Part : II

FREEDOM

I

Turning away from the conceptual framework of alienation, we may now undertake our main task, i.e., to consider the role played by the concept of alienation in the philosophy of Rabindranath.

In spite of his unorthodox manner of philosophising, he can be said to have given expression to what may be called the Indian ways of thinking, in respect of alienation. *By ways of thinking* we mean any individual's thinking in which the characteristic features of the thinking habits of the culture to which he belongs are revealed. *ways of thinking,* as here used, will designate especially ways of thinking about concreat empirical questions, which may, on many occasions, involve also value-judgments and questions of values in ethics, religion, aesthetics and other such human concerns. The thinker need not himself be aware of any way of thinking when he is engaged in operations of thinking. However, his ways of thinking are, in fact, conditioned by his culture's habits and attitudes when he coherent self-consciosness his thoughts. Again, any thinker might develop a co-herent self-consciousness of thought following one or more of several *ways of thinking* - as defined above. Rabindranath and Sree Aurobindo are Indian philosophers in this sense, though they do not follow any specific classical *darsana* of the past. They made use of the special language system bequeathed by our philosophical past, and it must

not be forgotten that language is basic to the cultural life of a people; so basic that when a special language system comes into being we may say that a people has come into being. Every philosopher, however great, is conditioned by events in a certain region of space and time. His thinking cannot, moreover, avoid a certain continuity with that of his associates, as a member of a particular society. Thus, the ways of thinking of philosophers cannot be freed completely from national or historical traditions. On the other hand, however, a great philosopher not infrequently follows a way of thinking which differs from that of the nation which gave him birth. Indeed a philosopher is often considered great for this very reason. Rabindranath will be found to be no exception to the general statements made above.

II

Let us now note the Indian ways of thinking about *alienation*. The clearest statement about it (in the sense of "self-alienation", as a split between man's real "nature" and "essense", and his factual "properties" or "existence") occurs in the two *sūtras* of Patanjali. Freedom consists, according to *Sūtra* no. 3, in resting in one's own unmodified state, poised as an onlooker. Freedom means that one's existence is not estranged from one's essence - *Svarūpa*. Hence a description of freedom would be in the following terms : *tadā drastuh svarūpe avasthānam.* Alienation would, then, be *vrtti-sarupya* (Sutra, 4), that is, the state of fall from one's *svarūpa*, and the consequent disintegration by way of confusion with *vrttis* or factual properties. Yoga is essentially a method of dealienation. Several objections can be raised here, for example, whether the metaphysical essence

designated by *svarupa* can be, with propriety, taken as an equivalent to *essence* as used in connection with alienation. Again, how can Rabindranath accept this view of self to which one can have access only by putting an end to the objective use of mind? Now, the minimal requirement for applying the concept of alienation, as we proposed (and it is a well supported view) is to have a case of estrangement between essence and existence, whatever the essence might be in a given context. The requirement is fully met with by the *Sutra* no. 3 of Pantanjali. If so, then the second objection can be easily disposed of, since Rabindranath defines human essence in terms of a creative self, and fall from this *Svarupa* of creative unity would imply a state of alienation. Alienated men are those who have lost their creativity, *ātmohāno janāh* as the Upanisads say. Self-possession, *ātmalābha,* an absolute possession of the self by the self, is freedom. *Mukti* is dealienation. In Indian philosophy, in general, there is a mental tendency to seek a transcendent substantial basis for "what is real". What is different in Rabindranath's case is the context and its assumptions, but the criteria suggested earlier are undoubtedly satisfied. Let us look more closely into the Indian ways of thinking.

Indian people are inclined to consider the universal seriously in expressing their ideas of things. One of the main features of most philosophical thinking in India is a predominant way of minimizing the particular in the logical sense. This does not mean that the Indians did not develop the concept of the individual. They did. The Sanskrit equivalent of individual is

Vyakti. But Vyakti did not play much of a role in the history of Indian logic.By *particular,*in tne logical sense, we mean anything of which a property can meaningfully be predicated. Most Indian thinkers are apt to emphasize universal concepts and to subordinate the concrete individual and the particular perception to the universal. Even in the *Vaiśesika* philosophy there is no direct awareness of the concretely perceived individual. The *antya-viśesa* or the final particular is used to represent the principle of particularity or what the Western Scholastic metaphysicians called the principle of individuation. However, even in classic western logic the singular or the individual was not always discussed. John Dewey remarks, "I do not believe an instance can be found in genuine Aristotelian writings in which a singular (which by its nature is an instance of severalty) appears as the minor premise in a rationally-demonstrative syllogism" (*Logic, The Theory of Inquiry*, p. 95).

Of course,in other pluralistic philosophical systems in India more attention was paid to the concept of the individual, and its unique meaning was investigated. The debate between the Individualist and the Universalist concerning the meaning of a word is well known. The individualist (*Vyakivādin)* held that the individual (*Vyakti)* is the denoted sense of a word, whereas the Universalist (*Jātivādin)* held that the universal (*Jāti)* is the denoted sense of a word. But in Indian philosophy for the most part, the position of the perceived individual was minimised in favour of the *inferred* particular and the *conceived* Universal, differing from the schools of European philosophy in which the

particular and the universal were all given equal consideration with respect to their meanings and logical status. Even Indian realists and pluralists esteemed universals. In giving the definition of *substances*, Annambhatta said, "A substance is that which is endowed with the genus of substance." This is a purely verbal definition, or a truism which teaches us nothing new about the thing to be defined. But the definition satisfied the philosophers, perhaps because of their very tendency to reify concepts. It was only in the logical sense of the word that Buddhist thinkers admitted the significance of the individual, though they did not believe in a soul as a permanent substance. With them the individual *(vyākti)* meant "the thing in itself" *(Svalaksana)*, which is just an instant or moment in any given situation in the transient course of time. It is the extreme concrete and particular *(kincididam)*. Mental construction of Judgment (*Kalpanā, adhyavasāya*) comes later (see Stecherbatsky, *Buddhist logic,* Vol I, p. 79f and Vol II, pp. 34 - 35). In the West also we find a similar concept : *hacceitas* or "Thisness" in the philosophy of Dun Scotus. The tendency of most Indians is to lay stress on the significance of the Universal only, and they almost neglect the significance of the individual or the particular. Hegal characterizes Indian philosophy as the "growing of the mind inwardly in the most abstract way" and he called it "intellectual substantiality". Abstract concepts are treated as concrete realities. In the *Brāhmanas,* which offer explanations of the sacrifices, abstract ideas are treated as if they were on the same plane as concrete things. This is in consonance with the Indian propensity for the abstract notion. In their way of thinking an abstract idea is expressed as if it were a concrete object, i.e.,in their thinking process the universal is easily endowed with substantiality. Here the characteristics of Sanskrit language system

influence the logical thought. In Sanskrit the distinction between an attribute and a ground of that attribute is mostly neglected, and the differences between substantive and adjective as two parts of speech is not always maintained. In the Vedic literature, it is very difficult to find out which is substantive and which is adjective among many terms that indicate the same object. Even in classical Sanskrit, an adjective is used as a substantive, e.g., *suhrd* (good-hearted, a friend), *tapana* (burning, the sun). The inclination to lay stress on the universal appears to some degree among the ancient Europeans in their languages. Plato touched the problem of "Virtue itself as to its universality" after he had examined human virtue, by analyzing the general idea into the virtue of man, of woman, of child, of slave, and so on. Plato's intellectual procedure would have been very natural and rational for the Greek people at that time. The problem, however, of whether it is possible to pursue abstract "Virtue in general" apart from concrete deeds becomes a difficult question in modern ethics. But in India the conception, which was represented by an adjective, had more importance than the individual that was modified by the adjective. And the significance of individual things, which embodies the conception represented by the adjective, was reduced to almost nothing for the Indians.

Another characteristic way of thinking prevalent in India had been the fondness for the negative expression. This came about at the end of the quest for the universal, which is less limited that the individual. Hence the undetermined is

posited. It is here that the negative character of Indian thought comes into prominance. The noun with the negative is a popular Indian expression. Instead of saying "many or none" we prefer "non-one", *aneka.* The word composed with the negative serves to express not only negative but also positive meaning. In the Indian mind "non-idleness" or *apramāda, non-violence* or *ahimsā, non-duality* or *advaita* etc. appeal as having more positive content than "exertion" or "tolerance" or "monism". To Europeans such a negative expression of virtues and creeds appeals less than a positive expression for practical conduct. But to most Indians these negatively expressed virtues have more power. Three of the five moral precepts of Patanjali are negative, e.g., *ahimsā, asteya* and *aparigraha.* The precepts of Buddhism and Jainism are shown in the negative form. This seems to suggest that morality consists in the negation of ordinary men's actions. Greek virtues have invariably a positive expression, and though the Ten Commandments (Exodus, 20, *The Old Testament*) are negative expressions of great consequence, yet the Sermon on the Mount (St Mathew, 5, *The New Testament*) is emphatically positive. But to the Indians, who lay stress on the negative phase in moral life and pursue the undetermined, the negative form of expression has more positive and powerful meaning.

Negative conceptions are preferred even in ordinary sentences, since it is thought that the negative form of judgment is not only negative but also positive and affirmative. So in Indian logic the universal negative judgment is not used, and is discussed only by being changed into the universal positive

obverse judgment e.g., "All speeches are non-eternal" *(anityah śabdah)*.

The Absolute is grasped negatively. The hymn of creation in the *Rg-Veda* is called *Nasadasiva* i.e., there was neither non-existence for existence. In the *Brhadāranyaka Upanisad* the *Ātman* is said to be capable of being expressed only through the negative as "not so , not so" - *neti neti*. The highest principle in the universe is that which is free from all differential qualification. Negative expressions are used abundantly in the scriptures of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. Nagarjuna enumerates the "eight negations" while demonstrating the theory of *Pratityasamutpāda* in his *Mādhyamika-Kārikā*. Chandrakirti says, "As to *Pratitya-Samutpāda*, though we can express endless negative predicates, here we adopt only eight negations, because these eight can reject all objections." (*Mādhyamika Vrtti*, 11.4.f). It can be very easily seen why fore the Indians the Absolute is a non-personal principle.

The Greeks, on the other hand, who had pre-eminent skill in visual intuition and such arts as sculpture, preferred to see the clear image of all things. Therefore, that which was devoid of boundaries was considered to be indeterminate, without certitude, incomplete and imperfect. So that even in regard to the supersensory, they could not divorce themselves from their concrete way of thinking. Even Parmenides, who seemed to grasp the ultimate principle of Being most abstractly and negatively, discussed the fundamental principle of the world as if it were

a material existence, expressing it as a spatial or extended thing. (Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, p. 49). Plato called immaterial substance by the visual name of "idea" or literally, figure, form. In general, the ancient Greek people had a way of thinking concretely. Though they speculated on things rationally and conceptually they rarely ever tried to reach such abstractions as total voidness. The Eleatics, of course, did discuss Non-Being, but only in order to reject it. We may remind ourselves of the fact that the Vaiśesikas proposed the six-*padārthas* (categories) as fundamental principles. They are abstract ideas that are classified into six groups and admitted as substantial elements.

To lay stress on the universal inclines the mind to disregard the individual and particular. Because their method of thinking puts more stress on the underlying essence of the individual than on the particular surface qualities of the self, the Indians seem inclined to stress more the relation meaning of a thing than its fundamental uniqueness. According to the dominant way of thinking in India, the nature of the individual or the particular is dependent on the universal through which the individual or the particular is supported and inferred. This peculiarity is evident in many spheres of India's cultural life. For example, in ethical books there is very little attention or criticism given to the individual's feelings and conduct. In Indian essays on art and aesthetics there is a good deal of speculative discussion about the nature or essence of beauty in general but scarcely any detailed analysis of individual works,

time-honoured masterpieces (or any of the many works of art in India). Gods in Indian mythology have hardly any individual personality in so far as they are symbolic mainly of universal powers or virtues. Indra, for instance, is a very highly respected deity in the *Rg-Veda,* but the word "Indra" is also used as a common noun to stand for any divine being who performs the same function. (Samkara, *Brahma-Sutrabhāsya*, 1,3,28; Richard Garbe, *The Philosophy of Ancient India,* p. 36). There is a general neglect of local geography in Sanskrit poetry in general. The tendency to classification in any detailed concrete fashion has been confined to Indian works of a general kind such as the *Kāma-Sutra,* the *Artha-Śāstra* and the *Nātya-Śāstra.* But most of these works lack case-histories of natural phenomena.

The underlying idea that motivates this minimising of the individual, as a concretely perceived being, is the Indian tendency to think that all particular beings perceived by the senses are only illusions, because only the universal is real. The universal, or the species upon which the particular is based, must be subsumed under the higher universal or more general species. If such a relation to higher species is pursued, then eventually ultimate existence (*Satta)* is reached, beyond which nothing exists. As a matter of fact, Bhartrhari expressed just such speculative thought. He maintained that since all species are realized by ultimate existence in the final analysis, so all the meanings of words are no other than existence. Moreover, he thought, the only ultimate existence is absolute being and what gives existence to species as species is not true being : as

this relation between truth and non-truth can be seen between the subsuming upper species and the subsumed lower species, so, any kind of conception is non-true against the universal while it is true against the particular. He said, "Now, as it was testified in the sacred book, these two things *(bhava),* true and non-true are present within everything *(bhava);* and the true thing is the species, *the individual is not-true"* (*Vākyapadiya,* III, 1, 32).

As a result of their inclination to emphasize Universal Being, to which all individuals and particulars are subordinated, most Indian concentrate on the Idea of the unity of all things. A more or less Vedantic ring is to be heard in most Indian thought. Only the Universal Being behind the changing manifestations of the phenomenal world is the ultimate source of reality. And the more anything is individualized, the less it shares in the essence of reality. The less it shares the essence of reality, the more it is alienated. From ancient times, again, almost all Indian philosophy believes that reality is *ultimately* one and ultimately spiritual. The Buddhist rejected the existence of any metaphysical principle as advocated in the *Upanisads*, yet they emphasized participation in the current affairs of the world for the realization of absolute virtue. They taught the importance of unity among individuals in the actual society of their fellow-beings. The monistic tendency among the Buddhists finds a clear expression in Nagarjuna, who says that defilement arises from the differentiating notions (*Vikalpa)*, which comes from the concept of diversity (*prapanca*). This concept of diversity culminates in the state of *Sunyatā*, which means absolute negation and it

permits nothing to be differentiated (*Mādhyamika-Kārikā*, 18.5).

From these intellectual tendencies in the culture of India there emerges another notion, viz., the supremacy of the universal self over the individual self. The numerable individual selves are regarded as only relatively separate, and beyond the plane of appearances the subject of action transcends the opposition or alienation between the self and "other-than-self". Hence the tendency of the Indian to be concerned with an unlimited *extension of the will* in place of a more finite human relation. He does not consider others as other selves or as opponents of one's self. In other words, he conceived the idea that other selves become one with the self as an extension of the self. The aphorism : "Buddha's identification with the self and the self's identification with the Buddha" stated in Tantric Buddhism, is based on the view of the continuity of one's self with other selves which the Indian people commonly conceive. Here we have a striking contrast with the familiar view held in the West. Heraclitus said : "War is the father of all Things" or Plautus thought : *Homo homini lupus*, i.e., Man is a wolf to others. Hobbes comprehended the natural condition of human beings as "A war of all against all". In India, it is common in this connection for a proposition to have a universal as its subject; it is rather exceptional that the individual is its subject. This fact exhibits a tendency to attach importance to the universal self beyond the individual self who comprehends it. This explains the absence of any pronoun in Sanskrit which denotes the public or a mass of people in contrast with an individual. In order to

indicate the common subject, generally the active voice of third person singular is used. If necessary, *sa* (he), *nara* (man), *purusa* are substituted. In Western Society each individual has an intrinsic value, and each individual opinion becomes the object of public attention. The Indians, on the contrary, emphasize that only as a member of the united body is each individual worthy of respect.

The Cartesian proposition *coqito. Ergo sum* was conceived in Hindu philosophy in a way quite different from the individualistic European view. The self or the *Ātman* in the Indian concept does not simply mean that individual souls populate this phenomenal world, each claiming itself to be distinct from others inspite of its substantial homogeneity with others. But, by the *Ātman*, Indians imply also the self hidden behind the competing individual souls. In many Indian books of philosophy and religion the Self means the Absolute Self as well as the individual self. As the form of the word *solipsism* indicates to us, it is the concept of "Only I am" in the West. On the other hand, as a result of their unique concept of the self, the *ātmavāda* or the Indian theory of the self-only emphasizes the oneness of all beings in the Universe.

The *ātmavāda* is also responsible for the Indian ethics of the non-duality of one's self and other selves. When most Indians think that each self is essentially identical with others and that the distinction of persons is merely a matter of phenomenal form, it is natural that they look upon the state of

non-duality of one's self and other's selves as the ideal. The *Upanisads* teach, "All this thou art" or "I am Brahman" (*Kausitikī*, I.6). And these statements from the core of their ethics. The Indian view of non-dualism between one and others takes another form of expression in Buddhism, even though the Buddhists do not acknowledge the individual soul as a metaphysical entity. The Buddhist exercises himself with all, making no distinction whatsoever with regard to caste, colour, class or creed (Kenneth W. Morgan, *The Path of the Buddha*, p. 95). Buddhism prescribes that men in the monastic order (*Samgha)* live as one body without any personal discrimination. It is *metta* which attempts to break all the barriers separating one from another. Mahayana philosophers taught that in the ultimate state one can reach the transformation of one's neighbour into one's ego-*parātma parivartana*. Things being so, the union of one with others is the ideal in the practical ethics of the Mahayana Buddhists. In the final stage of Indian Buddhism it was claimed that everything is Buddha. *Ahimsa* is said to be *parama-dharma,* and this point of view can be logically deduced from non-dualism. A generalised explanation may be suggested as follows : In so far as the individual is a self, it is a distinct reality. Its spiritual freedom is the ultimate end to which its entire life's activities should be directed.But in sofar as the self is embodied, all its activities are through the body, and the body is an inseparable member and product of the world of Nature, out of which the bodies of other selves also have evolved; so there is an indissoluble bond between the embodied individual and all

other such individuals forming the social corpus.

Indians attach great importance to the authority of the universal law. This springs from their reverence for universal standards in behaviour. The universal law is *Dharma.* This word comes from the root *dhr,* which means to hold, to support or to bear. *Dharma* means what serves as the norm to support human behaviour. *Dharma* as the norm that guides a man to establish and to perform moral acts, is the power that realizes "Truth" in this world. Thus, the ancient Indians understood the *Dharma* to be the truth that works as *creative* power, and identified the two. *Brhadāranyaka Upanisad* states that "the law is what called the true. And if a man declares the law, they say he declares what is true. Thus both are the same" (I,4,14). There are many cases of identification of *satya* and *dharma* (Cf. *Chandogya,* VII, 2, 1; VII, 7,1; Taittirive, 1, 11.1).

Dharma is the basis of the whole universe. All beings rest in peace in *Dharma.* It exists eternally. In the *Vaisesika*, it is assumed that the rise and the deliverance of the soul is attained only on the strength of *Dharma.* They called the whole system of their doctrines "the Dharma" and they made a quest for truth in this system (*Vaisesika Sūtra*, I,1,1,). This idea of the eternal universal law was inherited by the Jains and the Buddhists. In recent times Mahatma Gandhi represents the classical idea in unmistakable terms. Radha-Krishnan has suggested that Gandhi's statement "Truth is God" is a commentary on the Upanisad text, *tapo brahma* (*Recovery of Faith*, p. 73). In short, for Indians, it is a matter of the greatest moral and

religious importance to know the universal law and to submit themselves to it.

We may now pass on to the Indian concept of man. When Indians speak of man, they are likely to use such terms as *prānīn, bhūta* or *jīva* along with *manusya, purusa or nara.* They think of man more as an instance of the species of "Living being" than as a member of the human race. In the text of all Indian religions the subject of ethical conduct is a "living being". In the West too, some philosophers have held that the subject of ethical conduct is not to be limited to man; for example, St Thomas. But as we see in Kant's idea of man's rational essence, the Westerner has focussed attention on the problem of man and ignored the consideration of living beings. The Indian concept of man in relation to other beings is thoroughly different from the Western concept of man. In India, the moral rules that regulate human relationships are not enough. Ethics should be so extensive that it rules over all the relations among men, beasts and other living beings.

According to the Indian system of classification man corresponds to other animals as one of the viviparous creatures-*jarāyuja* (cf. *Brahma Sūtra,* 3.1.21; *Manu Sarnhitā,* 1,43-46). This offers a sharp contrast with the Western concept of man before the Middle Ages, and possibly corresponds with the modern scientific classification. The Indian concept is not the result of scientific study of ecological phenomena, but results from their instinctive and natural way of thinking of man as

belonging to the world of *living things.* Indians acknowledge the spiritual factor in all living creatures. But this does not mean that the Indians did not, in some respects, hold that man is superior to other creatures. Man is a "thinking" animal. The Sanskrit word *manusya* is etymologically connected with the root *man,* to think. Aitareya-Āranyaka states that in a man the *Atman* is clearly revealed because man is endowed with intelligence *(prajnā).* He distinguishes between the real and unreal worlds, and tries to attain immortality though he is a mortal (2.3.2.). The Buddhists regarded highly "The rare state of being a man. One should be grateful that he is born a man" (*Majjhima-Nikāya,* 29). In certain circumstances, man was distinguished from other creatures being endowed with the capacity to carry out the *dharma*-ethical law. This emphasized the ethical and religious significance in human activities so that those who neglect the *dharma* are no better than beasts. The Vaiśesika School says : "The *Dharma* is the excellent quality of the human race (*purusaquna).* The *Dharma,* the essential distinction between men and other beings, has continuously been emphasized throughout all Hindu thought (*Prasastapada, Padārtha-dharmasamgraha,* Section 39; *dharmalaksana).* The glory of human existence runs high in the *Chaitanya-charitāmrta*, and through the mysticism of the occult, religious folk-cults of Bengal reaches its apex in the philosophy of Rabindranath. The final outcome of course is more spiritual than religious."

We have seen earlier that in the Upanisads *dharma* is considered to be identical with *satya.*The dominant philosophical

schools of ancient India did not find truth in the agreement of subjective knowledge with the objective order, nor in intersubjectively valid knowledge. They sought truth in the practice of ethics. In other words, they sought complete concordance or spiritual unity through ethics and they considered this spiritual way of life to be the truth. The word *tattya* is also used together with *satya* to mean *truth.* Buddhists had their unique term *tathāta* also to mean *truth.* The original meaning of *tathāta* is "thatness" and "suchness". Truth, in the ancient Indian concept, is no other than "to be that" or "to be such". They indicated truth by "that" or "soul" - the terms of the simplest prescription of the object. In other words truth exists where all forms of discrimination have been negated. And *satya* means "being" or "relating to being". Generally speaking Indians are inclined to take an ontological view, and not an epistemological view of truth. Thus the Indian concept of *truth* is different from that of the West.The Kantian view of truth has been predominant in the West : "If truth consists in the agreement of knowledge with its object, that object must thereby be distinguished from others; for knowledge is false if it does not agree with the object to which it is related" (*Critique of Pure Reason,* p. 97, trans. Kemp smith) and this view can be traced back as far as the ancient Greeks. In spite of Hegel's criticism of Kant, the Western concept of truth is based on the Greek ideas of the external relationship between the subjective knower and the known object.

To sum up, we have attempted broadly to delineate the Indian ways of thinking in terms of the atress on universals,

preponderence of abstract notions, the treatment of abstract notions as concrete realities; the preference for negative expression and the tendency to grasp the Absolute negatively; the consequent inclinition to minimize individuality and specific particulars in general speculation, the concept of unity of all things, and primacy of the universal self over the individual self, resulting in the belief in the continuity of one's self and other selves finding expression in the Indian concept of man. All these are accounted for by the introspective and metaphysical character of Indian thought. These ways of thinking are revealed in the thoughts of the modern Indian philosophers, and have had a profound influence on the apprehension and the solution of the concept and problem of alienation, as dealt with by the Indian philosophers. These ways of thinking are present in the very formulation of the concept of alienation for them. It is not denied that alienation, or the awareness of alienation is a characteristic feature of our age. It is also true that *alienation* as a concept of philosophical anthropology was not *explicity* developed in ancient India. Yet modern Indian philosophers like Rabindranath and Sri Aurobindo in considering the concept have evidenced unmistakable trends of Indian ways of thinking. To Rabindranath goes the credit of propounding a philosophical anthropology based on Indian ways of thinking, and employing the concept of alienation in its multi-dimensionality. But another serious example of the Indian diagnosis of alienation can be had from Sri Aurobindo, and this shows that the concept of alienation has ever been a matter of ethico-ontological concern in India.

III

Alienation has assumed the proportion of a problem in that which Sri Aurobindo calls, "The Subjective Age". In his *The Human Cycle,* he makes a searching analysis of "the psychological seedcause" of our time, which, he says is "an individualistic age of mankind". This age is marked by an urge to rediscover "the substantial truths of life, thought and action" that are "overlaid by the falsehood of conventional standards". It is the individual who has suffered most, and therefore a programme of "discovering the truth both of the individual being and of the world to which the individual beings" has been undertaken in science and philosophy, art and literature, religious and sociological thought. In every field, as a result, man has been coming "face to face with the soul of himself". Subjectivism has become "a road of return to the lost knowledge". But which step is to be taken? It is a razor's edge to walk upon when one proceeds on the path of knowledge. Hence, the distinction beween "true" and "false" subjectivism. Sri Aurobindo remarks, "Everything depends on how that step is taken, to what kind of subjectivity (*ātmavāda* or *solipsism* of Kierkegaardian *singularity*) we arrive and how far we go in self-knowledge; for here the dangers of error are as great and far-reaching as the results of right seeking" (*The Human Cycle,* p. 47). In Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine* we come across the problem of alienation as an ontological issue and on the human level, it is treated as symptomatic of "Separative Knowledge", which arises when the sense of differentiation overpowers the sense of identity. It is

a fact of human existence, though, by no means the truth of it. Alienation manifests itself in what Sri Aurobindo calls the "Surface mind". With this instrument, "Human beings..... live as strangers to other at best tied by a very partial sympathy and mutual experience; we do not know enough, do not know as well as we know ourselves - and that itself is little - even those nearest to us" (*Life Divine,* p. 481). This is a remarkable account and touches directly the core of the issue.

In modern Indian philosophy, the problem is studied in its new formulation and novel analyses have been offered keeping in view the contemporary scene, without, however, losing hold of the cultural heritage, a fact, which makes the problem all the more real to us. What distinguishes Rabindranath or Sri Aurobindo in the perspective of the Indian ways of thinking is their heightened awareness of the individual as an alienated being. This concern for the individual is a novel feature and calls our attention to their modernity.

IV

We shall now turn to specific instances in the ontological thought of India that may be said to contain the alienation-idea,and determine the extent to which they have been presupposed in the philosophy of Rabindranath.

Perhaps the earliest occurrence of the idea of alienation is to be found in the *Taittirīya Upanisad* (2.6) where it is asserted that *desiring* that he should become many, that he should make of himself many forms, Brahman meditated. Meditating, he

created all things. He became all things whatsoever. The passage underlines the ontological fact that in consequence of the desire to become many - *vahu syām prajāyeti* - *Brahman* arose alienated from the Self-Existent. But what is important is the fact that this self-alienation of the Self-Existent does not introduce a complete estrangement between what *Brahman* is and what he has become. What he has become, i.e. the world created in his "other", which is qualified by plurality - *Vahu,* does not have its own *raison de'tre* of existence. This statement is true by definition in the context. Since the "other" or *anyāt* (*Brhadāranyaka,* 3.7.23) does not enjoy self-existence, it is there only as a self-differentiation of the Self-Existent. We are also told that creating all things *Brahman* entered into everything - *tat svstva tadevānupravisat (Taittirīya,* 2.6). The essence of the doctrine is that the self-alienation of the Self-Existent is comprehended by himself. The alienated aspect of *Brahman* does not fall off from reality, rather it is contained within the Real : *tat Satyamityachksate (Taittirīya,* 2.6). This mode of containing the alienated aspect of *aesthetic*, since it is enjoined by the same *Upanisad* that the Self-Existent is the essence of all felicity.

There is another passage in *Brahadāranyaka Upanisad,* which puts the matter more acutely. It is said about the *Hiranyagarbha* aspect of *Brahman* that he divided himself into two halves - *dev dhāpātayat (Ibid,* 1.4.3). The reason adduced for this self-division is also *aesthetic,* since we are told that the creator was not happy : *Sah vai naiva reme,* for he was lonely in

his self-existent, and hence the act of self-alienation. The aesthetic significance of this ontology is admitted even by Samkara, who, in his commentary on the above mentioned text, clarifies the point by defining the word *rati*, which occurs therein.

The following points emerge from the account of self-alienation of the *Brahman* that we come across in the *Upanisads* :

(a) Alienation is a relative concept;

(b) Alienation and the transcendence thereof make the moment of self-realization of the Self-Existent complete;

(c) It is to be transcended by an aesthetic comprehension of the creative unity of existence;

(d) It is a moment in existence, but not identical with it;

(e) The given ontology is creative;

(f) Creativity is Existence *par excellence*; the uncreative mode of being is infected by *ennui* or as Samkara has put it *a-rati* (commentary on *Brahadāranyaka,* 14.3). Alienation is justified in its transcendence.

(g) Self-knowledge is alienating. Long before Kant's doctrine of "transcendental apperception", *Brahadāranyaka* (1.4.1) provided a phenomenological account of self-knowledge, which, it may be said, anticipated Hegel's theory of self-consciousness, Which produces its own object. Marx quotes Feuerbach's assessment of Hegel's doctrine that alienation originates from the essential nature of thought.

(h) The concept of *Yajna* or self-sacrifice or *Brahman* as the act preceding the creation of the world is a familiar one in the *Vedas (Rg.* X.90.6) and may be taken as the pictorial presentation of the act of self-alienation of the *Brahman* spoken of in the *Taittirīya* and the *Brahadāranyaka Upanisads*.

The aesthetic significance of the ontological

self-alienation of the Brahman is at the base of Rabindranath's philosophy of existence. Existence is creative unity or *harmony* and *alienation* is the uncreative mode of being. He takes the Upanisadic account of the creation of the universe as a model of human creativity. For him, human creativity and the transcendent ontological act of creation do not constitute separate spheres of existence; rather, human existence insofar as it is *creative*, is itself divine. The transcendent ontology is only an apotheosis of human creativity. To exist is to create, to create is to rise above the domain of *facts* and enter a life of value-consciousness. Creation is Truth.