

# The Mind's Road to Fulfillment, Self-Realization, and Experiential Knowledge: Some Tagorean Views

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*To participate in a conversation with Truman Madsen or to attend one of his lectures is a remarkable event. He never leaves you untouched. Through his calm speech and behavior, he takes you to deeper layers of human existence.*

*How he accomplishes this is hard to explain. One reason is certainly to be found in his profound knowledge of the history of philosophy and religion. Decisive, however, is the fact that, in a unique way, he practices the basic law of rhetoric: He always stands for what he is saying. His words never leave his being—which becomes our being.*

*Truman Madsen reminds me of another wise man, Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941).*

The mind's road to fulfillment is a central theme in Tagore's writings, in his philosophical essays as well as in his novels and poetry. Sometimes, as in the beginning of the novel *Sadhan*, he speaks, like the Buddha, of a liberation of the mind.

Most classical philosophies and great religions likewise deal with the mind's road to fulfillment as a central theme. Baruch Spinoza, sometimes called the Hindu—and also the Buddhist—of the West, speaks of a liberation of the intellect, culminating in man's intellectual love of God.<sup>1</sup> Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia* (1318), being an apology for Christianity, describes man's passage from hell, via purgatory, to paradise. Bonaventura attempts to blend the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle with Christianity under the title *The Mind's Road to God* (1251).

Everyone with some knowledge of Western philosophy and literature will know the fate of this topic in the course of the last three centuries. The mind's road to God has to many—perhaps to most—people become an empty phrase, but especially to philosophers. No trace of it remains in philosophical discourses. In the 1880s Nietzsche declared the death of God: "We are ourselves the murderer"—saying, in effect, that we had lost our sense of direction. We no longer knew what was upward and what was downward.<sup>2</sup> In the 1920s, Franz Kafka, a contemporary with Tagore, wrote a short story about the hunter Gracchus, who after his death sailed toward heaven. However, he was soon distracted by the view of his home or whatever—and lost the direction. Since then, he has been sailing on earthly waters, not knowing where heaven is. Jean-Paul Sartre, in his *Being and Nothingness*—the existentialist version of classical metaphysics—underlines man's search for a godlike being. In the middle of the twentieth century, however, this was "a useless passion" (*une passion inutile*).<sup>3</sup>

The mind's road to fulfillment and, hence, the proper meaning of self-realization were therefore threatened. But Tagore, blending philosophical and religious wisdom from both the East and the West, was in a position of strength. He was fully aware of the ongoing dissolution of religious and philosophical values in the West and its long-term effect on Indian society. At the same time, he was firmly rooted in the ancient traditions of India, fortified by his broad knowledge of philosophy and religious tradition in general. The history of mankind, Tagore warns, had reached a level where the whole man, the ethical man—perhaps without knowing it—had given himself away to the limited objectives of political man and businessman, which are often devoid of an ethical commitment. It was time to take heed.<sup>4</sup> To understand such a warning is no easy matter. Strictly speaking, if we are to believe

Tagore, the mind's reminder to itself of the ultimate goal of human existence, the urge toward fulfillment, is the proper meaning of self-realization.

In itself this model is commonplace in religious and metaphysical thinking. In the West this paradigm ranges from Plato's ideal world inherent in the mind to Martin Heidegger's concept of the mind's calling on itself. It is a call to a more genuine being than the mass culture allows.<sup>5</sup> The question here is: What chances are there to succeed in our present-day culture of media and consumption? In which directions should we sail? Tagore, trained and deeply involved in that kind of thinking, was in a far better position to provide an answer than we, at least most of us, are about a hundred years later.

### Individual Uniqueness

**Self-realization as a search for fulfillment is a personal matter. Even though the goal for which we are striving is common to us all, the way for each to achieve it is personal and unique. It depends on one's own history and personal experiences.**

The idea of a personal and unique individuality appears to be the opposite of what characterizes any mass culture. The course of economic development and its outlet in the culture of media and consumption seem to gradually destroy individual and even cultural diversity and cause us to be identical. This process is described by philosophers almost the world over—most vividly, perhaps, by Heidegger in his *Being and Time*. We are *no one* in particular, he concludes.<sup>6</sup> Social and cultural ties—which bind people together in friendship, families, institutions, local communities, and companies—suffer accordingly. These relationships certainly involve an enormous amount of common knowledge, most of which is historical and silent. But the ties that really bind people together and enable them to identify with the group are basically personal, and personal relationships always have an emotional component. Personal and emotional ties account for the mutual sense of belonging to and caring for one another. The homogeneous culture of entertainment, consumption, and money tends to empty those basic relationships.

### The Individual's Representation of the Infinite

**How can one be rescued as an individual from this process of devaluation? Tagore's answer reflects his personal philosophical and religious position: We are unique in the way in which we represent the *Infinite*. We are part of the universe and thereby carry the unity of all things; this unity is without limits and is thus *Infinite*.<sup>7</sup>**

He offers some help in understanding this concept by saying that the mind may involve and represent the Infinite, or the universe as a whole, in varying degrees. The extent to which the mind actually represents the Infinite depends, presumably, on the kind of knowledge it is able to exercise. Thus we are unique to different degrees. However, this way of thinking, though well known from the history of philosophy, may not be particularly illuminative to most people in the twenty-first century. Our minds are usually immersed in a restless reality. The Tagorean notion of the Infinite remains presumably the same. Anyone who engages in the restless society becomes in the long run restless himself—and will not be in a position to grasp the meaning of the *unique* and *personal Infinite*.

Explaining what the Infinite is not is fairly straightforward. Knowledge of the Infinite is not the same as knowing an infinite number of things or the many laws governing their interrelationships. Thus natural sciences cannot contribute to our understanding of the Infinite. In this respect, it is no wonder that Tagore held science in low esteem. No scientific discovery, however valuable in other respects, can ever contribute to our search for fulfillment, to our proper self-realization. Tagore would undoubtedly hold that knowledge of human beings

involves, beyond a scientific comprehension of them, an understanding of their unique participation in the Infinite as a whole.

To Tagore, the Infinite is obviously what we would call an *experiential* notion—that is to say, in order to understand it, we have to share the experience of its meaning. And this experience is both general *and* unique. The fact that others may have the same experience is no argument against its uniqueness. Hegel nicely illustrates this in his story of a couple sitting in a public garden. The couple is deeply in love, and they experience their loving relationship as highly personal and unique. Yet some yards away sits another couple experiencing the same loving feelings.<sup>8</sup>

In this context it is fairly obvious what experiential knowledge means and that this knowledge has a strong emotional component that significantly contributes to the experience each of the participants undergoes in being a part of the whole. One is even tempted to say that a loving relationship, in its own way, is a model of something infinite. It is equally obvious that, in a loving relationship, it is too late to speak of “you” and “me.” We are somehow united.

Such a model of unification goes beyond the usual dichotomies known from science and the major trends in philosophy (for example, Descartes): that is, the dichotomies between man and world, between subject and object, between mind and body, and between language and reality. But does a loving and unifying relationship, as a model, apply to these dichotomies as well? An answer to this question should lead us to a wider, and perhaps even deeper, understanding of Unity and the Infinite. The overall purpose is a practical one: What chances do we have, in a restless society, of experiencing the Infinite, of perceiving something divine? I shall limit myself to a brief exposition of a few selected topics, taken partly from Western philosophies in the same tradition as Tagore. Tagore himself attaches major importance to the role of aesthetics and the role of women as mothers.

### **The Mind's Interaction with the Environment**

**A first step is to observe that a human being is continually interacting with the environment. The interaction is with nature, the social environment, and history. Through these interactions we build our own history, our life history. Being the result of a series of interactions, a person's life history, or inner world, is never entirely private. Each person's history is unique, being the result of a variety of relations in a variety of contexts in different places at different times. One person's history, however, does share common experiences and values with another's. Our experiences often overlap through personal encounters, education, and work.**

We are all part of an enculturation process. That is how we become part of a community and acquire communal values. Experiences that in the outward sense may appear the same do not make us homogeneous or identical; every new experience is shaped by the previous ones and acquires—or may acquire—a meaning more or less different from the meaning attached to the same experiences as undergone by others. That is how a common experience becomes personalized and creates individual commitment.

The point is that the things, events, or persons with whom we relate become part of our own being. That is why Spinoza can say that the mind is nothing but a complex idea<sup>9</sup> and Heidegger can say that the world is part and parcel of man's being.<sup>10</sup> In other words, if we relate ourselves to what is continually changing and restless, this is what we ourselves become. What remains the same or only slowly changes has the opposite effect.

### **The Principle of Self-Realization**

**The *moral* character of our relations, or relational existence, is best explained in terms of the principle of self-realization and self-preservation. To many of the great philosophers of the past—including thinkers as**

different as Augustine, Spinoza, and Heidegger—this principle is a basic feature of human existence. Some consequences of this principle are clear enough. Whatever our relations are with nature, other human beings, or history, they are of a moral character. In varying degrees, they serve our endeavor to unfold our capacities and take care of ourselves, as well as bind together the larger community. Ethical norms and rules usually apply to our conduct with others and, thus, to the community of humankind. Ethics is a theory of how you and I ought to behave together to the advantage of both and, ultimately, to the advantage of humanity at large. The principle of universality is basic to ethics.

The principle of self-realization and self-preservation does not run counter to the interest of other people, to communal life. It serves it. All the great philosophers of the past have dealt with the question of what self-realization really means, and most of them have arrived at the view that, if you are to succeed in your own life, you should at the same time care for others. A strong community and a community feeling enable you to concentrate your physical and mental powers on your own self-development and, at the same time, on assisting the development of others. Pure selfishness creates conflicts and negative moods and detracts from both your self-development and community building. The most instructive way of phrasing this view that I have found appears in a 1970 book, *Individuality and the New Society*, edited by the American philosopher Abraham Kaplan. The book is addressed to the new generation of his day. At the end of his introduction, he asks: “What does it mean for you to develop yourself?” He answers: “It is the predicament, the opportunity, and the glory of every man that he becomes an individual only as he reaches out to the rest of mankind.”<sup>11</sup>

This traditional view of self-realization may not be easy to understand in those cultures that, like the West, give priority to individual freedom and rights. Over the last five hundred years or so, this idea has been combined with the concept of technological progress and economic growth. The ultimate result is the development of the modern welfare society, which, according to John Kenneth Galbraith, represents “the culture of contentment” (the title of one of his books).

Today the long-term costs of an emphasis on individuality are discovered and experienced by more and more people, including many outside the West. Individual freedom and rights, together with the welfare state, foster selfishness, removing individuals from each other and from nature and, worse yet, destroying community values and ultimately themselves. Left to itself, individual freedom is self-destructive. Witness the growing number of lonely people and the tens of thousands of young people and children, both in Western and Eastern societies, who harm themselves even to the point of committing suicide in the belief that no one cares for them anymore. Selfishness invades even families and friendships. The most basic needs of a human being are not freedom and rights but the sense of belonging to a community and experiencing mutual caring and love. That is what gives direction to our freedom. Freedom requires some degree of social security. And according to ancient wisdom, both in the West and the East, social security originates in belonging to a group and having someone who cares for you.

### **The Dialectical Approach**

The dialectical approach to man’s self-realization may be further illuminating. The principle goes back to Plato, especially to his dialogue *Parmenides*, and even further back to Chinese and Indian philosophy. In this discussion, I shall focus on Hegel. While looking for a principle in terms of which he could explain historical change, he found an analog in the relationship between man and woman as a prototype of a dialectical relationship. Perhaps he was inspired by the principle of yin and yang in Taoism. At any rate, the relationship between the sexes makes it easy to explain the dialectical principle as a basic principle of change and of growth. The principle rests on his observations, first, that life is a constant, interrelated pattern of opposites (man and woman, light and darkness, heat and cold, and so on) and second, that a human being is limited in itself and is in no way self-sufficient in the sense that God is said to be. Therefore, any human being is in need of something beyond itself and is therefore necessarily related to something outside itself. By its very nature, an individual transcends itself.

A love relationship is an instructive case. In a love relationship, so Hegel’s analysis goes, one gives oneself away to another person. To make this statement, one certainly does not need philosophy. The additional observation is,

however, telling: one gives oneself away in order to enrich one's own being and to become more complete and, consequently, part of a community. Thus a love relationship is a fulfillment.<sup>12</sup>

Hegel's use of this model to explain historical change—and he applies it more or less justifiably to all cultures—is not the topic here. Let me just remark that the dialectical principle may be regarded as valid in all our relationships. We are continually giving ourselves away to another person, to a group of people, to ideas and tasks, to nature, and to God. This is how we create history. Inherent in this endeavor is always the hope of some fulfillment. If the environment blocks this endeavor over a period of time, mental suffering is likely to occur.

### Women in India

**In connection with this model of the human need for community as a part of self-fulfillment is the role of family and of the wife and mother in particular. Tagore's view on the role of women in family life and consequently in society as a whole is more radical than that of most writers on the theme. He identifies the mother as the central person in the transmission of values in the family. She exercises love and care and is much more important than the father.<sup>13</sup> Tagore goes even further in his view on the prolongation of life. Woman, he says, is what nature needs for its renewal; man is, in this respect, barely needed.<sup>14</sup> In the opening words of Tagore's novel *The Home and the World*, Bimala describes her mother in the following way: "Her face carried the sign of something holy and divine, of depth and peace."<sup>15</sup> Whenever a woman "moves around serving her household," Tagore says, "light and music come out of her body."<sup>16</sup>**

Descriptions such as these certainly have a poetical flavor. Anyone, however, who has some knowledge of the great philosophies of the past knows that these very words are used to designate experiences of a unity of all things, also called God or Substance, the infinite Beauty of all things, and the Mystic. The terms *holy* and *divine*, as used by Tagore, speak for themselves. The relation of the Holy to the concept of wholeness should also be noticed. As to his references to light and music, the philosophy of Plato and Plotinus is sometimes called "light metaphysics"—the light coming from God. Music, according to Eastern traditions, is what most contributes to the perfection of man. And the perfect being is one who basically communicates *humility*, one who is the servant of life itself. That is where a woman's expression of peace and depth comes from. To be the servant of life is one's highest achievement. Humility is receptiveness, and it calls for personal relations and commitment.<sup>17</sup>

As is obvious from this perspective, a woman's experience of life goes far beyond her pursuit of household things. Presumably by virtue of her very nature, she is able to transcend every item in her doings. Everything, like herself, is subordinated to a higher purpose, to be at the service of life itself. Women are, in a peculiar way, like the unity of all things, both immanent and transcendent. Compared with women as the servants of life, men's primarily action-oriented behavior in the pursuit of technological progress, efficiency, and profit is fairly modest. Business leaders have even reduced themselves to the level of being servants of their shareholders. From a certain point of view, as women would know, most men in our present-day restless society appear to be slaves of a system. Yet many of them either neglect women or demand them to follow. The overall view of what life is about is, in a way, being forgotten.

Tagore's high esteem for woman has several sources. His primary source was his loving relationship with his wife, who died too young. She gave him the model of a perfect human being: she was able to exercise love in all her relationships without expecting reward—a property usually attributed to God. His other sources were the old Hindu scriptures, the Vedas and the Upanishads. Unlike the view of woman presented in official Hindu teaching and in textbooks published in the West, the old Vedas and Upanishads teach a different story. In these traditions, subordinated to men though they may be, women are the great teachers. Their way of teaching is through love, caring, and affection, the most effective language of all. Women are therefore "divine treasures for family life" and, consequently, for society at large. Woman is God incarnate. That is why she transmits peace, depth, and eternity.

Tagore emphasizes the importance of being familiar with history. This traditional Indian view of women is an important part of that history.

This view of women as mothers, however, is hardly prevalent in Western societies. Rather, women have been held in very low esteem. According to Mary Wollstonecraft, they are the real slaves, as compared with the freemen and citizens. Almost throughout European history, women have been denied access to education and politics. Simone de Beauvoir, a major figure in the feminist movement, even regarded motherhood as a burden. A woman became almost a slave to her children, born and unborn, whereas men kept their freedom. The only solution for women, according to de Beauvoir, was to adopt the rationality of men.<sup>18</sup>

Simone de Beauvoir has many followers. She has, over the years, also accumulated a number of opponents. The well-known American writer Adrienne Rich published in 1976 the book *Of Woman Born*.<sup>19</sup> In contrast to de Beauvoir, she advocated a new and more positive evaluation of woman's body, motherhood, and self-knowledge. Perhaps the most profound analysis of women's nature is given by the Jungian psychoanalyst Clarissa P. Ests in her book *Women Who Run with the Wolves*,<sup>20</sup> in many ways a remarkable work. But this is not the topic here. Let me just remark that the author appears to be inspired not only by Jung's depth psychology, but just as much by the Taoist concept of yin and yang. Passages in the book also point to the Tagorean view of women.

### **Aesthetic Experience**

Tagore's metaphor of women's service as music hints at the role he feels that aesthetic experience plays in human self-realization. Our experience of unity is of many kinds and has many levels. Something in human nature makes us transcend ourselves in search of a wider and richer reality than we have within ourselves. Communication, cooperation, rituals, customs, friendship, and love are all indicators of this search—all provide evidence that we are more than merely ourselves. We are all carrying experiences of a unity within us, from infancy and onward. It is too late for us to be on our own. We are somehow reaching out for higher levels of experience and awareness. Presumably, this applies also to those who are reaching out for riches. From the perspective of motherhood and values and interpersonal encounters, these material cravings seem rather pointless. They are surface happenings. The collection of things, Tagore says, is not self-realization.<sup>21</sup> Most of us are looking for more lasting experiences. To undergo these experiences is one thing; to explain them is another. The history of philosophy and of art is full of those experiences and of more or less successful descriptions of them.

Tagore also deals with *aesthetic* experience.<sup>22</sup> In listening to music and drama and looking at paintings, we should not forget that we are moving into a realm of experience that can hardly be understood properly unless one is familiar with that kind of experience beforehand. This is because aesthetic experiences and emotions are, first and foremost, a kind of knowledge, not of specific material objects or of the natural laws governing their relation, but of something of a different sort. Ordinary experience, according to Tagore, is directed outward; the self remains in the background. In aesthetic experiences, the objects move into the background—they do not disappear; rather, one's awareness of them is deepened. Objects, of whatever kind, become part of a wider reality, just as we are ourselves. Aesthetic experiences offer us a glimpse of that wider reality in which awareness goes beyond sense perception and intellectual cognition. In such an experience the "I" and the world of things are intimately related—even united. Tagore does not pretend that we understand reality as it is. But, he contends, we find the most illuminating experience of it in artistic creation. In such acts of creation, reality comes before our conscience unveiled, and we are somehow united with the world.<sup>23</sup>

At the same time, Tagore thinks that truth and beauty are closely interwoven; they are, in fact, identical.<sup>24</sup> Truth in this context has nothing to do with correspondence between statements and reality. This is a very restricted notion of truth. In the present context, truth applies to man's self-realization. Coming from classical philosophy in

the West, this concept is familiar ground. Tao, dharma, Itinerarium Mentis, liberation of the mind—they all belong to the same category of thought. Truth is true self-realization, the unfolding of the inner self. Self-realization is self-creation. For example, an artist creates a piece of art, while others create something corresponding to their nature. Things in nature have their unfolding, their true becoming.

Truth and beauty thus have a *moral* dimension. A true self-realization is an understanding of what we *ought* to be and do. We are carrying an imperative within us. This imperative may certainly be covered up and may be forgotten in a display of selfishness. But we all know when we succeed in becoming ourselves. Ethics and aesthetics—moral good and beauty—are two faces of the same coin, and both are intimately related to unity. True self-realization is the attainment of higher stages of experience and awareness of unity. In this pursuit, we have all succeeded at some time and in some manner.

### Kinds of Knowledge

**The progression of an individual's self-realization runs through different stages of awareness or knowledge. The number of stages varies, ranging from three (according to Tagore and Spinoza), to six (delineated by Bonaventura), up to eight (as in Buddhism). Three stages appear to be basic to all these systems; if more stages are counted, they seem to be specific applications or expansions of the three basic ones.**

The *first* kind of knowledge is a display of self-interest. It guides the pursuit of our daily business. Spinoza calls it knowledge by imagination and by opinion and hearsay. Self-interest is a knowledge based on the external appearance of things and, for the most part, is related to our interests. We are interpreting things not with a view to knowing what they are in themselves but with a view to satisfying our needs.<sup>25</sup> This way of looking at things is certainly useful and may even be necessary in order to find our way through the wilderness of daily life. But self-interest hardly contains much commitment to communal values and certainly often leads to conflicts of interest. In the worst cases of selfishness combined with a strong dependency on external things, it may even lead to the basic illnesses of mankind. Tagore calls these illnesses expressions of greed. Spinoza lists five types of greed that lead to the destruction of the human mind and body by turning man into a slave. They include strong ambition, craving for luxury, lust for property, drug addiction, and uncontrolled sexual desire. These widespread illnesses distort the balance and harmony both within man and between man and nature in society.<sup>26</sup>

The *second* kind of knowledge—knowledge of reason or of natural laws common to man and nature—may help to restore the balance. Tagore's view on natural science is mentioned above; he does not hold it in high esteem, simply because science and its explanation of nature in terms of universal laws do not allow for personal relationships. He nevertheless regards science as necessary. He even admits that modern science "is Europe's great gift to humanity for all times to come." He further holds that "we, in India, must claim it from her hands, and gratefully accept it in order to be saved from the curse of futility by lagging behind. We shall fail to reap the harvest of the present age if we delay."<sup>27</sup> However, Tagore draws attention to a danger for the Indian national culture resulting from an educational system dominated by science and technology.<sup>28</sup> There is a risk, he says, that one will educate oneself away from the national culture, from all ideas of further liberation of the mind, and, worst of all, from the capacity to enter into personal and emotional relationships. Thus we would educate ourselves away from harmony and unity and from values. Tagore sees a danger in the scientific and technological language: It is useful, but without due caution it may come to dictate our thoughts and emotions.<sup>29</sup>

Self-realization proper is only possible using the *third* kind of knowledge, which is admittedly difficult to describe despite the fact that most of the classical philosophers, Aristotle and Spinoza included, employ it. However, a few (external) characteristics are easily given: This kind of knowledge is concerned with wholeness or unity. A situation



is a whole of a limited kind. The ultimate whole or unity is God, or reality as a whole. In this aspect, we may call it the intellectual love of God. Similar to the relation between man and woman, in experiencing the intellectual love of God we are united with reality as such. The third kind of knowledge therefore goes beyond the distinction between subject and object. Intuitive knowledge of this kind does not allow for a distinction between knowledge and ethics (and, in fact, the title of Spinoza's work on the theory of knowledge is often called *Ethica*). The intellectual love of God is both a cognitive and an emotional-moral concept. The highest kind of knowledge is a loving, caring, and joyful knowledge—for reality in general and for human life in particular. At the same time, it is fulfillment and peace—as exemplified in Bimala's mother.

Tagore describes the highest kind of knowledge in similar ways. He sums it up in relation to the Sanskrit word *saccidnanda*, which says that Reality is essentially One. Our understanding of it has, however, three phases (*sac-cid-ànanda*): The first refers to the fact that things *are*: they belong to each other “through the relationship of common existence.”<sup>30</sup> Second, we are related to all things in our knowledge of them—that is, a knowledge of the common property of being. The third phase, *ànanda*, shows that we are united with reality in a loving and joyful relationship. The ultimate purpose of life, or our self-realization, lies in an increasing “unification” with all reality.<sup>31</sup> Such purpose reveals itself in an “expression of sympathy,” of love and care for life itself.

Strangely, if you want to perfect yourself in the process of self-realization, you will only succeed by subordinating yourself to others, as in a love relationship. In the end, perfection requires subordinating yourself to the entire reality. In the unification with others, you experience freedom. No wonder, then, that the great religions and moral systems of the world point to *humility* as the basic moral virtue. Only as a servant of life can you really succeed and be free and in charge of yourself. Humility makes you powerful. Says Tagore: “We come nearer the great when we are great in humility.”<sup>32</sup> Fortunately, a few genuine servants, both men and women, exist in our restless societies. In their own way, they are the true teachers.

## Notes

1. Spinoza, *Ethica* 5.15. References to this work give part and proposition number rather than page number. The edition used is Baruch (Benedictus) Spinoza, *Éthique: Démontrée suivant l'ordre géométrique et divisée en cinq parties*, ed. and trans. Charles Appuhn, 2 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 1953). The original work dates to 1677.

2. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel, vol. 2 in *Werke in drei Bänden*, ed. Karl Schlechta (Munich: Hanser, 1954–56), 7–274, no. 125. The work originally appeared in 1882.

3. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (London: Methuen, 1957), 615. The work's original edition came out in 1943.

4. Rabindranath Tagore, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, ed. Sisir Kumar Das (New Delhi: Sakitya Akademi, 1997), 2:424. All references to Tagore are to this edition.

5. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson (London: SCM, 1962), 312. This work was first published in 1927.

6. *Ibid.*, 165.

7. Tagore, *English Writings*, 2:316.



8. Cf. *ibid.*, 356.
9. Spinoza, *Ethica* 2.14.
10. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 92.
11. Abraham Kaplan, "Perspectives on the Theme," in *Individuality and the New Society*, ed. Abraham Kaplan (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970), 20.
12. G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), 1:244.
13. Tagore, *English Writings*, 3:676–79.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Rabindranath Tagore, *The Home and the World* (New York: Macmillan, 1920), 1.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Tagore, *English Writings*, 1:403, no. 57.
18. Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxime sexe*, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1949).
19. Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (London: Virago, 1976).
20. Clarissa P. Ests, *Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992).
21. Tagore, *English Writings*, 2:294.
22. *Ibid.*, 334.
23. *Ibid.*, 356 and 359.
24. *Ibid.*, 357.
25. Spinoza, *Ethica* 2.40.
26. *Ibid.*, 2.4.
27. Tagore, *English Writings*, 2:565.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, 512.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., 1:403, no. 57.