CHAPTER ONE

1.0 One is born with certain dispositions and many things happen in one's life. Together they mould the personality of a man. It is very natural to suppose that his personality determines his perception of things. Even his philosophy is not altogether unrelated to his life. The most potential premise, so to say, of one's philosophy is one's psychology. So comes the hypothesis that a person's philosophy has its foundations in his psychology.

1.1 It will be useful to see what the eminent exponent of Transcendentalism, Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his essay, 'Sobering Realities' has said in this regard. He says, 'A man cannot utter two or three sentences without disclosing to intelligent ears precisely where he stands in life and thought, namely, whether in the kingdom of the senses and the understanding, or in that of ideas and imagination, in the realm of intuitions and duty.
People seem not to see that their opinion of the world is also a confession of character'. (1)

So it will be seen that the origin of the theme of the present research work, which I wish to set forth in the following pages, can be dated back to the nineteenth century.

Another noticeable concurrent opinion, thereafter, we find, is that of William James, the staunch pragmatist. Though unnoticed specifically by any of the contemporary philosophers or the thinkers of the following generations, the suggestion of the psychological approach to the philosophical thinking is elucidated, in details, by William James, in his 'Pragmatism':

'The history of Philosophy is to a great extent that of a certain clash of human temperaments. Undignified as such a treatment

may seem to some of my colleagues, I shall have to take an account of this clash and explain a good many of the divergencies of philosophers by it. Of whatever temperament a professional philosopher is, he tries, when philosophizing, to sink the fact of his temperament. Temperament is no conventionally recognized reason, so he urges impersonal reasons only for his conclusions. Yet his temperament really gives him a strong bias than any of his more strictly objective premises. It loads the evidence for him one way or the other, making for a more sentimental or a more hard-hearted view of the universe, just as this fact or that principal would. He trusts his temperament, wanting a universe that suits it, he believes in any representation of the universe that does suit it. He feels mess of opposite temper to be out of key with the world character, and in his heart considers them incompetent, and 'not in it', in the philosophic business, eventhough they may far excel him in the dialectical ability.

'Yet in the forum,' James points out, 'he can make no claim, on the bare ground
of his temperament, to superior discernment or authority. There arises a certain insincerity in our philosophic discussion: the potest of all our premises is never mentioned.' (2)

An effort to look into the lives of philosophers, we find is that of Alexander Herzberg. In his 'Psychology of Philosophers', he tried to examine the case of some eminent philosophers on certain important issues, with a limited aim to determine whether those philosophers were unsuitable for practical life. He investigated the lives of philosophers, 'in order to ascertain whether they contained some strange psychic anomaly - that form of inactivity, that inhibition of action, which we conjectured to be a prerequisite of philosophic thought...' (3)


It will be necessary to go into what Psychology has to say with regard to the temperament or personality.

A great deal of psychological attention is focused upon the individual, the various related aspects - the development, individual differences, aptitudes, personality etc.

The term 'personality' refers to the whole individual. It is the integration of his structure, modes of behaviour, interests, attitudes, intellectual abilities, aptitudes and many other distinguishable characteristics.

The layman uses the concept of personality in terms of the social impact the person makes upon others. An individual with a good physique and appearance, well dressed and with good manners is said to have a good personality; one who lacks these things is said to have a bad personality or no personality.
But anything really psychological or scientific can hardly be put together from such a layman's view, since personality is a complex notion.

"Viewing a person as he goes about the various activities of his everyday life, we usually obtain total impression of his personality as 'agreeable, disagreeable, dominating, submissive or the like....' (4)

While viewing the individual analytically, psychology dissects the personality into its components, which are further termed as personality traits.

Character and temperaments are the terms meaning, respectively, 'personality viewed from the moral point of view' and 'a general term used to represent emotionally toned aspect of personality (moodiness, tenseness etc.).'

The dictionary meaning of the term 'temperament', used by James, is 'person's character or disposition - individual character of one's physical organization permanently affecting the manner of acting, feeling and thinking.' While the term 'personality' means, 'distinctive personal character'. As far as psychology is concerned, personality refers to the whole of the individual - the overall pattern or integration, of his structures, modes of behaviour, interests etc. as stated previously.

As regards the typology of personality or temperament, we have only Jung's widely accepted pair of 'extravert and introvert'. It has not been regarded an easy task to demarcate types of personality, as it happens to be a many faceted thing. As many as eighteen thousand terms were found referring to personality by two investigators. (5) In this context, even Dr. G.G.

Jung, was obliged to confess, '...... this subjective clouding of the judgement is, therefore, a frequent if not a constant factor, for in every pronounced type there exists a special tendency towards compensation for the onesidedness of his type, a tendency which is biologically expedient since it is a constant effort to maintain psychic equilibrium. Through compensation there arise secondary character, or types, which present a picture that is extraordinarily hard to decipher, so difficult indeed, that one is even inclined to deny the existence of types in general and to believe only in individual differences...' (6)

1.3 For the present research work, I have chosen six persons of distinguishable philosophical types and with the help of their available biographical and/or autobiographical material I have attempted to show, what type of personality goes with what type of philosophy. These types with their respective philosophers

are as under:

J. Krishnamurti  non-conformist  non-traditionalist
Vivekananda     conformist    traditionalist
Aurobindo       introvert     spiritualist
M. N. Roy       extravert     materialist
Schopenhauer    pessimist     pessimist
Rabindranath Tagore   optimist   optimist

My method of study will be to show the general influence of man's personality and his philosophy; to determine the type of personality on the basis of his biographical details, then to state the type of his philosophy and to show the correlation. One chapter each is devoted to the listed types. At the end, in a separate chapter, I shall present a report on a project carried out by me in support of my hypothesis. I hope, the field work undertaken there will prove innovative and pioneering in the realm of philosophy.