties of the European Romantics like Wordsworth or Keats. It is oriental in
the sense that it is a kind of in-depth revelation. It is a combination of the
known and the unknown. It transports the material hopes and fears to a height
of aesthetic idealism from where nothing but a joy of realisation is felt. But
Mr. Ghosh questions whether such a transcendence was at all possible for Rabindranath.
He says that we human beings are tied to our environment and all our material
limits. The poet so far as he is a man cannot out-do matter. He too gets confused
and rather deranged at points under the pressure of objective circumstances of
life. The Romantics described matter as meaningless because they preferred to
stay within the truth of imagination. Our poet has not hesitated to forsake the
abstract imaginativeness of the personal level and to cling to a concrete reality of
the objective world as and when necessary. The necessity occurred many a time.
Mr. Ghosh's opinion goes in favour of accepting Madam Okampo as an objective component
of the abstract imaginative concept of an ideal which he was nurturing within in
many forms throughout his life and was calling a strange woman. The secrets of the
poet's aesthetic philosophy were many. One major aspect of it was his attempt at
unifying the known and the unknown. Rabindranath's romanticism may be discussed in
the above light in further details. It is not relevant in this context because the
most point here is to search how the poet's dejected mental state was nourished and
rejuvenated by a South American woman whom the poet had met by a sheer coincidence....
Mr. Ghosh's introduction gives one the scope to see in the ageing poet an awakened artist who was on the look out for an abode of peace and congeniality in the objective world and in whose fresh search for an objective ideal the inspiration was an absolutely earthly woman with all the desired virtues and womanly values. The argument of the author may be defended by the poet's new creations in Argentina. The very prospect of meeting a new aesthetic Muse was already there when the poet boarded the ship for he again took up pen and wrote a few poems while on ship. The health broke down all on a sudden but the urge did not flag. The note in these new poems however was somewhat sad and symbolic of the fatigue that the poet had been facing due to high age and the burden of various topographical experiences of life. Then there appeared the lady. Her hospitality and care were used as a healer and the imagination ran obviously high. But the melancholy of knowing about the impending finale of life however did not go. The poet's attitude has been described by the lady in her book in a separate chapter titled 'The lonely man of Punts Chica'. Punts Chica is the name of the highest region of San Isidro. Very near it was Miralrico, the poet's abode. The poet was then suffering from an acute loneliness. Leonard Elmerst had described this state nicely. From the journal of Romain Rolland the author has supplied Elmerst's description. Rabindranath thought many a time that his wellwishers had rounded him up from all sides. They had stolen his freedom. From this realisation he often became sceptic. But he was never able to express this. The poet himself had said about it to Elmerst, 'Le realist melancholique, c'est qu'il est seul'. The result was melancholy. From a letter of the poet written in January 1925 to Victoria the argument is justified. The poet wrote, 'I have lost most of my friends because they asked me for themselves, and when I said I was not free to offer myself they thought I was proud. I have deeply suffered from this over and over again - and therefore I always feel nervous whenever a new gift of friendship comes in my way. But I accept destiny ......' Victoria (Feb.1925) wrote in reply, 'you will never loose my friendship, no matter what happen
..... This promise was the real objective component of the ideal that the poet was
dreaded to lose so long firstly because it was something new and fresh, secondly
because it was from the tender heart of a woman however strange and distant she
might be in the physical analysis. The poems resulted from the mixed feeling of
shelterlessness and shelter corroborated by a sense of achievement and its corre­
ponding reaction in the perspective of an alluring sense of futility. Another point
regarding the loneliness was the poet’s embarrassment in the hands of his countrymen
and his knowledge of the political turmoil of his country. ‘My time in this country
is constantly pelted with petty claims by numerous individuals, each of whom believes
that he is the only one who deserves to be attended to. There is no escape from them
unless I run away from India.’ (August 1925) In a humorous manner the poet himself
had described his state of life to Victoria after returning from Argentina. He said
‘There are some creatures who pretend to be dead to avoid great dangers. The doctors
have asked me to follow their example..... In a word, I have to move in a manner as
if I am really dead.’ But in San Isidro when the lady and Mr. Elsharst were trying to
keep him in rest, the poet got irritated. The guests poured in and he met them with
due humility. This is symptomatic of the poet’s inability to tackle the problem of
human involvement in the right manner. In the same year the anthology of the poet’s
latest poems Purabi was published from Calcutta. The poet dedicated it to Vijaya
which was the Indian name of Madame Okampo, given by the poet himself. The name of
the book as the poet explained to the lady in a letter meant (in its feminine gender)
Purabi. It is a raga. The character of this musical composition is based on a note
of parting. It is sung in the evening time when the day takes leave of the world
leaving an impact of sadness and melancholy. The book has two parts. The part
written in Argentina was titled (pathik) that is ‘the pedestrian’. Madame Okampo
has furthered her analysis of the poet’s melancholy during the last phase of life.
In his description Rolland mentions that the last years of the poet’s life were
overcast with deep sorrow and that the poet’s interest in painting grew out of this
helpless solitude. But Okampo has supplied a contradiction of the fact of the poet’s
interest for painting.
The paintings originated, according to her, in the pages of a little copy book. The poet wrote in Bengali. The deletions in the poems were attended to with particular care. She once discovered this tendency of the poet to make fun with his own doodling, by giving them peculiar shapes like those of strange faces, prehistoric demons, reptiles and so on. Kamal insisted on the poet's being drawn to the art of drawing. After six years of this initiation the poet was met in Paris. 'By then the play was turned into pictures'. There are other factors to consider before any specific comment is made about the origin of the poet's paintings. The poet was never an adept in the art of lines, but from the earliest days of his life he was often haunted by the passions for an expression of the forms as they occurred in imagination sometimes without any provocation from outside. He has fondly reminisced in his Memoir how on lonely nights inside the old rusty walls of the Jorasanko house under the yoke of the servant kings he used to discover with awe various ghostly forms on the walls and was attracted to them with the enthusiasm of a patron of painting. In his valuable book 'Rabindra Chitrakala' Mr. Manoranjan Gupta has quoted an extract from an article by the famous artist and disciple of the poet Mr. JHikul De. The extract contains the following fact. On a summer day in 1909 De was painting in a lonely room of the Ashram. The poet came to the room all of a sudden and asked De why he was still working without going to the field for play. It was afternoon and the time for play. The poet then took the artist with him and handed over a leather bound fat copy book filled with head and figure studies in pencil. Of the drawings mentionable was the one of Mrinalini Devi, the poet's wife. Narrating his experience of Japan as a company of the poet, De has also mentioned the poet's personal interest for Japanese art of which mention has already been made in this dissertation. In 1917 the poet returned from Japan and in 1920 he opened an art school in Santiniketan. The poet has taken us to a much earlier date in this connexion. 'I remember, I was drawing pictures with a drawing book at the carpeted corner room at noon (1885). .......
It was not a rigid concentrative study of painting. It simply was a play in mind with the desire to draw. (Memoir). In the year 1900 the poet wrote to Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, the scientist, 'you shall be wondered to learn that I am now drawing pictures on a sketch book. When I had vowed that I will now concentrate upon hundred percent lethargy this art of drawing had been discovered after a long thinking.' Kameswara has not done any injustice to the observer by jumping at the conclusion that the poet was inclined to pictures for the first time during his stay in Argentina. She was not supposed to know the background of the poet's fascination for pictures. It is also true that her company opened the poet's inherent urge to picture in lines and colours the forms that had been crowding his imagination since boyhood. The poet's whole hearted devotion to painting was however a different affair. He had tried in numerous letters and speeches to prove that the paintings were the conduct of his unconscious self. He said in a letter to Rani Mahalanobis in November, 1928, 'The subject matter of a poem can be traced back to some dim thought in the mind. Once it leaves the nitted crown of Siva, the stream of poetry flows along its measured course - well defined by its two banks. While painting, the process is quite the reverse. First, there is the hint of a line, then a line becomes a form. The more pronounced the form becomes the clearer becomes the picture to my conception' (translated by Ishits Roy). He confirmed his stand as a painter in another letter to Mrs. Mahalanobis a couple of weeks later.

'My artist's pen wishes to recapture this play of forms - not in any emotional, sentimental or intellectual manner, but purely for the sake of assembling different forms together'. The manner was not related to nerves, but the emotion was there. It was the refreshed emotionality of an illusioned realist towards a woman who was earthliness incarnate. The poet has clarified his stand further with many comments of the following type, 'People often ask me about the meaning of my pictures. I remain silent even as my pictures are. It is for them to express and not to explain. They have nothing ulterior behind their own appearance.'
If this stand of the poet is accepted as valid then *these pictures offer a theory of art as a thing in itself*, i.e. art qua art was uppermost in the artist's mind while drawing these artworks. *The forms as delineated by Tagore are self-referent and as such no outside dictation is there to guide Tagore's art activity*. One critic of the paintings of Rabindranath has exposed this subjective stand of the paintings of Tagore with the above arguments. The critic further argues: From literary creations to paintings, there was a slow transition from a quasi-traditional, ethical aestheticism to an increasingly subjective interpretation of tradition to an open assertion of vivid personal experience of reality as the apprehensible universe of the individual. In paintings, the intuition of the painter was not fettered by any extra aesthetic consideration which was repugnant to the identity of intuition and expression. Conventional ethics, aesthetics and axiology did not find a place in Tagore's paintings. They were desubjectified subjectivity, completely unrelated to and divorced from the technique of externalisation and as such were no part of aesthetic activity. The critic has tried to discover the genesis of the paintings in the same level of personal bewilderment and joy which Madam Okazaki had touched rather superficially. The criticism finds a support in many western opinions which tend to explore the spiritual genesis of the art of Tagore with a mark of respect for the Indian cultural heritage. In a review of his exhibition held in November 1930 in New York---one such opinion was published. An extract: *...those who believe that the artist must perform tap the life stream of his racial history will feel here as if all India stands back of Tagore, resigned in quietism and nostalgia. There is always an imitation that the tremendous door will open behind the shrouded shapes seen dimly in these drawings, as if it were indeed a procession of life that moves so uncertainly in his pictures....* Mr. Anand Coomarasamy, an eminent Indian art critic also remarked fitfully about the national and spiritual trait of the paintings of Tagore. ....
While introducing the works of the poet for the exhibition in Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in the same year, Mr. Goswamy made a comparative estimate of Rabindranath and William Blake, the great poet painter of England immortalised in history as the precursor to Romanticism in Nineteenth Century English literature.

They do not mean definite things, but are in themselves definite, in this sense they may be called truly mystical, and after a refreshing contrast to the vague and sentimental works of the pseudo mystics. A comparison with the work of William Blake is naturally suggested, for here too was a mystic poet who from the resources of a vivid visual imagination created forms not to be seen in natural forms. The parallel can be carried even further, for most of the work of Blake is actually a kind of marginal comment to poetry. While the separate paintings now exhibited by Rabindranath are actually, as he himself tells us, a development from marginal and interlinear peblems enjoyed when composing, or correcting manuscript. In this sense they are probably much nearer to his music than to his poetry. In his poetry, so far at least as the content is concerned, he is primarily the sensitive exponent of a racial or national tradition, not an inventor and therefore his words are more profoundly sanctioned and more significant than those of any private genius could be; all India speaks and understands the same language. In 1930 the poet said in London 'It came to mind that the whole world can be viewed as a unity of life and creation. Only those creations of the poet or the artist have a right to survive which have their proper balance, for inter-relation is a principle of creation'. An well known indologist Mr. S. De attributes to this excellency of Tagore's pictures to his sense of chhandas which was his legacy and heritage from a rich past. 'And it will not be too much to say that painting and poetry in Tagore are complimentary... Another critic Mr. B.K. Sarkar while commenting on Chitrakopi, published much later at the penultimate year of the poet's life, wrote - 'Rabi the painter is nothing but power, vividness, brilliancy, command over material things, definite construction, vigorous delineation'.

...
There can be no reluctance in accepting Rabindranath the painter as a replica of Rabindranath the poet for his painting habits justify the same spiritual cause which held his poetry so high for so long a time. Without committing to any direct divine inspiration behind the poet's change to painting at a phase when he had grown an approver of aesthetic valuelessness one can decide to safely define Rabindranath the painter as a votary of the theory of the objective correlative. His mental strength was on the decline. His physique had remarkably failed. The Argentinian lady along with the genial atmosphere around her took possession of the sick man only for a couple of months but the impact that this lawsuit had created was maximum for a victory over all the sickness. The poet called the lady Vijaya which is the feminine form of the word victory. It was the victory of a philosophical contemplativeness over the facts of life. The poet had certainly been able to recover from the depression by rectifying his subjective approach towards the world. He had argued in defence of his pictures as a source of unconscious inspiration. But the unconscious mind could never handle forms and colours in due course had it not been possessed with a conscious sense of participation in the world of forms and colours as they were and not as they seemed before his unqualified subjective observations. Even if the paintings were spiritual interpretations of an Indian aesthetic's views of life there is no denying the fact that they carried a decontextified subjectivity. Spiritual analysis and observation are subjective realities but the spiritualist cannot build the world in terms of given forms without any relation to the formal world that lies independent of him. That the poet painter found in the world of disintegrated values an objective correlative may be justified by his interpretation of the forms born within his own imagination as dark and in a majority of cases sombre. The landscapes are nowhere near the known natural set up of Bolpur. They are filled with silhouetted hills and steamless reservoirs. The faces are either agonized or funny to an absurd extent. The animals are unknown to the human world. They are the bastard offsprings of the prehistoric fathers and modern mothers. ......
They combine dinosaurs with foxes, extinct mammals with pelicans. There is scope to interpret them as creatures of the poet's subjective mind as they did not expose any similarity with the poet's known formal world. But there can not be any doubt about the stretch of the poet's known objective world beyond the formal geographical level. The poet was familiar with the world where those gloomy human faces were the masters. He was a member of the tendentious human society of absurd ambitions and unreal prospects for physical perfection. The argument of the poet that he could not stand the visual incongruities of the deleted lines of written words supports the view that he was troubled by the objective inconsistencies. The deletions were subjectively necessitated. The calligraphic art born out of the doodles (which the poet practised during his stay in Argentina and which was the bottom of the poet's huge treasure of paintings) were objectively realised.

Mr. Ghosh opines that the poet's stay in Argentina was certainly an inspiration behind his turning towards paintings. Okampo also has defended the poet's zeal for painting as something like an impetus, a new permit to a new world of expression. Such impetuses keep the flames of art burning in the artist's soul as a natural law.

It may be that Okampo was not able to enter deep into the inward agony of the poet's mind because she was ever alert and conscious about her own gains from him. Her gain, as one may easily understand, was one of companionship. She came of a rich parentage. She had never seen the other side of life. Added to these, she was ambitious about coming in close contacts of stalwarts. Her ambition of meeting the Bengali poet matured as he read him in Spanish. The meeting with the poet was accidental. But the mental preparation and the coincidence coupled together left her in no mood to bother about the vacuum of the poet's mind. She reflected upon it, but she never cared to accept the vacuum, if any, as real. ......

She wrote three essays in a magazine named La Nacion on Dante, Ruskin and Gandhi. In the first chapter of the book under discussion she mentions about them.
..... In her personal experience of the poet's company so much passion was there that the lady was never able to stress the poet's entire aesthetic loneliness in a detached manner. From the description of her intimate moments with the poet, her hide and seek, her compassionate craving for a dinner with the poet etc., one can easily make out how she was ever swayed by a gamut of almost physical passion for the artist's company. The result of her emotional togetherness is her book which has praises and panises only, of the poet's mental and physical prowess.

Before we switch over to the poet's next phase a bird's eye view of the book Purabi by the poet is necessary. Mr. Mukhopadhsy, the biographer has dug deep into the poet's renewed interest in an almost youthful love in the poems of Purabi. One of the poems bear the stamp of a deep nostalgia for the adolescent passion for love. The biographer has referred to the poet's expressions in Yatri, (the book should be titled as 'Sojourner'in English) and showed how immensely the poet was moved almost all of a sudden by the prospect of a thorough change. 'God has designed my mind as a theatre. He does not want to create it as a museum.' The prospect for gaining any manna from the renewed passion is nil. But the poet does not frustrate himself for that. He wants to believe, like the youthful lovers, that the deprivation is a source of joy. Poems, songs, various other expressions in prose came crowding into the world of Rabindranath like the flash of thunder the moment he was convinced about the flavours of a youthful love within his sick soul in whatever residual proportion they might remain.

The days in Argentina ended in a couple of months, the poet stayed for some days in Italy and returned in February, 1925.

She had been somewhat about the poet's later attitude to the Argentinian ways of life and their national politics. But the criticism too is smeared with a feminine tenderness.
The mind was still pregnant with the melodies of Purabi. It was springtime in India. A huge bulk of songs was presented to the world by the sick and sullen artistmind. The songs of these phase bear the same original penchant for lyricising an ideal vision of life. They include Nature in bounties. They include the human note of exuberance in the face of an apocalypse. They include, probably God too. They leave any reader of Tagore literature in utmost awe at the poet's inhuman capacity to formalise the inner subjective sensibility in defiance of all the oppositions of body and conscious mind. But the next one year was devoted to the political problems of national and international importance. The poet opposed Gandhi's call for using 'coars', the handmade weaving machine. He addressed the Indian Philosophical Congress, the reference of which has already been supplied in an earlier occasion. In a lecture in the University of Dacca he clarified his conception of art in furtherance of the points supplied previously and included in the book Personality under the title 'What is Art?'. The tone of the poet now was soft and rather submissive. He hinted at the nonpurposive value of art in life. He explained that art is Sadhana, a course of meditation. The secret of art is the joy of success. Science does not choose before acceptance. But art does. 'In the choice remains the issue of taste, education, tradition.'

Days grew more eventful the more the age increased. Side by side with active participation in life grew the inactivity of the body. The tension was never over. Many songs were composed during 1926. On the occasion of the poet's birthday a new dance drama was composed named 'Natir Puja'. Within four days from the birthday an itinerary was again arranged. With a huge party the poet proceeded towards Italy. Italy showed its usual warmth this time too. Mussolini, the Fascist chief of the country hosted the poet and his party and exchanged his views about the future of the world. The poet was so impressed that he almost readily complimented the leader as the perfect embodiment of personality as designed by him.* But the destiny was again active to play him false. ...

* Mussolini struck me as a masterful personality' - From a statement of the poet made in Zurich a month after the visit to Rome.
He came to learn, when he was staying in other parts of Europe after the visit to Italy, that the fascist regime in Italy had used him as a mouthpiece of them to make a defence of the atrocities they had been doing in Europe. They tried to prove, by connecting the poet's statements, that the poet was in support of their political adventurism. In Switzerland the poet learnt from persons like Holland about the extent of damage that his statements in Italy had created to his international image. He contradicted, but nothing specific could be done in this regard except a pursuasion within the personal limit for a consideration of his attitude in the true light. From Zurich he went to Vienna, Paris and London. In London the poet met the doyen of modern sculpture, Jacob Epstein.* One wonders how the program this time was stretched to so many places with the health of the poet awfully on the decline. The poet proceeded to Norway, Sweden and Denmark. From Copenhagen the poet was going to Germany through Baltic Ocean. Suddenly a song was born. The song has a message of the eternal futility of life and the eternal effort of man to stick to life. It dramatises the life of an insane who is going towards a strange land. The man is singing with his lyre. But who can realise the worth of the man's song? The great chariot race of Time is on. Let us not try to stop it. We cannot be a party to it. This song arrives at the poet's itinerant heart after a silence of four months. In Hamburg there came some more songs. This time too the songs are nothing other than a regaling romantic spirit. Some more songs were composed during the stay in Munich, Dusseldorf, Stuttgart, Dresden, Prague etc. The urge for roving about and meeting people of the greater world was so strong that the poet could not sit to write anything serious except lectures. But this urge had to be curved in Budapest. The body broke down heavily. In Budapest he wrote 'The road has not yet ended'. 'You played the flute at day time' etc. The note of melancholy is present in these songs. Some days stay in Hungary recuped the body and the places visited were Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece etc. .......

* He was an American sculptor of Russo Polish descent. Born 1880.
From Greece the poet parted with his company Mr. & Mrs. Prosanto Chandra Mahalanabis. Mrs. Mahalanabis has been complimented profusely by the poet for her cordial company and shelter throughout the journey. The poet has recorded this along with certain other feelings of this long tour in the book Pathay O Pathar Prantey. But most of the letters recorded were written in the return ship, so it is difficult to establish a direct acquaintance with the mental make up of the poet during this journey. Mrs. Mahalanabis has written a valuable book on this journey but that too is not much deeper than a reportage. In Pitrismriti, Rethindranath, the poet’s son who was a part of the company upto Berlin, has given certain informations about the poet’s personal reflections to the problems of the world and the people around. But he also is rather informal. The scope to enter in details into what others had thought is nil in the present context because the problem here is to find whether this greater public relations of the poet had influenced his waning aesthetic faith upon life. It definitely had for during the sojourn the poet was never able to concentrate upon the interpretation of his worldly experiences in art. The poems written for song compositions were not revealing his inward working of mind. They sounded rather abstract and ascaptistic.

On his return to India after seven long months the poet was bewildered to learn that the countrymen by now had grown absolute strangers to peace. A matter of greatest importance was the communal badblood between the Hindus and the Muslims. The message of the poet at this juncture was soaked in the spirit of unambiguous acknowledgement of a human stand. He treated all political power neuroses as an issue of humanity and suggested that the basic need of the hour was to forsake subjective impulses for perfect living in the name of an objective decency of the community life. Natir Puja, a dance drama, was performed in Calcutta with the poet in a key role. The play centered around the devotional offerings of a danseuse. But the poet was at a lose to determine to whom the woman actually offered her regards. ....
Is it an offering to an abstract object who is God? Is God an object beyond the material levels of life? He found the answer in the delineation of the object as the Nataraj. Nataraj is the image of the Lord Siva generally used by the South Indians. It is conceived as a dancing symbol of God. Nataraj is accepted in the Hindu mythology as also the symbol of an eternal dynamism which creates as well as destroys and thus represents an eternal cycle of life. The biographer has supplied a quotation from Heinrich Zimmer's famous book 'The Art of Indian Asia' to explain the image. 'We behold the solemn, terrible yet marvelously reposeful dance of Siva Natesvara, the divine creator and destroyer of the Universe, whose operations in time are but the phenomenal reflex of a supernal state of timeless peace'. Mr. Mukhopadhyay comments that at the core of the theory of Tagore's creation lies 'a slow musicality of gesture'. The poet clung to it as a means of reconciliation with the disharmonized state of experience. He was too old to make good use of this formal explanation of the eternal cadence of life and death. But his urge to stick to it defied the limits that this formal explanation of life had put. The ballet 'Nataraj Hitarangasala' included the theme of the continuity of time through all seasons. The poet had no difficulty in equating the workings of Nature with the ideal of a dialectical convention of life in the objective universe.

For a certain period of time the tempo of creation ran high following the above zeal for an explanation of the futility-oriented creativity of life through art. But the acute financial stringency of the institution was eating up his aesthetic energies. From Shillong he wrote in May 1927, 'I am to write a story for Vichitra.' It is more in my own interest than in the interest for Vichitra that I have to write the story. I do not know of any other means for earning money except making use of the strength of my pen.' He wrote some poems as well but the mind was not at all stable. However, a tour was arranged to the islandic regions of Java, Malay, Bali etc with a financial assistance from the industrialists like G.D. Birla & N.D. Bajoria. * It was a new literary magazine published from Calcutta.
The aim of the poet was to collect data regarding the traditional link of Indian culture with these islands. The stay in Malay was packed with public appearances and lectures. In a letter written in August 1927 (included in the book Java Yatra Patra) the poet wrote about the fatigue that was almost gobbling him up. The Malay journey fetched malicious remarks from some Englishmen as well. The main aim of Malay journey however was to collect money for the Visva Bharati. While staying in Batavia, Java, the poet wrote, 'These days all big cities belong not to the country, but to the Time. Everybody is modern. The face is not seen, only the mask. These masks are manufactured in the same workshop and made in same dice....' He was drawn to the Balinese art of Dancing. In their dances the Balinese dancers speak through physical symbolism and gestures keeping the tongue inactive. His interest in dance was multiplied by the experience. On 1st October he wrote a poem while leaving Bali. It is Sagarika. The poet addresses the same foreigner stranger and says, 'Lady I have come to thee from a distant land in the attire of a king. See, whether you can recognise me or not'. The ideal was still dangling in his sunburnt bonnet. But it was about to change the colour because there was an irresistible urge in the poet to forsake it at the instance of the objective human world. An eternal music was flooding the poet's weary ear. He spoke of it to Sagarika, the seashore woman, in the poem mentioned above. But the music was remote. It was an abstract pattern that embellished the eye but was not caught by sight. The Romantic was not yet immune of his own typical heart throb at the instance of an ideal realized. But the flashes occurred seldom. Many poems were born towards the end of the journey. These reflect the poet's awareness of a transition of Time. The poet was trying heart and soul to adjust with this changing phase. He wrote a couple of essays on the function of literature in the perspective of this phase of transition. ....

* The poet painter drew many a masked face. They convey an imposed artificiality which must have resulted from the poet's corresponding attitude towards the faces of the modern materialist human beings. The faces never attracted the poet. He expressed this disagreement through direct method sometimes exploiting the dearth of training in portrait making.
It was time when a new wave of unmixed realism was flooding the Western literary firmament. The translation of this new literature created an apathy among the Indian youths for the Victorian literary flavour. The poet himself was dubbed as a petty Classicist by the new generation of literati who flourished in the numerous 'new-wave' Bengali little magazines viz. Kallol, Uttara, Kali Kalam etc. The avant garde artists piled up complaints against the poet. The poet felt rather bewildered by the new race. He was aggrieved to learn that a trend of naked approval of reality has entered into literature and that he was no longer in power to resist it. His grief had its source somewhere else. For one who wanted to reorientate the aesthetic vision as per the growing human tendency towards a concrete state of reality, the jolt should have been less than the proportion it acquired in actuality. The poet reacted to the role of reality in literature in the menace of the loss of originality in art. He never wanted to revalue art in terms of realism without an ideal. His aesthetic idealism only began to include the material explanations of life. Hence the reaction.

Philosophically the poet was driven to a harmonious realisation of the things of the world, the more there was the pressure from outside to break the harmony. He began to see life in death and death in life. The world of art was his hope. The new practitioners wanted to ignore the inner philosophical necessity of an elevated art in the context of contemporary turmoil. But the image-marking or the universal man suffered a real crack with the instance of this deliberate materialisation of art in the name of humanism. Songs appeared in profuse numbers *asa salsal*, as a resort to Romanticism from the tension of reality. Mahua is an anthology of poems written mainly during the middle of 1928. The spirit of this new bunch of poems is also lyrical. The poet himself described the birth of this series of mellow poems as accidental. It began in order made by the editors. But it opened up a floodgate of abstract aesthetic joy, perhaps after a long interval. Mahua is a kind of fruit which appears in nature in Spring time.
The last book Purabi was dedicated to Madam Gkampo. Mahua was dedicated to an aimless unknown somebody. The lyrical passion of love suffered a sort of depersonalisation in the lines of Mahua. The poet was almost ready to create an aesthetic realism of his own which should be termed as Tagore realism for its distinct stress on the synthesis of personality and non-personal conceptuality.

The biographer has drawn out particular attention to the dissipation that came in the poet's progression of thought. The poet was now mentally prepared to express this new aestheticism through any other form of art, if necessary. Then began the trial in painting. This was not his profession, nor his vocation, it was a sheer joyful hobby. A week after the last poem of Mahua (November 1929) the poet wrote to Rani Devi, 'My whole mind has been trapped in the illusory net of lines..... I have forgotten that I ever wrote poems. This affair attracts the mind so deeply for its inconceivableness. Poetry comes in the head at the beginning, however faintly it may be .... The pictures I try to draw has a contrary process....'

He again wrote to Rani Devi - 'Lines have taken full possession/me, I cannot release myself from her.... There is no end to her mysteries. The joy of pictures is one of coherence. In the discipline of lines, I see the finite perfectly - my mind cries out, I can see for definite'. A huge flow of painting submerged the entire lyrical passion of the poet at the end of the Mahua phase. This change seems to be natural now because the poet had been trying to achieve such a direct medium of expression for a long time and he was consciously making choices between the facts of life and the fictions of art. The period which begets certain restlessness, the experience of the Evil in the form of the automation of life, the monotony of living too much among the recognisability of words and finally an intrinsic enthusiasm for the new form led the poet to painting. A couple of novels were written after Mahua, the book of poem. These are Yogayog and Sesher Kabita. The poet was now sixty seven. Both the stories dealt with intense human passions of love and mutual understanding. The former is a postmarital affair. The latter is premarital. ....
In Yogayog there is an intricate issue of women's liberation. The woman Kumudini had a traditional attitude to life. But due to her elder brother's guidance, Kumu became adept in all modern forms of education. She was married to Madhusudan. It was an intercast marriage because the man and the wife were reared up in different phases of culture. Madhusudan found the old Hindu idealism stale. He was a stranger to the modern European culture too. He wanted the wife as the bedfellow and the subordinate only. His conception collided with Kumu's conception of life. Kumu discovered herself in the state of a prisoner in the in-laws' house. She is extremely sentimental about her own position. So her suffering is acute. Amidst utter mental exhaustion Kumu learnt that she was pregnant. She had to accept this as an injustice because her carriage was the symbol of an unjustified social superiority of men over women. In a male-oriented society the woman and the mother had no emotions to express regarding her own hopes and desires. By creating this psychological crisis the poet ended the story. No one can overlook the poet's urge to socialize his aesthetic behind the creation of such a novel, written in simple prose. The labours of a woman's hopes of liberation were lost in the ideally backward Hindu society. The poet's interest was now focussed to it. The subjectivity of the theme did not impede the progress of Yogayog towards an objective explanation of the socially misplaced womanhood. In August 1929 Sesher Kabita the second book was published. Meanwhile the poet undertook a journey to Canada and Japan. The strain of dealing meticulously with the social disorder and its impact upon the subjective mental status of man gave rise to a hunger for relief in the poet's mind. The poet was indecisive again about the exact nature of man as a social being. Sesher Kabita stands for the other side of what was seen in Yogayog. Mr. Mukhopadhyay has discussed in a separate chapter the three works, Yogayog, Sesher Kabita and Mahua. He points out the common trend of human love in all of them. Sesher Kabita according to him is a relief from the strains of Yogayog. 

* He refers to Rolland here. After the completion of John Christopher, Rolland wrote a comic play named Coles Breugan in 1918 as a sort of relief.
It is full of dramatic moments and dialogues that import the reader to a state of absurd perfectionism. It is a sort of lyric in dramatic form. The dramatic personae of this novel belong to the high modern society. The characters here struggle with the veils of their own emotive contents and not with any other socially valid situations. Amit Ray is an opponent of Madhusudan. He never cares to achieve anything. He gets solace in the truth of abstract imagination. Labanya, the ladalove discovers the absurdity of his approach at one point and she immediately decides to withdraw. For a lily-levered idealist of Amit's potency marriage is a danger signal. So the ceremony does not take place and the tragedy is averted. The story ends in an honorable settlement of things. All knots are untied almost in a Shakespearean comic manner. The poet expressed his own disfavour for sudden lyrical raptures in a socially committed humanbeing. The characters criticise the idea of lyricising without provocation by citing the instance of no less a person than Rabindranath by name. But as Mr. Mukhopadhyay has pointed out at the end of the discussion, the stories of the poet were gradually losing contacts with the green of the grass and the warmth of life at large. The characters grew abstract. Their voice seemed uncommon. The reader of Sesher Kabita will agree to this premise. The cause of it lay at the inability of the artist to hold his ideal strong. By digging deep into the core of universal humanity the artist realised that the real, as it were, was too huge to be entered into his aesthetic world. It had to be seen from a distance. The art of Rabindranath of the final phase is the record of this distance which the critics often term as aesthetic distance, which again blurs the vision of the audience and gives rise to the problem of understanding between the artist and the appreciator. The impact of losing the typical human stand, if any, may be felt in the paintings of Tagore most effectively. The forms and the colours used, were unknown to us when he used them. The argument that this queer choice was due to his untrained hand, does not sound valid as we approach the paintings of Tagore in the perspective of his slow but steady withdrawal from the motto of humanisation of all aesthetic norms.
The mark of withdrawal was prominent in the continuous absence of any original literature following Purabi. Songs were there, but they never carried us much beyond a soft susceptibility of the poet's lyrical mind to the working of nature and to the elemental human bondage. The poet on the contrary is found engaged more in material problems like the opening of a Co-operative society in the Santiniketan etc.

The visits to Canada and Japan only aggravated the poet's wounds. He was honoured everywhere. But the ways of life around could not supply his waning mind any succour. The subjects of his lecture were again not directly related to art. In Victoria, Canada, he spoke on the Philosophy of Leisure. It was nothing but a warning against the excesses of work in the name of progress. 'A true gentleman is the product of patient centuries of cultivated leisure.' In opposition to the Western theory, 'Time is Money', the poet said 'Leisure is wealth.' In Canada the poet had to face an utter embarrassment in the hands of the passport authorities. He reflected on the matter later in the following manner. 'The ordinary civility between gentleman and gentleman was lacking in his treatment, but this was entirely due to the fact that he had been dealing with Asians....' This particular incident cannot be treated as a precedence of the poet's ultimate psychological doom. But the above expression carries the note of the poet's mental disturbance in the face of the sociopolitical tension in the world around. The poet was plodding through his weary way of life in an utter amazement at the spiritual carelessness of the whole race. Leaving aside the lyre he had to clasp the material intricacies of human existence. He had to lose his art in consequence. But the loss was at once compensated by a change of form sometimes by means of escape to a world of timeless bounties of lyricism. His response to painting had naturally been approved by his consciousness in the above context.

Returning from the tour the poet wrote to Hard Devi, about his incapacity to respond to the melodies carried by the vernal season through poems.
He faintly hoped to express his feelings through pictures. But he is not yet sure. Mr. Mukhopadhyay has rightly pointed at the sense of loneliness in the poet which, according to him, was ever in search of substitutes in various art forms. Painting was a new addition. Within a fortnight from the return the poet rewrote Raja O Rani and named it Tapati out of an utter discontent about his own past creation. The play was originally in poetry. It was prose now. He expressed in a letter to Prosanto Chandra Mahalanabis about a possibility of musical compositions in simple prose, rather than in poetry in future. The cause of such inclination was simply a will to change and recover from the hangover of learning too much about the world without. After Tapati no new literature was born. The poet was now painting profusely. In his comment about a book 'The Political Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore' by Sachin Sen, journalist, the poet explained his ideas about the proletarians of the world. He could never agree that the equality of status would rebuild the world. He doubted whether the state of equality would be a stimulation for the new generation of materialists. Material ambition has a tendency to increase. Human history has recorded it as a truth. Why the class which has the scope to increase the ambition for becoming stronger shall leave the chance to play a superior role over the weaker? The poet's mental unrest found expression in his sudden interest in planchet reading. To talk to the dead over a planchet has nothing to do with a materialist. But the poet was still not confident about his own stand as a materialist. He wanted to recupe in some way or the other. He wanted to make himself free from the bondage of the known and accepted events of life as a part of the same desire which forced him to comment on the various human situations.

Reaching the scriptural age of three score and ten years the poet went to Europe for the last time. The year was 1930. The bard was now transformed into a maker of lines and forms. From Paris he wrote, 'The poetry of Rabindur of the last century has recently been rendered numb. He is now appearing as a painter'. ....
On 2nd May an exhibition of paintings was inaugurated in Gallery Pigalle, Paris with one hundred twenty five works. Madam Okampo was the principal financier and sponsor. From the poet's letter it is learnt that without Victoria nobody would ever have seen the pictures, whether they were good or bad. From France the poet went to England. The practice of making comments over politics and other things however did not cease. In Birmingham and Woodbrooke he passed opinions about the bureaucratic systems. He could not support Communism directly, but he was always in favour of the oppressed masses. The poet was then invited to give Hibbert Lectures in Manchester College, Oxford (May 1930). His subject was The Religion of Man. He narrated his feelings about an international religion of humanism upon the strong base of Oriental human faith in the continuity of a universal impulse of life through human life. In the midst of Hibbert Lectures the poet went to London once and spoke at the Annual meeting of the Quakers. He said 'There can be no absolute independence for man. Interdependence is in his nature and it is the highest goal.... Let the best minds of the East and West join hands and establish a truly human bond of interdependence between England and India ....'. In a very significant lectures in the chapel of Manchester College, Oxford (Sunday May 25, 1930) the poet assessed the worth of light above darkness putting particular stress upon the ignorance of the darkened man about light. He based his thesis upon the Upanisadic concept of divinity. 'Darkness drives our being into an isolation of insignificance and we are frightened because in the dark the sense of our own truth dwindles into a consciousness of our personality which naturally seeks from our surroundings its response in a truth which is positive and then in this harmony we find our wealth of reality'. 'Most often crimes are committed when it is night. It must not be thought that the only reason for this is that in the dark they are likely to remain undetected. But the deep reason is that in the dark the negative aspect of time weakens the positive sense of our own humanity. Our victims, as well as we ourselves, are less real to us in the night, and that which we miss within we desperately seek outside us'.
Let us keep our faith firm in the objectivity of the source of our spiritual ideal of unity, though it cannot be proved by any mathematical logic. Let us proclaim in our conduct that it has already been given to us to be realised, like a song which has only to be mastered and sung, like the morning which has only to be welcomed by raising the screens, opening the doors.

From Oxford he went to London. An exhibition of his paintings was arranged in this city on the occasion of which the poet repeated his opinion about his own paintings. He said that he was still blind about the qualities of his paintings. In July an exhibition of his paintings was arranged in Berlin. In Germany he met Sir Albert Einstein. The scientist had an intimate discussion with the artist about the possibilities of philosophy in an age of science. In Germany the poet was in company of Mr. Amiya Chakroborti, the eminent Indian scholar and the younger brother of Mr. Ajit Chakroborti, an ex-ashramite of the early days of Santiniketan.

Referring to the busy days at Munich, Mr. Chakroborti wrote, 'Rabindranath is writing an English play for film in a new technique. Like paintings this also is a new intoxication.' The art of filmmaking did not flourish much at that time although the origin of this new art form dates back to the first decade of the new century. Rabindranath did not show greater interest in this new art because this art was almost unknown to his own country which was the major source of his creation. But the painter went on. In Dresden there was an exhibition. The next place visited was Denmark. In Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark there was an exhibition. The poet was greatly inspired by the contacts with the defeated Germans. His companion Mr. Chakroborti has written, 'We have been travelling Germany like Emperors.... The poet always remains inspired so much so that whatever he says sounds best as poetry.' But poet's interest for the German nation was unknown to the other side that was German nationalism. It was the days of flourish for Adolf Hitler, the cruellest of the Nazis.

* They met in Germany also in 1926.

* Hitler became the master of the German nation in 1934.
Another important point to make here is the limits of the poet's inspiration. The poet's entire sojourn this time was designed by a deep involvement into the business of objectivity. He painted and showed the paintings. He lectured on universal humanism. He saw places and enjoyed the glamour of the glorious Western world, but the bard in him was constantly lulled into sleep. His abstract poetic exuberance and expression did not find the mentality of this phase suitable for a refuge. The days of Europe were covered by honours and accolades, but the poet's worries about the state of life in his own country did not cease. It was time when the political cries of freedom from European supremacy were affecting the peace of Santiniketan. How can he keep his artistry at peace when the greatest of his creation was thus at distress?

In September 1930 the poet reached Moscow with his party. For a longtime the poet was cherishing the desire to visit Russia because this huge subcontinental country was gradually making a clean breakway into the political atmosphere of the world. What impressed him at the beginning was the conscious attempt of the Soviet leaders to arouse every individual in accordance with a spirit of self-assertion. The entire country was downcast with economic stringency. A huge number of letters flowed which were published later as Russian Chiti (The Letters from Russia). The country was trying to bring a social equality for all sorts of people. The glamour of remaining rich was abolished. This had given the people of this country the due human dignity both on subjective and objective level. In the middle of September an exhibition of paintings was arranged in the State Museum of New Western Art. Qudos were showered with the same warmth as was present among the Europeans. The poet's stay in Moscow was short but the visit proved to be a great impetus for the disorderly artistmind for it revealed the possibilities of a universal human assertiveness which could cope with the wrath of Time and Fate. The poet was missing the same among his fellowmen both in the native country and the racing West. ....
The poet went to America from Soviet Union. The enormous wealth of the United States posed a veritable contrast before him as the memories of the socialist government of Russia were still very fresh in his mind. He wrote from America to Protima Deb, his son's wife, 'I had been expecting for a long time that my land should belong to my subjects and that we should remain as the trustees only.' The thoughts of a socialist set up of the world were nurtured by him so long because he expected a betterment of the society on the standard of humanism. Socialist philosophy smacks of utterly human spirit. The idea of Rabindranath about socialist reconstruction of the world was based upon a clarity of vision which his training in Oriental humanism had crowned him with. His Russia visit inspired him to comment that a day was coming when the people would no longer be in a position to confide in the traditional concept of land-lordship. He did not deny the difference of classes, but he was now mentally ready to accept dialectical materialism as the guiding principle of earthly life. His mind was bathed deep in the spiritual fervour. He did not forsake it. A great truth of contradiction between spirituality and materialism was now making headway into the poised mental make up. As the artistry of Rabindranath was a product of the same responsive mind, the chance for recasting his art in accordance with the new ideas was prominent.

The stay in America was at the beginning rendered horrible by an over emphasis of the news of his health breakdown. The reason was simple. The Americans knew well his attitude and his capacities to express it. They were aware to learn about the poet's choice for the Soviet ways of life which was absolutely antiscapitalistic. He however had many shows of paintings in America too. From Philadelphia the poet wrote, 'The little experience I had in Europe has made me understand that I can now rely upon my habit of drawing. So my mind is now replete with happiness.' Paintings occupied the major part of his aesthetic exercise during his long sojourn. It was obvious that in them was reflected his mental condition which was charged with an intense anxiety due to the dialectical states of experience in USSR & USA.
He was bewildered to such an extent that it became impossible for him to accept a new creative venture having retained the same aesthetic faith upon an all pervading reality of life. What was real? The will of the universal man to transgress the limits of materialism? Or the will of the individual man to bank upon the capital earned, giving rise to a state of mutual discrepancies and social disbelief as per the difference of classes? The exhaustion found an outlet in the letter written from New York, "An army of five hundred fans will felicitate me.... Alas why I am within this? What sin did I commit? Viswabharati? ... At each step it seems that I am distorting the truth into a lie — how horrible is the burden of that lie."

The travel lasted for eleven months. The best fruit of this contact with the West and the Soviet Republic was his reassertion of the faith in a universal humanism. He was dazed to see the disillusioned human race of America which was made apparently flabby with economic security as the talisman but at the core of which lay the cankerworm of immense impossibilities of understanding and cooperation.

He was dazed to see the Soviet economic system and the ardent Soviet will to assert a social personality that would fight the evils of individual ambitions to become well placed at any cost. The need of the hour was, as he saw it, to remember that the world belonged to humanity and that the purpose of life was to humanize the flux of Time with best efforts. The concern he had to express was so grave that he got little time to concentrate over the finer aesthetic problems that had so long been his definite shelter. The art of painting did not require much concentration. It began as we learn from Madam Okampo, in stray doddlings and it matured, as the poet had said umpteen times, in the poet's inmost urge to objectify the harmony and coherence that shaped his very personality in course a long span of time. He never meant to render it consciously purposive. He painted as pastime and a meaning was formed in consequence. ....

* To Bambala Sen, the director of Sri Sadan.
The purpose was created by the poet's enthusiasm to stick to the practice. He needed such a hobby very much as he was by now an absolutely estranged individual groping recklessly for a socialisation of his self. His humanism was the other name of this objectification of his personal tastes of life. His pictures similarly were the translation of his personal incapacities to acknowledge receipt of whatever was given to his senses. He had always been loud about the whimsicality of their origin. But even if he did not want the paintings to be included into his consciously created literary or musical art, the paintings became an integral part of it. His urge to exhibit them extensively and the corresponding satisfaction that he had, made him a conscious painting artist of the highest order. He had his limits. But once the above facts are tagged to his penchant for lines and colours, the limits are rendered insignificant. The support that his Western friends rendered to him as a painting artist was largely due to his imposing personality. But the finer level of an aesthete's will to explore the direct world of colours and lines could hardly be overlooked by the audience of the West. Hence the acknowledgement. Hence the impetus.

At this point mention should be made of what Sir William Archer, the art critic, has said about the paintings of Rabindranath. Mr. Archer's views* seem rather disorderly to an Indian mind for his typical proneness towards analysis which inevitably threatens to break the philosophic totality of the entire process of Tagore's creations of which painting was but a final part. The author however has been able to touch the basic point of reality in the paintings of the poet. He has taken us directly to the crowd of opinions passed by the poet himself about his paintings. The poet mentioned on many occasions that the paintings originated in an effort of his poised mind to systematise the deletions of his writings. The poet was stimulated to do so by an inner urge for a rhythmic incarnation of the dismal and uninspiring states of things symbolised by the deletions. 'Art like life reveals in a rhythmic play of appearances for its own sake' (The poet's Lecture on Art at Teheran). ....

* Art and the Unconscious - Rabindranath Tagore - William Archer.
There is some force in me which continually works towards that end, but is not mine alone - it is beyond this control and acts according to its own nature, and in surrounding our lives to its power is our greatest joy (Glimpses of Bengal).

Having cited some such quotations Mr. Archer has defended the poet's stand as a painter on the philosophical level. He then proceeds to make out as to whether the painting art of Rabindranath was a development of his unconscious aspirations for a rhythm which might have naturally flowed from certain conditions of rhythmlessness on the level of consciousness. The poet has mentioned in details about the background of his training in the philosophy of an eternal rhythm that abides life and he has passed many an opinion as 'This has been my conscious training'. Archer has attempted to equate this apparently conscious affinity of the poet for an inward rhythm of life with the nonacademic approach of the poet to art education in general. 'Let us take part and make daring experiments, venture out into the open road in the face of all risks, go through experiences in the great world of human mind, defying unholy prohibitions preached by prudent little critics, laughing at them when in their tender solicitude for our safety they ask our artists to behave like good children and never to cross the threshold of their classroom' (Art and Tradition).

The suggestions that the honoured critic has offered by the above equation was that the process of creation in the case of Tagore's paintings was marked by a conscious attempt to cling to the internal unconscious order existent perpetually in the life in general. Mr. Archer's second point is Tagore's patriotism as a poet and his support of the cause of India's right to claim Independence. His internationalism allowed the poet ample scope to stretch his ideas about painting beyond the national boundary. Mr. Archer has tried to find an objective correlative of the poet's inspiration to paint in the flourish of modern western art all over the world. May be, says the critic, that Tagore was inspired by the Exhibition of Modern Art which took place in Calcutta in 1927, in which pictures of Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky were included. Mr. Archer's opinion about this encounter seems rather justifiable.

* although the poet has not recorded any personal reflection of this exhibition.
During his visit to Europe in 1926 the poet indeed encountered Modern art in all its abundance. The critic finds in the attitudes of Tagore and Klee towards forms an undeniable closeness. 'The heart must do its work undisturbed by reflective consciousness. Each (artist) should follow where the pulse of his own heart leads' — said Klee in 1924. The poetpainter tried to justify his stand with similar statements in favour of an unconscious flow of creative passion during painting. Mr. Archer names the Norwegian painter Edward Munch too as an inspirer. 'Munch's style has an ugly ferocity which expresses through its savage biting manner a sense of harsh resentment.' 'Rabindranath's own gestures of defiance were to find more abstract shape,' employing 'exaggerated figures and change them with sinister venom'. But such a closeness is too obvious and this minimizes the scope to assess the background of Rabindranath's paintings in relation to his developing aesthetic ideas. Mr. Archer finds an affinity between the works of the poet and the works of Pablo Picasso (During the years 1925-34). The critic has quoted from Herbert Read to explain Picasso, the painter. 'He (Picasso) does not know in advance what he is going to put on the canvas, nor does he decide what colours to use, .... He allows his sensitivity a free rein, paints in a trance — a trance which has all the acute, the visual definiteness of dream. Picasso is obviously in the condition of daydreaming, perhaps a condition of self hypnosis.' Picasso was a votary of the theory of the Unconscious. Mr. Archer relates both of them on the basis of this theory. 'Playing with erases was merely a beginning, for Rabindranath found that lines suggested lines, forms suggested forms and just as words developed their own musical rhythms during the making of a poem, a process of unconscious creation seized him.' His first experiments are often little more than Arabesques, and 'for several months he was content to use a fountain pen and his instruments continued to be simple. ....

* But Klee's statement does not carry any special suggestion. This may be said by any creator. The similarity of the two artists attitude is not reflected by such generalized statements.
The end of a pen, a piece of rag, a fragment of cloth or even the tip of a finger were often his valuable ways of transferring ink to paper. Mr. Monoranjan Gupta in his book Rabindra Odtrakala (which is the only repository of the poet’s paintings in Bengali) has named the Chinese poet-painter Mi Fei and pointed out the Chinese painter’s methods of transferring colours into paper by the pulp of sugar-cane, the stalk of a lotus flower etc. ‘Gradually’, proceeds Archer ‘the intervention by the conscious or unconscious now became a part of the creative process. When a form had actually appeared, preconsciously memories often asserted themselves, and a shape which had hitherto possessed few, if any, realistic associations was converted into an image’. Mr. Archer then quotes a few lines from the speech of a character of Sesher Kobita. The character says ‘My second contention against poet Tagore is that his creations even like his hand writing are full of curves reminding one of roses and female forms and floating moons! Primitive’. From the new literary dictator we expect creations, straight and sharp — like thorns, like arrows, spearheads. Not like fragile flowers, but like the lightning flash and the pains of neuralgia, piercing and angular like a Gothic Church, not rounded like a mosque dome, not self-complacent but aggressive, even if they be crude like a jute mill or a government secretariat. Let us dischant ourselves from the witchery of musical forms. The critic adds a fitting comment in the following manner. ‘There is no evidence that this passage was written in connexion with his own art, but of all Tagore’s paintings it is precisely those which embody this very kind of imagery which constitutes his greatest achievement’. The urge to declass himself as an idealist poet was ultimately expressed in paintings most of which embodied a horrific—sure. If this argument of Archer is registered, the theory of an outer reality that created a new dimension in the aesthetics of Rabindranath may find a secure place upon it. Archer switches over to the poet’s physical decrepitude during the painting period from the above point and shows that the incapacity to sustain the youthful vigour which was his constant company turned him into a reckless painter of forms, sometimes absurd uncouth forms. ....

* Protima Devi, the poet’s daughter-in-law has given the information in an article (published in Viswa Bharati Patrika, 2nd issue, 1st year) how the poet sometimes went to the extent of selecting the sleeves of his own jobba (a sort of gown) as his brush.
His loss of popularity also was a moot point behind the change to painting. But to accept these arguments one has to give vote in favour of the poet's mental degeneration in the face of the above circumstances. The change to grotesque forms certainly does not justify the poet's will to pervert himself under pressure of circumstances. True that he was scathingly criticised in his own country and abroad for his internationalism and his aesthetic idealism at the last phase of life.

Edward Thompson, the poet's biographer wrote to Rothenstein in 1931 - 'He won't get justice now - nothing could get his justice .... My disappointment over the loss of reputation that has come to Tagore is largely because he lost the best chance an Indian has ever had of getting a hearing from the West. He got the ear of England and then lost it. He lost much more than his own battle'. About his painting too no less a renowned person than Ezra Pound once said, 'I remember when Tagore had taken to doodling on the edge of his proofs, and they told him it was art. There was a show of it in Paris. 'Is this art?' Nobody was very keen on these doodlings, but of course so many people lied to him'. (Writers At Work, New York 1966)*the effect created by his last art was two fold. Side by side with such abuses there were praises from persons like Paul Valery, Andreess Lead and the Russians. One Russian art-critic S.Tulian said, 'At a climatic stage of the development of the genius of the painter Rabindranath the stress on the formative and the linear drawing was transformed into a thematized art*. A few contemporary Bengali artists viz Nandalal Bose and Binod Bihari Mukhopadhyay also commented exuberantly on the philosophic perfection of the pictures. The poet should have used these praises as a foil to the negative criticisms. In the Western world too praises were there and the adverse attitude of the Western people including those old English friends like W.B.Yeats should have been refuted by the poet's success as a painter. In Vancouver the poet said in December 1930, 'Columbus set out to find the passage to India and found the American continent. Now the West should continue the journey and complete the voyage to India.' ....

This was a naturally an unlovable comment for the western mind which had been all set to put the entire oriental spirit of life to rout for the success of an inescapable material cause of life. The root of the poet's loss of popularity lay in his advice to the disbeliever to turn into a believer. His art was neither a thorough representation of his personal ideas any longer. Mr. Archer has not considered the philosophical disagreement that the poet had with his audience. What is more important was, according to him, his 'proud refusal to admit eclipse'. There was a growing resentment against life for failing him. 'It was as if he sensed a conspiracy of evil, and in the face of those who were either frankly hostile or dimly neutral, defiance seemed the only appropriate attitude'. The critic has done a great injustice to the artist by dragging the poet's urge to paint to the level of a libidinal lapse typical of an old man. Freud has shown that symbolism is an integral part of the unconscious imagination, and that whether revealed in dreams, riddles or poetry, the unconscious is mainly preoccupied with sexual issues. Naming Klee, Juan Miro, Picasso, Lorca and Dylan Thomas the critic has tried to illustrate the validity of the thesis. His conclusion is rather hastily drawn. His poem 'The Kopal' for example treats the river 'as if it were a girl filled with sexual charm'. Tagore surrendered to their (Santhal women)'healthy grace'. (The beautiful harmony of their figures and movements and the vigorous cleanliness of their limbs.) But this has been an utter misreading and a malice against the very aesthetics of Rabindranath. The paintings have women. They are sometimes naked too. But what sexual impulses do these speak of? The sickly and sad faces and figures of the paintings of Rabindranath were in a majority of cases sexless neuters just as the heads were maky, the hominids were reptiles, the gods were apes, the trees were human skeletons, funny faces were melancholy metamorphosed. In the concluding part of his dissertation Mr. Archer has paid tributes to the poet-painter in the following manner. 'His art is incontestably modern. Whatever we may say of some of the features, it could not have been produced either in India or in Europe at any other time than the present.... Similarly, ....
... its sexual context, its vindication of ugliness and its strong emotional attitudes are obvious products of the modern age'. Viewed against the tepid sentimentalities of neo-Bengal artists, set beside fabric imitations of the Mughal and Ajanta Schools, Tagore's paintings had 'a freshness and vigour which was truly regenerative'. 'Tagore's paintings had the critic continuous, 
for Indian Art the same kind of revolutionary and vitalising function as Henry Moore's sculpture has had for English. Both were subtly expressive of their times. Both suggest a new start, yet both can still be filled into their respective national traditions. ...inner assurance was the only quality needed and because Rabindranath Tagore possessed it above all else, he was able to break the impasses which confronted modern Indian painting.'

Beyond the area of Archer's criticism and its counter-criticism lies the prospect of approving Rabindranath's painting art as an ideal specimen of 'the art the real'. Let us turn Archer's views. But Archer is right in pointing out Tagore's nationalism as an objective correlative for his art, Tagore's defiant attitude against the impending decay of body and mind which rendered him almost sexually inclined towards the sensate world of colours and symbolизм and finally allowed his phenomenal potency to sculpt a new art of the century inco-ordination with his Western experience and eastern faith. The critic should be remembered in the context of the present dissertation for his attempt to objectify the state that gave rise to painting in the world of Tagore's poetry and song by defining it as a journey of the poet to the Unconscious. To attribute the genesis of the art of so great an artist to a state of unconsciousness is a sort of sacrilege. Such attribution will minimise the prospect of understanding Rabindranath's very philosoph of life, which was, as we have seen in the proceeding pages, gradually maturing into a new aesthetic reality of the new age. But nonetheless incontestable is the view that the weary poet's last journey to the terminus was regaled by an 'inner assurance'. This abstract 'inner assurance' was offered to him by his pictures. ...
.... And, in that respect the initiative was more of those visually dole, ted lines which threatened the harmony of his vision than his own sweet self which often pondered over the bleak prospect of turning to painting for want of due training. The poet's change to painting and his obsessions for this last art is enough to empower him with the authority of the 'art of the real'. Our following observations regarding the particular period of his painting along with other art activities will authenticate the above claim.

Days hang heavy after the return. The mind was incapable of responding to the stream of life. Suddenly, on the eve of his seventieth year, a flood of lyrics came to erode the area of depression. With thirty four songs, most of them old, the new composition Nabin (which means the New) was staged in the New Empire Theatre, Calcutta in March 1931.

The poet has now acquired a religion of his own. It had manifested itself in a stream where the desire to mingle the origin of life with the end was cropping up, throwing aside all sorts of rational argumentations. The poet wrote to Promotho Choudhuri in a mood of utter renunciation, 'My childhood days were spent with the chaste playfulness, now I am content to remain with a chaste whimsicality'. But the goddess of strangeness was still kind, still cooperative. She poured into the shaky nerves of the emaciated poet a fresh flood of energy to imagine. The poet was now busy in painting. He had already said that he was now a stranger to poetry. But on the occasion of his new birthday the voice sounded the same old murmur of a poet's heart who imagined the good and the beautiful and played with words and words only. The poet said, 'I have one identity. I am but a poet. I am not a theorist, a pundit, guru or a leader. I am the messenger of the diverse. Accepting the play of the diverse into the soul I went to objectify it. This is my business'. In a letter to Mr. Dilip Kumar Roy he wrote, 'The trend of all my feelings and creation has culminated in man. I have called God repeatedly, ...
The reply was made by Man, in the form and the formless, in enjoyment and renunciation. The concept of Man was the sole authority of the art of Rabindranath of the final phase. He saw humanity trampled at the feet of the monster of materialism. He saw the possibility of a vertical man amid destruction. His humanism was the result of a realisation of the dialectics of existence. For him now the geographical limitations were ridiculous. Man in his art was a struggling biological entity with an immortal fire hidden within his soul.

The racial quarrel between the Hindus and the Muslims, matured into a mutual apathy when the poet returned from the West. The poet scathingly criticised the countrymen for this drift. The poem Sishutirtha (The pilgrimage of the child) was written in the context of the race struggle. This long poem written almost in simple prose was a development of the poem, The Child, written during the stay in Munich in July. The poem was the invocation of an anthropomorphic child-god who was the epitome of a human ideal. A play was also staged with the theme of the above poem with a good number of dance compositions. The poem carried the message of a new birth. The newborn child would redress the wrongs of the world. The hope of a thousand possibilities remained beyond and above the limits of material habitualities of life. The newborn would usher in a new era.

In April 1932 a journey was made to Persia by plane. The invitation was offered by the Shah of Persia. The poet was naturally accorded warm ovations at all the places visited. The poet expressed his deepest regards for the hospitality of the Persians and mentioned how fortunate he was to accept the invitation at a phase when the history of Persia was turning over a new leaf as an independent country. In June the poet returned. The heart was now filled with an urge to poetise the experiences of the objective world. The poet's mental tension was apparently over and he was found to be actively involved into the business of writing poems. But the reality of life too was putting its paw over the bosom of poetry. There was a recurring shortage of fund. A grandson named Mitu was seriously ill.
In the poems written during this phase the poet's reactions to these untowardnesses were clearly marked. The poems of Parisesh were written mostly in a prose rhyme. The practice of proseryhme reached a mature state in the poems of Punoecho (The Post Script). The biographer draws our attention to the impressional similarity between the prose poems and the system of painting. In both of these attempts the poet's tendency to overcome the expresional stipulations was prominent. The need to accept such a change was felt for the traditional ways of expression were fast losing the desired effect. The poet had to describe the Evil and the Good in direct terms now. He should find a direct medium of expression. The systematic cadence of a poem limits the imagination within the words. It does not allow the reactionary mind of the artist to enter nakedly into its area. The achievement of Rabindranath was that it was he who for the first time in the history of our Art had dared to search out a way of expression that carried the reactions of the artistmind in the raw form without disturbing the due aesthetic impression. In painting he of course could not succeed much because the mysteries of line and colours were not fully revealed before him. But the urge to chalk out a new aesthetic expression which would be at par with the new temper of the age may be detected by any casual observer of his paintings. According to the poet there is in the prose lyric 'a simple feeling of ordinariness, it may have no decoration, but it has beauty....' 'Beyond the venue of dance there exists the world of crests and truffles. This world is diversified, it is ruthless yet graceful. Only the fast movement suits this world - sometimes along the grass sometimes stonechips.' The poet was trying to justify his stand as a worshipper of the direct and the real. The character of this real is cognizable in its objectivity. The old silken robe of the lyricist was not snatched by the realist who did not hesitate to drag the usual metre and rhyme of poetry to the dungeon of drab prosaim. 

* The poems were collected in the anthology Parisesh which means the 'Fag End'. The end was not directly beautiful. It too had its dark shades. The thoughts of a newbirth were mingled with the fear of death in the poems of this phase.

* Letter to Mr. Dhurjati Prasad Mukherjee.
The result was unique. It fetched an unknown flower, a new art to be known to the world as 'an art of the real'. What tremendous impact this change to prose rhyme had created upon Bengali literature can be fathomed from the entire concentration of the later Bengali poets towards expressions in poetised prose. The subjects chosen by the poet were certainly his own but the description, the narrativeness rather, as in Prithul (where the different seasons of the world are described in detail) of Punoscho (The Post script) is utterly evocative of a tendency to objectify and to make a direct reflection upon the events outside.

A play was rewritten and named Rather Rasi (The strings of the Chariot). It was Kaler Jatra (The March of Time), when written nine years back. This symbolic play is written in prose rhyme. The message of the poet to the charioteers was that they should be careful about the strings by catching hold of which the chariot was drawn. The chariot moves only when the driver is conscious and the strings are within his bold grip. It was a call to the people of the world for a revival of their awareness of the medium through which they served the purpose of life. It sounded socialistic, but the aim of this short play was to defend his stand as a neorealist who cared most for the outer form that had to be coordinated with the inner form for any perfect creation.

The political condition inside country worsened with the arrest of Gandhi in January 1932. The poet unhesitatingly pledged his full-throated support to the call Gandhi had given to his countrymen. The poet wrote to the countrymen from Santiniketan — 'But let us not be sidetracked by emotional consideration and let us meet the real issues that will soon be revealed to us, united amongst ourselves and prepared for any contingency'. He advocated the cause of a communist structure as a key to freedom. Through his political commentaries the poet was hoping for an integrated attitude of life for the Indians. The root of his remarks were at the aesthetic realisation of and contemplation over the various objective issues of life...
It was a period when the poet should have, as a sensitive human being, concentrated over the futility of daily life. But death was no longer a potent factor. The poet's subjective reflections upon abstract philosophical matters began to cease as he engaged himself into the sociopolitical crises of the objective world. In January 1932 the poet delivered Kamala Lecture in the University of Calcutta on 'The Religion of Man'. The same note of a spiritual wonder at the possibilities of Man as the best of animals as was heard in Hibbert Lectures, could be heard in this series of speeches in vernacular. The poet was certain about the establishment of his humanged theory for a promotion of the spiritually impoverished state of affairs all over the world. His personal realisation was now communicated to the impersonal world with the conviction that the life and the world were the two strings of a unified force and that man was the final authority through whom the eternal order of life had issued. He emphasised upon the state of disillusionment of the downtrodden masses of the world and hopes for a betterment of their states through education and economic prosperity by dint of dignified labour. Philosophy was smoking the altar of poetic faith. Post and philosopher were melted into each other long ago. The philosopher poet was now going to many lengths but when asked to recite, the stress was at once laid, to our utter amazement, upon the formal facet of poetry only. The poetry of the purest flavour as was there in the days of Geetanjali, or even Balaka or Puresbi to advance to the maximum, was absent, very much absent at this phase. Of the many reasons, philosophy was of supreme importance.

The dance drama Saap Kochan was recomposed with a few new dance and song numbers. In March 1933 it was staged at New Empire Theatre, Calcutta. Some creative prose also followed (Dui Bon, Malancha, Bensari). In the first two the theme centred round nuptial relationship and its corresponding bitterness. But the third one (a play) began in conflict but ended in a high pitched sentiment of idealism.
The poet lived an extremely eventful life with his focus of attention sometimes upon the political turmoil, sometimes upon the educational reforms (through Visva Bharati) and so on. Some stories of Galpaguchho (The selection of short stories) were dramatized in the following phase. Tours were arranged to some near and distant places. Lectures on various social issues were delivered. In 1934 when he was travelling in South India he wrote another masterpiece and named it 'Charādhaya' (The Four Chapters). It is a novel based on an idealist political worker of Bengal named Indranath. The rebel hero picked up Ela, the woman, for serving the party. One of the cadets in the party was Antu, a young man with a throbbing pulse of life. He and many others rallied around Ela for her prowess. Antu wanted the lady as his love. Meanwhile the party began to disintegrate. It was learnt that Ela would soon be arrested by the police. The leader conceived that Ela might confess everything under police lockup. Antu was ordered to kill Ela for the safety of the party. The murder was not the point to stress. The poet took us directly to the core of the political turmoil that was spreading a contagion of mutual faithlessness among the countrymen. He dealt with a private problem. But the suggestion was nonpersonal. Charādhaya was the story of an inherent incongruity and conflict between the man and the society. It was another document of an outgrown idealist's penchant for the lost stream. The nature of Rabindranath's aesthetics of this phase can be determined from his choice and treatment of such a controversial theme. Charādhaya had another aspect about which the poet himself had commented elsewhere. The poet: The side which enchants the reader of Charādhaya is its poetry. Mr. Buddhadeb Baru has supported the emotional aspect of the story with its unusual bent towards lyricism. Mr. Baru: Of all his prosebooks, only here he has agreed that love is barbarous. The lyrical tune of the relationship between Ela and Antu was so deep that one confuses it with the previous works of the poet. But the poet did not. ....

*A Journey to Ceylon also was made in May 1934. The object was twofold, one cultural exchange. The other fund raising. The former was met with tremendous success, but the latter was more important. One wonders how the two poles met within the poet's heart.*
Ha was trying desperately to remain honest to his personal emotionality. He was never a miser whenever the call was given by his heart to reflect upon the poetry that pervaded life at all events. But the challenge of prose was causing widespread erosion to the banks of his sensitive and weary soul.

The light was finally out in August 1941. Between 1935 and 41 at least seventeen books of poems were made ready. A huge number of paintings were created. Added to these were the usual lecturings, sojourns, commentaries on the social condition, involvements in the various socio-political problems and so on. We have so long been trying to defend the tendency of the idealist poet to objectify his aesthetic convictions in accordance with the necessities of his age. Our defence is not weakened at the instance of the poet's taking a last resort to pure lyric because the poetical works of the final phase were never a victim to sheer subjectivity. They were, taken generally, the offsprings of a neorealist modern artist. With a niche in his heart for all that was utterly mundane the septuagenarian artist made numerous attempts to maintain his inmost 'devotion to something afar' and what was most striking was the old man's utter indifference to the limits of the material aspirations during these attempts. The tide into which the artist was caught and gradually adjusted was one of a perpetual development from the personal to the impersonal, from the real to the spiritual. But like as the river ends in the sea and the sea returns the water to the river through a course of constant evaporation explanation of the streams of consciousness culminate in the material into cloud, so did the search for a spiritual/realities which were the bases of his spiritualist searches. The process was circular as in the world of Nature. The art of Rabindranath should have to be placed at the centre of this circular order. To prove him an 'artist of the real' it is necessary to place his artistry at the centre where the ideal was incessantly making room for the real and real was spreading itself without any disregard to the ideal. An 'art of the real' is a method of exchange between the senses and the sense datum. It is the acknowledgement of an impersonal world of reality, an independent consciousness that runs into the artist's personal consciousness.
The artist ultimately returns to himself, but in his journey he gathers ingredients from all external realities around him. This gathering is not flat materialisation. It is an objectification of the feelings and realisations as per the nature and influence of the things gathered. Rabindranath saw whatever came to his sight. He was flexible enough to lend his vision to any sort of object. Upto this every artist has to go. What he added anew was that he allowed his flexible sight ample liberty to change, if not modify, its own stand in accordance with the nature of the object. If his humanism was conditioned by material limits it was due to his agreement with all such limits on the basis of human justification. Seldom a poet is bothered about so many social reformations. His VisvaBharati, his political commentaries which outnumber his spiritual and artistic commentaries and his 'Religion of man' were results of his attempts to materialise his aesthetics.

The stories chosen, the forms selected like the prose poems, dance, paintings, were always subjected to the necessities of the world where the audience live and move. The horrors of war and loss of faith in an integrated life haunted him heavily. He often surrendered to the corresponding awe and wonder. He ceased to write, took to painting in defiance of his limits as a painter due to want of training. But the imaginative artistmind was vigilant; it was ever responsive to the subjective undulations. The Evil posed constant obstructions to its movement. The objective world was frequently metamorphosed into the form of an Evil incarnate. The sum Total of life in the new century was safety on the physical level, at any dear cost.

It was Evil, incarnate in the eyes of a devout idealist and a poet of the highest order. But Rabindranath had the great potency to ride over the barricade of darkness and make known his zeal to discover the coherence of light. He was never incompetent to voice the Upanisadic maxims 'Tamaso ma yotirgomaaya', 'Asetoma sadgomaay' 'Mrityusmrirtogomaaya'. Darkness melts into light, Dishonesty melts into honesty, Death melts into eternal life. Poetry was the first and last arrow in his quiver. When he faced the robot of the Western civilisation he felt embarrassed for a moment. He reacted in inane prose. But the last of life, the final hour of parting makes a man nostalgic.
The poet mellowly reminisced the old citadel of pure poetry which was his original abode. A controversy may occur about the authenticity of Rabindranath the poet as an 'artist of the real' on the ground that he never reconciled with the external forces to the extent it was required of him. But an 'artist of the real' is not an iconoclast that way. He accepts the ideal and the self-referent imagination as the immediate reality. He does not accept and withdraw by means of objectification. He participates in the very directness of the events that are taking place outside his personal area of knowledge. There is a double action. He gathers the knowledge on the one hand and assimilates it with his aesthetic passions on the other. The difference he has with his predecessors can be marked in his will to change without the intervention of scruples about the ultimate goodness and beautifulness of things. By turning ultimately to poetry Rabindranath has proved that this unscrupulousness begets a natural proneness towards an eternal coherence and order. This order is recorded in art. It is the only business of art. This order is inclusive of the personal and the impersonal, the good as well as the evil. Moralist has nothing to do with art because he is not in a position to sacrifice his personal ideas for the sake of a greater cause. His approach to the problem of good and evil is oriented by a bias. He does not allow imagination after certain limits. He has a focus automatically fixed up towards the world of others. But the artist fixes up his focus towards himself and outside at the same moment. The poet in Rabindranath had a constant combat with the moralist and teacher in him. The aesthetics of this great modern Indian artist was framed out of the tension of acceptance and refutal, personal choices and the choices of the audience. The audience often rebelled. But the ultimate success was his and as days pass by the art of Rabindranath is gaining widest popularity. The artist was successful in healing his personal aesthetic trauma through a continuous connection with the spiritual tempo of life and time. His poetry was basically static in so far as it exhaled an affinity with the eternity of time beside the futility of life. The nature of staticism was never changed. It gradually sanctioned permission to the dynamic current of objectivity. ....
The later artists, who are described as 'artists of the real', too stick to a static conception of art and abide by the temporariness of the physical kind. They make experiments with forms, techniques. They cater to the needs of the audience. They mould their expressions and views thereby. But the point or the target is same for all artists of all times. Rabindranath's instance may come in favour of treating the theory of the 'art of the real' as one about expression. It is so. It is a journey of the artist from the land of his own imagination and back. The course is different. The trend of modern art approved of this change of course. Thus the surrealist draws a woman half in flesh half in skeleton. The Cubist distorts the human form into cubes. The psychedelic artist creates a dizzying visual tension in fluorescent colours and so on and so forth.

At the age of seventy four the anthology of poems named Sesh Septak (The Last Octave) was published. The poet is now lonely. He can see his last from close. He is dipped in the fading colours of his bygone youth. He is now bewitched by the thoughts of mysterious death. The poems are not written in metre. But the poet defended them as pure poetry because of their inherent consistency and order. The poet was trying to console himself by the imagination of an order which was the basic reality of existence. Painting was still a fascinating pastime. Poetry and painting now went together. Both calmed him in solitude. After Sesh Septak there was Bithika, another anthology of personal agonies and exuberances. Some songs were born on the occasion of the festival of Rain. The note in them was melancholic. The poet's physical condition again began to deteriorate. Meanwhile attention had to be focussed upon the constructive works of Grindelvan. Creativity ran parallel to constructivity. In a startling poem written in the Spring of 1935, the poet, however, expressed his current mental reaction in the form of an advocacy of the new season. It is included in a contemporary anthology named Patraput. The poet reminded the new season how it once flooded the days of his youth in the prospects of an intoxication of life. Those days are no more. ....

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The Muse has drawn a dark veil of an ending era upon that prospect, the evil sane colour, sans any language to convey. This is indicative of the loss of the sense of wonder in the artist's mind. The wonder was a proud privilege by dint of which the poet waded through the inundated areas of knowledge. The dearth of it was a warning before catastrophe. Such poems crowded his last phase. They should be treated as less poetical. They smack of an air of utter dejection. They have colours, but the drama was passing through denouement. The colours are objectively real. The poet is inspired to learn about the advent of Spring, but his knowledge does no longer complete the equation between his consciousness and his aesthetic urge. It is limited into the range of observation. An artist elevates personal distress to the standard of universal enlightenment. The poet was so long a votary of this elevation. He is now bereft of such an impulse to elevate. The tragic sense of life of this last phase was the consequence of his feelings of loneliness and separation from the universal cycle of life and Time. The feelings were evoked by the experience of the disorder existent outside him. The mind was no longer capable of transcoding the limits of objective experience. It is bogged somewhat that even the flowery Spring does not reveal its glamour. Our experience of his teeming past tempts us to wait for a change of situation. The change took place once or twice but only on the outer level. The paintings of the poet remained imprisoned within the dark chamber where the human faces were the very portrayal of sordidness. If maximum they were funny. But fun after all is a matter of deliberate distortion on the physical or formal level. Poetry remained utterly matter-of-fact, direct and exclusively philosophical as and when the exit from the dark chamber was covered by a dense fog of failure to correspond. Poetry was no longer a spontaneous outburst of emotional feelings to the Romantic. But it was strangely there. In the meantime the poetic drama Chitrangada was transformed into a dance drama. The songs were remodelled in accordance with the temper and metre of dance. Technician Rabindranath prevailed over the artist Rabindranath with a new seal.
In March 1936 the poet went to northern India for performance of Chitrangada with his troupe. The chief aim of this tour was to replenish the paucity of fund which was throttling the business of VisvaBharati continually. The poet's mental unrest found expression in the poem dedicated to his birthday in the same year.

'I have seen only the secret beauty of the self which was like the streamless reservoir in a foothill. The self disclosure of the defiant man who rescues life from the strings of death was not made possible through me. I grow pale, weak. I am leaing with the humiliation of an obscurantist. But was the citadel wrecked so pompously? Why not the philosopher appeared to rescue the poet? Why again there still remained the urge to poetise? Beside poetry there were studies, painting, articles on subjects like metre in poetry (published later in the form of a book named Chhanda) Commentaries also had to be made on Communal award and so on. The activeness of thought did not recede with the withdrawal of the Romantic flavour of affirmation and rebuilding. The trouble aggravated as thought came to control emotion and without any rigid and affirmative basis of its own. Critics attribute to his poetry of this phase a sort of psychology. They unfold as it were, like the sonnets of Shakespeare, a psychological drama. The tragedy almost of the Greek pattern was impending. The art of painting, dancing and seeking solace in the solitude of Santiniketan could not avert it in the ultimate analysis. The greatness of Rabindranath was multiplied by his aggravating decadence of faith in the elemental emotionality that abides life.

Two productions were ready in 1936. One is Kshaphera, the other is Shya. The poet was adept in grabbing a forced holiday from the drudgeries of experiences throughout his life. The original vigour was on the wane. But the above books of poems with numerous pen and ink and colour drawings represent the flair for holidaying even in the waning artistmind. The former was, as it is by name, an assimilation of disorderly thoughts. The latter is Herself in English. .....
It was she who was so long pentup in the poet's ivory tower of imagination and now forced to see the light of the world. The identity of the woman was, queerly enough, overburdened with a veil of obscurity. The poet had no alternative but to turn obscure because he was now inca pacious to form an image, an idol in the physical sense. The drawings of both Khapchar and Shayan are either funny or absurdly obscure. The reason was not merely the hastiness of their creator. Nor was it due to the want of training only. The very idea of composing absurd funny poems convulsing upon a sort of freak childishness was the symbol of the poet's deliberate bid to chalk out a holiday from the tenor of intellectualism. He was forced to absurdity as a comic relief from the habituality of living (too long?) as a committed human individual. The habit of painting coalesced with the bid to reconcile his fever-worn soul with the flamboyance of poetry. But the portraits of Shayan did not emit freshness that way. The wit lingered, sans the worth of a mature artist's metaphysics. A poem was written on Africa in the same year. The poet reiterated the cause of the black people of this dark continent and exposed the naked atrocities of the white civilization over them. He was an advocate of all those causes which defended elemental humanism. But as time went by the poet was suspended within a private world. He came to realize that the objective world of human beings for which he had censored his vowed idealism was still a stranger to his new aesthetic concept, his theory of seeing the infinite within the finite. The current of life in the human world was flowing towards a freedom from the wealth of mind. It was bent upon matter. The poet was ready with a formula for synthesis between matter and mind. The audience turned a deaf ear to his call. Poetry of this waning phase thus seems too depressive, too much drenched of the vigour of wonder. The poet's identity faded into a mysterious oblivion. The last flicker of richness was his song and to some extent his painting. "When the janitor of the realist literature chases me, I take refuge to song and my pictures", he said in a letter. The old play Parisodh was rewritten and named Shyama. .....
A significant point to note about this reconstruction was the inclusion of the murder of Uttiya in the hands of the executors. The poet consciously avoided such ghastly scenes from his plays (as in Tapeti) because such a scene emits a melodramatic flavour. They were there in his early plays but they were omitted in due course. This sudden fascination for a murder scene rather bewilders the student of Tagore and one is tempted to link up the mental response of the poet to such a ghastliness with the correlative distrust and disillusionment of this phase. In April 1939, on the occasion of the Bengali New Year, the poet said, 'The one question that crops up in my mind for sometime is what I have achieved in life ... What I see is an intense wonder. From the very inception there is endless wonder at each step'. But the sense of wonder was ebbing. The statement did not justify itself.

In a further statement made from Puri the poet made clear his angle of vision. The events in the world without were running towards a cataclysm. The debris will beget the truth of life's permanence through an invocation of the newborn. The poet said in Mongpu (a small township in the outskirt of the Himalayas) how grieved he was to learn about the miseries of the people of China. 'I do not feel like opening the newspaper, or listening to the radio. But I cannot help listening either. Nobody can extricate agony shutting his eyes only. This history of human torture becomes unbearable ... 'I do not want to live anymore. This human world has become unworthy of living...!' (From a biographical book Mongpute Rabindranath by Maitrayi Debi).

The new was an ideal, an abstract absurd image which would hardly reveal itself before the final departure. The world was ready for the second great war. The poet had to keep his sight ready for an experience of it, and that at no other cost than a sort of sacrilege, a damnation displayed before the divine Muse that is poetry. A story named Sesfc Katha (The last word) was written in Mongpu. From the statement of Maitrayi Debi it is learnt that the poet meant the story to be a psychological analysis of human behaviour and this was less concerned with everyday realities of the world, ...
In a significant address to the inmates of Santiniketan in the winter of 1939 the poet stressed the need of a deeper probing into the psychological realms of human life. He said that in the present era of science and technological flourishes the scope for evaluating the worth of earthly life on the basis of imagination and faith was obviously minimised. He could no longer find any specific difference between science and spirituality. It was time now to assert an intellectual conviction about the vast range of human potency. To do this it is necessary to shrug off the sentiments of understanding the mysteries of life through spiritual enfranchisement. Man has to do away with the orthodoxy of acceptance without analysis. He has to believe that the way to the understanding of the spirit of earthly life was not sacrificial, as it had been in the ancient dawns of civilisation. "I do not know about any external process. I only know about the influence of message upon mind." Man has to accept the business of life psychologically. He has to realise the worth of life in terms of a scientific comprehension of matter and not according to any idealist belief. The freedom of human consciousness from the servitude of inhibitions faith would clarify the meaning of earthly life before man. The poet was definitely a votary of this tendency of man to comprehend the functions performed within the range of psychology. The artist in so far as he is a human being, has to opt for all scientific attempts to equate individual human consciousness with social pragmatism because by a living man is now meant an operative organism that conducts the world with an intellectual and not emotional force.*

Two books of poems were again ready with poems written occasionally during the last few years. They were named as 'Sana!' (it is the name of an Indian musical instrument, generally played at the opening part of any holy occasion like marriage) and Nabajatak (The New Born). The tone in these poems was rather optimistic. With full acknowledgement of the fact that the poet had to pass into oblivion now, the eternal artist expressed his highest hopes for a new birth that would paint the pictures of life in new colours. ....

* This reminds us of a book named 'Visva Parichay' which the poet had written meanwhile. The book is a valuable document of different scientific problems.
Similar hopes occurred many times in poet's life. Now they are engulfed by an intense agony of parting and a poise of embracing the reality of Time that injures as well as heals up the order of life upon the earth. Most strangely songs too remained with their usual tones of freshness, sweetness and light.

From 1940 onwards the health began to decline so quickly that it gradually became extremely difficult to take pen. The habit of reading or speaking however did not betray him yet. There cannot be any criticism of this final withdrawal because it now became natural for him. The poet also was least bothered about the impending downfall. He was now absolutely free from any bias of subjectivity whatsoever. He has been convinced that an objective form (grotesque or fine as it may be) has to be accepted as one side of the reality which the artist is on the lookout for.

In September 1940 a collection of his paintings and drawings was published with eighteen pictures (8 in colours, either in black and white) along with eighteen short poems based on the themes of the pictures. It also included an English introduction by the poet himself. Following it the poet wrote an introduction of a book named 'When Peacocks called', by Hilda Salignan. It was a novel on Emperor Asoka's period. The poet wrote 'In an age of fratricide, aided by intellectual dehumanisation in large areas of the world, it is difficult to restore the calm air so necessary for the realisation of great human ideals.... My good thoughts go with the author in her venture to present ancient India through its message which has a perennially modern significance'. This was symptomatic of the poet's final realisation of the eternal cycle of life in the human world. The poet was now confident that the last of life was an ideal just as the first of life was. The ideal of life tries to transcend the mundane limits at any cost. The real blocks its path. The ideal remains. Even in death man does not lose the hopes of a recovery. The poet shouted out 'Colour and Sound coalesce in my joy. Does Kalimpong know it?'. while staying for the last time in the lap of the Himalayas. The poet in prayed in an elegiac vein/memory of late Andrews, who had been a great friend of the poet and his country, 'Oh Master open the gate of light'. ....
Poems flowed like the river that represents a cycle of creation. The poet could not shake the nostalgia of the golden past. He could not resist the agony of his inability to reach all corners of the objective world. The chariot of creation moved on in defiance of limitations adopted by the experiences of the physical world. Passion for shaking off the robe of ego was still strong. The artist mind often found a niche in the world of fun and freshness. There can be an opposition against calling him 'an artist of the real' on the basis of the fact that the ultimate extinction of his aesthetic ego was a natural consequence of his age and the saturation of his aesthetic energies. The fact has little relevance in this context.

The life and aesthetics of Rabindranath Tagore stands as an ideal model for the manifestation of the 'art of the real' for it is the story of an inwardness made outward. The longevity of the artist's physical self is not the point. Even if he lived lesser, there could have been an outgrowth of his idealist bias into a realist bias of the most matter-of-fact description. He belonged to an age, to a phase, when the civilization was turning over a new leaf. He made best use of the changing spirit of the age by shifting to a diversified, desubjectified directness of approach. He of course did not fall a prey to incomprehensibleness like his posterity. His greatest contribution to the development of modern literary, performing and visual art of India was his slow and steady acceptance of the Other in its new attire of crudity and negativity of all possible sorts. The business began in a state of absolute poise. It ended in utter chaos. 'Tagore Realism' is perhaps the best description of his success in bringing out the nectar from the deep salty sea of modern life. He was the first great modern who simply brought down the heaven into the dungeon of matter and mind. His works of the last phase, mainly paintings, denote how dearly he had to pay by losing the formal prowess and spiritual safety. That art surpasses the stipulations of Time has once again been justified by his immortality as a poet beyond and above the human struggle of life and death. He chose to remain on the human side till last despite the colossal human abnegation of its own unstinted identity and superiority as the last complete species in the universal animalom.
The penultimate piece was written eleven days before the zero hour. 'The first
day's sun asked me, 'who are you?' There was no answer. Years passed by. The
last sun of the day asked the final question at the Western shore amid silence
of the evening, 'who are you?' There was no answer'. On 30th July the poet was
operated upon. Little before the operation the voice sounded a note of complain
in the simplest prose, 'why you have covered your path of creation with the
diversed puzzles, O deceiver? One who has been able to endure the deceit at ease
has the right to enjoy the imperishable peace from your hand'. This prose is the
swan song. The poet left with a deep sigh for not having known in the ultimate
analysis the cause of Creation. Can anyone deny that for true realisation of the
unknowable the artist has to explore all known sources and to believe that there
still is an unknown? An 'art of the real' too is an exploration under certain
conditions as supplied in this dissertation.
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