



Artistic Disclosure of Nature

Heidegger and Tagore

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Abstract: The author reflects on the hazards of over-exploiting nature by modern technology which causes an ecological crisis, undoubtedly one of the crucial problems in the twenty-first century. Heidegger and Tagore distinguish between technological and artistic disclosure of the universe. Both thinkers are critical of technological domination of nature and come close in emphasizing the interconnections and harmonious relationships with all beings of the universe—human as well as non-human. They glorify the poetic way of looking at the universe that reveals the true nature of beings and makes one dwell in the world meaningfully. Heidegger advocates the "mirror-play and cosmic dance of earth, sky, mortals and gods" to bring cosmic harmony. Tagore pleads for "ever-flowing rhythmic dance of creation," which generates cosmic consciousness within man. The universe cannot be completely comprehended through abstract reasoning alone, as artistic outlook does play a significant role. The author explores how to view nature by addressing the possibility of nature being the object of worship (without modifying or changing it) or being a resource to be exploited to any extent. The essay concludes in favour of a middle position for maintaining ecological equilibrium.

Keywords: Heidegger, Martin; Tagore, Rabindranath; Einstein, Albert; nature; science; ecology; technology; art; poetic dwelling; earth sky mortals gods; cosmic harmony; materialistic; spiritual.

Man is born in a world, which is constituted of a network of relationships. He is a part of evolving nature and its manifold orders. Usually we think of our relationship with other human beings. Of course they are very important but man's relationships with other animate beings (animals and plants) and even with inanimate beings (entities) are also very significant. Man is surrounded by and part of a natural environment, which plays a very important role in his life. There is a strong existential interconnection between man and nature, which may be ignored by a technician but is deeply felt by an artist. For a dissecting scientist, nature is to be conquered but for an artist it speaks and touches his heart becoming a solace of life. The scientist looks at nature as an entity to be explored and used; the artist

establishes an intimate relationship with it.

There are various ways of looking at nature: materialistic—governed by commercialization and consumerism, anthropocentric—regarding man as the centre of the universe and at the apex of the whole creation, axiological—viewing nature from intrinsic perspective, caring for human as well non-human world. It reveals the significance of eco-ethics, which demands concern for the biosphere and is motivated by deep ecology in contrast to shallow ecology. The concern of shallow ecology for global warming and environmental hazards is anthropocentric. The deep ecology focuses on the normative claims regarding man's relationship with nature.

Michael Zimmerman regards Martin Heidegger as

forerunner of deep ecology.¹ Heidegger revolts against arrogance of anthropocentrism and demands change in human perspective towards nature. The entities cannot be regarded as mere resources. Heidegger is critical of a purely instrumental view of technology. He reflects on the question: how to dwell authentically on earth? He speaks of saving the earth through poetic dwelling. For Zimmerman, Heidegger's thought is "attractive for radical environmentalists interested in transforming humanity's currently destructive attitude toward nature" (*HBD* 260).

Heidegger makes a difference between ontic and ontological. Looking at the world ontically, is the scientific point of view. The scientist discovers the world through scientific methodology that knows the world through testing. The subject-object distinction is presupposed, the world is regarded as an object to be explored. Science is the search for truth, which is verified and can be demonstrated. Its approach is one-dimensional that does not reach the Being of beings. The artist looks at the world ontologically – understanding the core Being that unfolds the true reality and highlights the intrinsicity of beings. He is deeply involved in the being of the world, which has ontological power. He is concerned about the entities around and cares for other human beings. The modern technology (the off-shoot of science) conceals the true nature of beings because it looks at beings from manipulative perspective. The ontic world is known bit by bit. In the ontological sense, the world is known a-priori; man is born with the world, which is his home. The world is not simply a space-time location, man belongs to the earth. Man and world interact with each other influencing both.

Heidegger views the world as: presence-at-hand, to see the world as composed of independent objects; ready-to-hand, as equipment to be used; being-with, which neither regards the world merely an object out there nor as a tool to be exploited but as belonging intrinsically to the being of man. The most important relationship is of "being-with" which emphasizes the relationship of identification with other beings and shows that one cannot be without the other. Heidegger emphasizes both the uniqueness of man and intrinsic worth of nature. No doubt, man is not to be defined

in naturalistic terms but he is witnessing the external nature and views it as a phenomenon, which is a part of his own being.

Heidegger argues that nature is not to be regarded merely as presence-at-hand or ready-to-hand but man also encounters it. He is full of admiration for the poet who romantically identifies himself with nature and glorifies its splendor, which fills his heart with sublime experience. Nature is a source of inspiration for him. The identification does not mean complete absorption and annihilation of the self of the individual but rather leads to its expansion. The aim of Romanticism is "to bring forth" what is hidden in nature. Heidegger holds that the poet responds to the call of nature, which simultaneously reveals and conceals. He finds great depth in the poets of romanticism (for example, Friedrich Hölderlin and Rainer Maria Rilke) who look at nature having internal worth and respond to the call of nature. Nature speaks to man and man speaks to nature, while non-human beings participate in the world in their own ways.

Heidegger brings together earth, sky, mortals, and gods as the universe is their mirror-play. These four mirror each other, the being of each is through seeing the presence of the other and the saving grace lies in gathering the fourfold. The four appear to be separate and independent (without any connection) but belong to each other and the worth of any one of them is to be seen through the other. They belong to each other without losing their identities. The world comes into being through the interplay of the four-fold and their unification is needed without collapsing of any one at the cost of the other. The mortals dwell in the world by saving and preserving the fourfold. In Heidegger's words:

This mirroring does not portray a likeness. The mirroring, lightening each of the four, appropriates their own presencing into simple belonging to one another. Mirroring in this appropriating-lightening way, each of the four plays to each of the others. The appropriative mirroring sets each of the four free into its own, but it binds these free ones into the simplicity of their essential being toward one another.²

The preservation of the fourfold means: saving the earth, receiving the sky, awaiting the divinities, and dwelling of mortals. Saving the earth means not

¹ Michael E. Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1993, pp. 240-69. [Henceforth cited as *HBD*]

² Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter, New York: HarperCollins 2001, p. 177. [Henceforth cited as *PLT*]

to misuse it by over-exploitation, looking at sky as sky and not disrupting the journey of sun, moon, seasons, day and night, awaiting the divinity as divinity and not regarding oneself as god. The mortals should regard themselves as mortals who are aware of their own death. The experience of divinity makes them realize their own mortality. Man dwells in the nearness of god. The term god neither refers to Ultimate Reality nor to personified gods of different religions. It is the realization of Being without any onto-theological perspective. It is rather poetic invocation of divinity—attunement to one's being that undergoes ecstatic experience while engaging in the situation in an authentic manner and realizing its meaning. Divinity signifies transcending materialistic approach and thanking for what one has—going beyond the mundane experience.

The above four encounter one another. The artist does not see them as separate rather gathering and holding them together. He shows their interconnectedness. A tree for example is nourished by soil; light of the sky and through human effort and it is seen as divine creation. The entities of the world are created and manifested through the four-fold dance of earth, sky, mortals and gods—through their mutual interactions. The gathering of the four-fold makes a thing. Heidegger takes the example of a jug, a holding vessel, its "thingness resides in its being qua vessel." Heidegger adds:

When we fill the jug with wine, do we pour the wine into the sides and bottom? ... Sides and bottom are, to be sure, what is impermeable in the vessel. But what is impermeable is not yet what does the holding.... The empty space, this nothing of the jug, is what the jug is as the holding vessel. [PLT 166-7]

The being of the jug is in its emptiness, which is filled with gathering of the above four-fold. It is filled with wine—it is filled because of water coming from the sky, grapes produced by earth, wine produced by man and in certain places, it is used in religious ceremonies in the presence of gods (offering to gods). The earth receives rain and dew of the sky—the marriage of earth and sky. The grapes are due to nourishment of earth and sky's sun—earth and sky dwell together in the beingness of the jug. Further it is a drink for the mortals (men). However, when the drink is also given for consecration, it is used as the libation for the immortal gods. Thus earth, sky, mortals, and gods dwell together all at once. These fourfold belong to one another—gathering-appropriating staying of the fourfold that "brings the four, in their remoteness, near to one another" (PLT

175). Nearness does not mean abolishing the distances but realizing their presence. Thus, the thingness of everything is the onefold of the self-unified fourfold. No doubt, each of the four is different and retains its own nature but they join together to form the world. Their joining together to use Heidegger's terminology, is "round dance of appropriating" and not like a hoop. It is the ring that joins. Heidegger states:

Radiantly, the ring joins the four, everywhere open to the riddle of their presence. The gathered presence of the mirror-playing of the world, joining in this way, is the ringing. In the ringing of the mirror-play of the world, joining in this way, is the ringing...the four nestle into their unifying presence, in which each one retains its own nature. So nestling, they join together, worlding, the world. [PLT 178]

Man's being in the world is characterized in terms of building, thinking and dwelling. The three are interrelated. Building turns spaces into locations. It provides a shelter. Building is constructing the edifices and through them one is located at a particular space so that one can dwell. Building should not become mere human effort to make profit and concerned with only economic activities. However building is not dwelling, it is only a means to an end (dwelling)—letting dwell. The concept of dwelling thus is very significant in Heidegger's philosophy. The building becomes the house but may not be the home. Heidegger is very much concerned with two central questions: "What is it to dwell?" and, "How does building belong to dwelling?" (PLT 143).

Dwelling is the way one is in the world and for that both occupation of space and thinking are required. Thinking implies self-awareness and also awareness of the space one inhabits (building). For dwelling it is important how man relates himself to the things around. Only human beings are capable of dwelling. Dwelling means protecting as well as letting other to be. Dwelling is staying with the fourfold: saving the earth, receiving the sky and awaiting the divinities, which is possible only through the mortals. There is no fifth thing that can unite the fourfold. Heidegger argues that language characterizes the above relationships. The fourfold is unified through man who shows the presence of the earth by building, thinking and dwelling. He shows the presence of sky through the significance of sun, moon, stars and weather. He invokes divinities to show their significance for ecstatic joy and understands the true meaning of Being.

The oneness of the four cannot be attained through technological approach, which does not disclose the Being of beings. Consequently, the world is lost as the dwelling place. Stating Heidegger's viewpoint, the Heidegger scholar Miguel de Beistegui writes:

Technology signals the contemporary hold of man over nature. Planetary domination is its logical outcome.... World domination and ever-increasing power (Macht) is the contemporary form of homelessness.... Today, we are in danger of losing the world as a dwelling place.³

Cybernetics usage of language through codes is informative. It is an informative interpretation of language that is instrumental. The instrumentality is the use of entities, which one wants to manipulate. The poetic language on the other hand reveals the being of entities. Language is not merely a tool but is a house of being where being dwells in it.

Heidegger reflects deeply on the meaning of dwelling in the world and how to dwell meaningfully. We are living in the world but not dwelling authentically in it. The individual does not dwell in the world only by raising buildings and occupying a space in it. He dwells on the earth by regarding earth as earth—earth and other things on it are to be seen in their intrinsic worth. Dwelling is the authentic way of one's being in the world by recognizing the Being of beings. It also recognizes the unity of the fourfold—man standing on the earth, looking at the sky, and hearing the voice of gods. Man is not a master of the world, he inhabits in the world through the other three. Heidegger holds that mortals are "in the fourfold by *dwelling*."

Quoting Hölderlin, Heidegger holds that poetically man dwells. He uses phrases like "poetry is the song of the earth," or "earth is our home," both are very significant in highlighting the role of poetry in calling for homecoming. Jonathan Bate echoes Heidegger's ecopoetics: "If mortals dwell in that they save the earth and if poetry is the original admission of dwelling, then poetry is the place where we save the earth."⁴ Like Heidegger, also Bate holds that poetry is a "voyage through life" that can play a valuable role in a new millennium ruled by technology. It is a response to the song of the earth, which is not just representational but rather reveals nature. Poetry is the deep conscious

experience and not just a description of the environment around.

Heidegger's characterization of the relationship between *poiesis* and *physis* plays a very important role in reflecting on the intrinsicity of nature. The original meaning of *physis* is to reveal beings in their original form. He says that man is thrown in the world and finds himself in the midst of animate and inanimate objects. Heidegger's concept of "letting things be" emphasizes regards for all kinds of beings by letting them manifest in their own ways. *Poiesis* lets the natural entities to be. The function of *physis* is also letting the natural entities be. The original meaning of *techne* for Heidegger is also to reveal. It is linked with *episteme*—truth. He puts it:

The word *techne* denotes rather a mode of knowing. To know means to have seen, in the widest sense of seeing, which means to apprehend what is present, as such. For Greek thought the nature of knowing consists in *aletheia* that is in the uncovering of beings. It supports and guides all comportment towards beings. *Techne*, as knowledge experienced in the Greek manner, is a bringing forth of beings... [PLT 59]

However, modern technology has lost the Greek meaning of *techne* and has turned revealing into manufacturing, calculation, and a form of machination that has changed man's relationship to the world. The beings of the world are measured in terms of resources, energy, and power. Nature is viewed as standing reserve, to be used and manipulated. Heidegger maintains that modern technology puts unreasonable demands on nature and exploits it to any extent to produce energy. It regards ecosystem as made of energy that can be used for commercial purposes. Nature has become the house for industry. Thus the whole universe including man himself is seen as a "standing reserve" to be used. Modern technology ignores the intrinsic values of both man and nature. It is interested in controlling nature and taking possession of it rather than understanding in its original form. It approaches nature as standing reserve for the consumption, which does not reveal things on their own terms but challenges them to be used in a particular way.

In modern times, the essence of life is in its technical production, which is becoming threat to life itself. In this age of "enframing" done by modern technology, Heidegger depicts art as a saving power that has intimate connection with truth (*aletheia*)—to reveal the truth not that of the "Ge-stell but of the Ge-viert, in which world, earth, mortals and gods were

³ Miguel de Beistegui, *The New Heidegger*, London, New York: Continuum 2005, p. 125. [Henceforth cited as TNH]

⁴ Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2000, p. 283.

gathered and held together as the space in which our fate is played out and decided" (TNH 128). Beistegui continues:

In the Ge-stell, things appear as immediately available, manipulative, transformable, in short, as standing by and in reserve. In genuine art, things acquire a different quality: they appear as the place or the site of an encounter between world and earth, between men and gods; they themselves reveal the essence of the real as the unfolding of truth... [TNH 151]

Harmony of relationships is also highlighted by the ancient Indian philosophical tradition whose emphasis is on cosmic harmony, which is produced by having respect for the entire cosmos. The bio-spherical sanctity is rooted in this tradition. Nature is not only a sustainer of life but also an abode of divinity. The different entities existing in nature are worshipped in various ways. The sun, moon, rivers, mountains, trees, animals, etc. are regarded as sacred. Nature is worshipped in the form of Mother that nourishes and sustains all beings of the cosmos. Protection of nature and all kinds of life is a value for this tradition, which aims at uniting the diverse components of eco-system in a balanced way. Man's encounter with nature leads to ecological bioethical consciousness. The Indian tradition provides metaphysical basis of ecological ethics: non-dualism, oneness, and interconnection of all beings. The encounter with nature elevates the individual to a higher level.

Ecology and spirituality for the above tradition are interconnected. Spiritual awareness implies ecological awareness too. The deep ecological awareness is based on spiritual outlook. Spirituality means expansion of consciousness, which creates broader and deeper identification with all beings of the universe and unites matter and spirit. The individual realizes the presence of divinity within him as well as in nature. Besides being sustainer of all beings, nature is also regarded as sacred awakening divinity within man. It is true that the empirical world and divine are different but they are not ontologically independent realities.

The Indian tradition holds that unless man is in harmony with nature, he cannot be harmonious with other beings of the universe. The concepts of *rta* and *dharma* highlighted by the Indian tradition play a significant role in maintaining cosmic order. *Rta* is a law of cosmic order, which is dynamic in nature. The cosmos grows and changes. Nature is not just a dead matter and mechanical system as separate from man.

Thus nature and man are to be seen as united. *Rta* is a divine order, which is revealed in nature as well as within man. It pervades justice in the natural course of things and happenings and becomes the basis of *dharma*.

Dharma constitutes the nature of entities and persons. *Dharma* is in conformity to *rta*—to allow the natural things and persons to blossom according to their own nature (letting-be in Heidegger's terminology). *Rta* and *dharma* are the ethical forces that bring rhythm and harmony in the universe by regulating it. The emphasis is on relationships with all things of the world, which contribute to the whole cosmos. *Dharma* stands for both cosmic and moral law. The original nature of beings must be maintained. In case of human beings it stands for moral order because the individual can also disobey the natural order. The individual's *dharma* is to regulate his own actions. The individual ought to aspire for the cosmic harmony, which includes man, nature and other beings of the universe. These are interconnected and inter-dependent. The emphasis is on their unity and harmony so that no injustice is done to any one of them. This is possible by developing relationships based on care and concern, which is also depicted in the modern Indian thought of Rabindranath Tagore.

Harmony of relationships is the central theme of Tagore's thought. He emphasizes ecological stability and "sustainable development" of the universe, which implies all-round development. His love for nature reverberates in his poems. For him, in the aesthetic perception of nature, one finds one's true being. He experiences the presence of divinity in nature. The idea of *Śāntiniketan* symbolizes his love for nature, realizing the true meaning of education in the lap of nature: aesthetically pleasing eco-friendly environment. He holds that when man lived around the forest, he was in harmony with the environment. As the city-civilization developed and the materialistic attitude dominated him, he lost his identification with nature. Too much greed, ego-glorification, and craze for luxurious living devoid of intrinsic values would lead to the environmental disaster.

Tagore holds that the one-sided material development is problematic. He argues that sky and earth, the "lyrics of the dawn and the dayfall" are significant for the artist and the idealist and not for the "market men" who are contemptuous of all sentiments. He explicates that the inner cause of the ecological imbalance is the *ripus*—basic vices such as greed, jealousy, pride, lust, etc. are manifested in "commercialism, consumerism, and unbridled competition" that have overpowered life-styles of people. For him, the wealth-

producing mechanism has crushed the reality of man under its weight. He continues:

The question is, in what manner do we accept this world, which is a perfect gift of joy? ... We are fanatically busy making use of the forces of the universe to gain more and more power; we feed and we clothe ourselves from its stores, we scramble for its riches, and it becomes for us a field of fierce competition. But were we born for this, to extend our proprietary rights over this world and make of it a marketable commodity? When our whole mind is bent only upon making use of this world it loses for us its true value.⁵

Tagore maintains that if the civilization is governed by calculation of profit, cleverness, overmastering passion for material power and possession only, then it "bursts out in an explosive flame like a star that has lighted its own funeral pyre of boisterous brilliancy."⁶ The creative unity for him is attained through dharma that brings harmonious relationships. He glorifies the Indian tradition for highlighting the unity between man and nature.

The cosmic unity is produced through harmony of relationships. Tagore argues for developing kinship with nature and not only to be motivated by scientific curiosity and greed for material advantage. The natural entities on earth are not merely physical objects to be "turned to use and left aside" but are necessary for man's completeness. The hailing of the morning sun, the flowing water, the fruitful earth and developing a deep kinship with natural objects are the sources of joy (bliss) and peace leading to the realization of values.

Tagore distinguishes between fact and truth (value). Nature may exist independently as a fact, an external physical entity but when it is experienced by man, it becomes a truth enriching life and creating beauty. For a scientist, nature is an external physical fact; he is not concerned with the value of man's harmony with it: truth of creative unity, which is realized by man's consciousness. For Tagore, it is not "merely the number of protons and electrons which represents the truth of an element" (RM 62), but it is in the value of inward relationship—man's communion with nature elevates him.

⁵ Rabindranath Tagore, "Sādhanā," in *Rabindranath Tagore omnibus IV*, New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 2007, p. 143. [Henceforth cited as S]

⁶ Rabindranath Tagore, *The Religion of Man*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1975, p. 92. [Henceforth cited as RM]

There is an interesting conversation between Tagore and Albert Einstein on reality and truth in context of relationship between man and nature; the truth with or without relationship to humanity. Tagore holds that truth of the universe is human truth—realized by man. Truth is not based on the substance of things but in the principal of relationship. The meaningfulness of the universe is seen by the individual not in the sense of this particular individual (private) but the universal man (super-personal man)—"individual consciousness gains universal significance." For Tagore, the universe is "like a cobweb and minds are the spiders," mind is one as well as many. He regards truth as the harmony between "subjective and objective aspects of reality." He avoids both the extremes of purely subjective or purely objective approach towards world. For him, existence out there is meaningful only when it is related to man. His position on this point is closer to Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* that reveals simultaneity of man and world and that of Hilary Putnam who holds that the mind and the world jointly constitute the mind and the world.

Einstein on the other hand argues that he believes in the Pythagorean argument that truth of the universe exists independent of man. It has objective existence. From the scientific standpoint, there is dichotomy between the subjective and the objective. Nature is governed by its own causal laws, which produce order and perhaps one is not able to see that. Einstein argues that the causality is in the elements. Dipankar Home and Andrew Robinson describe Einstein's viewpoint:

The order is there, where the big elements combine and guide existence; but in the minute elements this order is not perceptible.... Clouds look one from a distance, but, if you see them near, they show themselves in disorderly drops of water.... Even the elements are not without statistical order, elements of radium will always maintain their specific order, now and even onwards, just as they have done all along. There is then statistical order in the elements.⁷

Einstein argues for the deterministic picture of the universe including man and speaks of illusion of freedom. He says that "lawfulness of events" unveils itself in organic nature, which does not cease to function in front of man's brain. Similarly a law of necessity governs human activities. Tagore holds a different point

⁷ Dipankar Home & Andrew Robinson, "Einstein and Tagore: Man, Nature and Mysticism," *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 2/ 2 (1995) 166-78, here pp. 176-7.

of view from that of Einstein. The former explicates that even the impersonal scientific truth belongs to man because it is the scientist (may not be the particular person but represents the rational mind of the universal man) who is analyzing it. It is the outcome of rational mind and logic is a "machinery of thinking created by the mechanic man" (RM 13). He adds that the "most distant star, whose faint message touches the threshold of the most beautiful telescopic vision, has its sympathy with the understanding of mind" (RM 15). Tagore highlights the significance of human factor (in the universal sense) in the realization of truth bringing harmony in the universe. He maintains that not only reasoning mind but also creative imagination, freedom, love, and wisdom are very important in understanding the universe.

Tagore regards the world as expression of beauty. It is a song, the rhythm of the world produces music, which reverberates in Tagore's poem, "When I See the World as a Song":⁸

When I see the world as a song,
I know and comprehend him
The best of all.
Then the language of his love
Fills the sky with light.
Then every particle of dust
Speaks to me with His voice.
Then He stands aloof no longer,
But takes His seat within my soul,
Then my heart quivers in ecstasy
With all the blades of grass
That He has made.
Then the beauty of form
Overflows the limit of its lines
And dissolves in an ocean of joy.
And the whole world whispers to me
Its inmost secrets.

Tagore argues that man cannot be separated from the universe. He is more than a body of flesh and blood and his greatest body is in the universe. He says that the music is not in him but he sings together with sun, moon and stars.

The beauty of nature manifests God and leads to soul-consciousness. Tagore states that man's identification with nature makes him rise above narrow ego and fills him with love for the entities and the people

around. This is beauty in the true sense that creates harmony in relationships. Harmony leads to expansion of consciousness, which is simultaneously aesthetic, moral, and spiritual. For him, the kinship and harmony of relationships cannot be seen through a limited ego but rather by soul-consciousness, which liberates man from the narrow horizon and lets him open to embrace others:

All our egoistic impulses, selfish desires, obscure our true vision of the soul. For they only indicate our narrow self. When we are conscious of our soul, we perceive the inner being that transcends ego and has its deeper affinity with the ALL. [S 91]

Tagore distinguishes between ego and soul by the analogy of the shell of the egg. The shell is the cage that imprisons life of the chick. The latter is aware of the world after the shell is broken. The shell does not let see the "the vast beyond that lies outside it" (S 94). Ego imprisons the individual in the narrow shell. It occupies itself in increasing possessions. The realization of soul is possible when one rises above one's ego, which has only superficial and fragmented knowledge of the universe leading to disharmony. The soul of man on the other hand understands and experiences the depth of reality as a whole. It correlates "within and without" and gets connected with the Infinite, which is the realization of freedom and bliss. To be with the Infinite (God) is to be with the whole universe.

Tagore elaborates the *Upanishad* standpoint that the key to cosmic consciousness is in the soul. The essence of soul is unity. He elaborates that the division between man and nature is "like dividing the bud and the blossom into two separate categories, and putting their grace to the credit of two different and antithetical principles" (S 78). The mind-set of "divide and rule" leads to domination by "erecting boundary walls" and "artificial dissociation" between man and nature.

Tagore realizes that truth is "all-comprehensive" and there is no "absolute isolation" in existence. There is no absolute unrelated to "humanity." For him, the only way to truth is through realization of "harmony between man's spirit and the spirit of the world" (S 76), because the whole existence is interlinked. It is rather realization of oneness in many. For him it is truth of unity that comprehends diversity. He states that when the individual feels the "rhythmic throb of the soul-life" of the whole universe within his soul, he experiences freedom.

The foregoing analysis has highlighted the

⁸ Rabindranath Tagore, "When I See the World as a Song," trans. Kshitis Roy in *Rabindranath Tagore: A Tribute*, eds. Pulinabihārī Sena and Kshitis Roy, Delhi: Sangeet Natak Akademi 2006, p. 108.

similarities between Heidegger and Tagore on their views regarding man-nature relationship. The cosmic harmony includes the well-being of man (fulfillment of his needs) as well as protecting the environment around with sensibility. It is true that the given environment is to be used to a certain extent to fulfill the needs of man but its excessive use or overexploitation is not desirable. The individuals and societies ought not to get trapped in the mechanistic and materialistic world-view, which is insensitive to ecology. They need the guidance of values (aesthetic, moral and spiritual) whose function is to see the desirability of any pursuit and play a creative role: to evoke sensibility and bring harmony (aesthetic), to see intrinsic worth in different walks of life (moral) and to avoid indulgence in merely materialistic pursuits and seek unification with all beings (spiritual).

It is not to suggest that scientific-technological approach is to be abandoned but society needs to take into consideration aesthetic, moral, and spiritual approaches towards nature so that harmony is maintained. Similarly, it is not sufficient to have merely romantic absorption in nature and religious (mere worshipping) perspectives because the survival of beings is not possible without using nature to a certain extent. However, overexploitation is not desirable. Mahatma Gandhi's statement, "earth has enough for everyone's need, but not for anyone's greed" is of great relevance for any developed society.

It remains to be seen if humans will develop the necessary moral maturity to become responsible custodians of technological advancements. This requires a new ecological paradigm that keeps a balance between technological growth and bio-spherical integrity to avoid depletion of resources that are equally needed for future generations. The need of the hour is to recognize that there are multi-dimensional ways of opening the world, and technology is only one way of opening it.

There is no solace in a simplistic choice between a man-centric or nature-centric approach. The man-centric approach may argue that since man in contradistinction to other beings of the universe is superior because of his mind, self-consciousness and freedom, he can rule the universe. The nature-centric approach on the other hand may hold that man is only one part of the whole nature and is also dependent upon it for its survival; therefore his being ought not to be over-glorified.

A sustainable use of the planet appears to be desirable. The above viewpoints need the expansion of horizons not only by one individual or a nation but

through the collective efforts made by a majority of communities and nations. Protecting the earth requires utmost care at the level of policy making in relation to technology and other relevant matters. Collective efforts are required at all levels: individual, social, political, local as well as global to protect the earth's bounty and beauty, and caring for life in all its diversity. The natural environment and social environment are interlinked. To break the environmental ties would lead to hazardous consequences. No doubt, the individual is the most developed being of the universe but he co-exists and interlinks with different species and beings of the universe. Over-exploitation of other beings breaks the environmental ties which can be protected only with relevant integrating policies.

Science, economics, and politics may not be seen as concerned merely with facts and material pursuits. Policies also reflect values. While engaged in any discipline, to keep the strict fact\value dichotomy in mind is not desirable. Although such distinctions are present, the rhetoric of dichotomy presents unrealistic and seemingly unavoidable choices. A value is a judgment about a particular fact, which is needed in any step of enquiry for the holistic development of ecology.

The materialistic approach belongs to sphere of the profane, which has relevance to a certain extent but dismissing the spiritual (axiological) approach by calling it emotional or superstitious is also not desirable. Similarly, the spiritualistic approach belongs to realm of the sacred, which is of high value but denouncing the materialistic approach would be running contrary to the realistic picture of man or any civilization. The civilization can develop only if the balance between material and spiritual dimensions is maintained. The material and the spiritual are two wings if any civilization wants to fly ever higher. If one wing is broken, civilization would decline. The overemphasis on any one at the cost of the other may lead to either destruction of even most advanced civilization or its under-development. The one-sided materialistic perspective so often held by privileged classes leads to ego-glorification, which becomes deaf to the song of fairness and equity. Such dispositions do create dichotomous relationships which disrupt the movements of cosmic dance. The axiological perspective recognizes the interrelationships of all beings and all sectors of society. Let us contribute to create cosmic harmony through participating in the rhythmic dance of earth, sky, mortals, and god.