The term alienation is used in many different senses: it is a word with many dimensions of meaning. The term, alienation, *prima facie* signifies 'estrangement'. Alienation "is the act, or result of the act, through which something, or somebody, becomes (or has become) alien (or strange) to something, or somebody else".¹ Ordinarily the term alienation means keeping away or turning away from partners, companions and associates. In Psychology alienation denotes deviation from normality. It is also taken to mean a person's feeling of 'aloofness' or 'alienness' as regards society. It can be alienness towards nature, towards other people or even towards himself. There are philosophers who look upon alienation as "self-alienation" (self-estrangement): the process, or result of the process, by which a "self" (God or man) through itself (through its own action) becomes alien (strange) to itself (to its own nature).²

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² Ibid., p. 76
In tracing the history of the concept we can see that it was Hegel who first attempted to philosophically elaborate this concept of alienation. Hegel's idea of Nature as Absolute mind in its self-alienated form itself is treated as having its source in Plato's version of the natural world. Plato regards the natural world as an imperfect picture of the ideal-world, the world of Ideas. Thus interpretations vary. But what remain established is that the term, alienation, was first given explicit elaboration and interpretation by three thinkers-viz Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Karl Marx. The interpretations of these thinkers may be said to mark the beginning of the discussions about the concept of alienation in the various branches of study—philosophy, sociology and psychology.

Hegel

In the Hegalian view existence is truth only in the Idea. This is the fundamental approach of Hegel's philosophy. He says, analysis of whatever is, or whatever exists ultimately ends in the Absolute Idea,
Absolute Mind or Absolute Spirit. This idea pervades all parts of the system: all particulars have their reality in this unity. The Absolute Idea of Hegel is not a set of fixed things and static properties. On the other hand, the Absolute Spirit or Idea is a dynamic self engaged in circular process of alienation and dealienation. Nature, for this Absolute mind is only a self-alienated form. As regards man, Hegel points out that, Absolute in the process of dealienation is man. History of man shows the development of human knowledge of the Absolute. It is also a growth of self-knowledge of the Absolute. That is, Absolute Spirit becomes self-aware through the finite mind. This self-awareness makes one come back to oneself from his self alienation in Nature.

But the finite mind it may be noted, is also subjected to alienation as it engages in producing things, expressing itself in objects, and objectifying itself in physical things, social institutions etc. Each case of objectification is an instance of alienation. It is an alienation of the produced object from its producer. Overcoming alienation of this kind
consists in becoming aware of it. Thus, the primary duty of man is to be an instrument of self knowledge of the Absolute. Failing to fulfil this duty shows his failure in fulfilling his human essence. This makes man nearly self-alienated.

Ludwig Feuerbach

Feuerbach approves Hegel's standpoint which admits the possibility of man's alienation from himself. But he deviates from Hegel's view that Nature is a self-alienated form of Absolute Mind and also from the conception of man as Absolute Mind in the process of dealienation. Feuerbach's position is that it is not man but God who is estranged from man. God as conceived by Feuerbach is self-alienated man. God is the essence of man, absolutized and alienated from man. He also contends that man is alienated from himself. To him alienation of man consists in positing an imagined higher Being above him, bowing to Him and in living like a slave in subjection to that Being. Hence man's refusal to recognize nature as a self alienated form of God cannot be treated as man's alienation from
himself. Thus, according to Feuerbach, what causes man's alienation is his own creation of a higher being-God. Man must become aware of the fact that God is nothing but an estranged picture of man. Hence dealienation of man according to Feuerbach consists in the abolition of this estranged picture of man, namely God.

Karl Marx

Karl Marx seems to agree with Hegel regarding the conception of self-creation of man as a process of alienation, and dealienation. But Marx differs from Hegel in certain aspects. First, he questions Hegel's identification of objectification with alienation. We have seen that Hegel identifies objectification with alienation and looks upon suppression of alienation as the removal of objectivity. This is possible only through the medium of pure thought, says Hegel. Hegel's conception of man as self-consciousness is also criticised by Karl Marx. Turning to Feuerbach, especially his criticism of religious alienation, Marx
agrees with that position. But he would point out that self-alienation of man has many forms—religious alienation is only one among them.

In this background, let us consider Berdyaev's position. Berdyaev brings in the problem of alienation in the special context of the emergence of technological knowledge. As a result of the advance of technology, he points out "Man is all the while more and more thrown out into the external, always becoming more and more exteriorized, more and more losing his spiritual centre and integral nature. The life of man is ceasing to be organic and is becoming organized; it is being rationalized and mechanised".3

Alienation is being recognised as a crisis which the modern man faces. "The danger which modern man faces today has been characterized as technological alienation".4


4 R. Balasubramanian, The Personalistic Existentialism of Berdyaev. (Madras: Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1970) p. 25
A clear understanding of this new phenomenon of technological alienation can be got by comparing it with creative alienation and productive alienation. Hegel was the first philosopher who stressed the fact of creative alienation. It is really a dissociation between man and man. It is also a dissociation between man and the world or between man and his artistic expression in the fields of art, science and technology. Various forms of this dissociation can be noted. As Heinemann opines, it is "a multidimensional phenomenon". 5

This alienation between the creative mind and its own creations is known as creative alienation. Marx speaks of Productive alienation. To Marx, labour is the essence of creativity. Both Marx and Hegel really negate the place and the part played by the individual in the society. The world-mind which Hegel speaks of never helps to overcome alienation. Also the

proletarian revolution which Marx refers to does not offer a solution to overcome alienation. The alienation which the modern man confronts is the result of technology. Marx points out that machines have become the means of destruction. It is necessary to focus our attention to human existence to overcome alienation. Alienation which has become the hallmark of the modern age is described as: "loss of self, anxiety states, anomic, depersonalization, rooflessness, apathy, social disorganization, loneliness, atomization, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, pessimism and the loss of belief or values".⁶

Alienation thus as of an all pervading nature affects almost all aspects of human activity. Viewed from the individual's point of view Malvin Seeman enumerates five dimensions of alienation such as Powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement.

Berdyaev points out that solitude, to a very great extent, helps man to realise his personality. "It springs from man's endeavour to develop his personality regardless of the life of the species. Only when man is alone, when he is overwhelmed by a sense of his isolation, does he become aware of his personality, of his originality and uniqueness, of his distinctness from every one and every thing else".7

Thus, man becomes aware of his personality in his loneliness. Berdyaev says that man is a social animal and as long as man exists the problem is bound to occur in every age and in every society. True, society has progressed to a very great extent. Technology has advanced to such an extent that man always welcomes changes in science. And yet he is rather afraid to welcome changes in morality. We have successfully established quicker means of communication and transport; but the basic problem is still there. Berdyaev, while analysing the problem of solitude in

7 Nicolas Berdyaev, Solitude and Society. (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1938) p. 68
detail, observes that many people do not consider it as a problem at all. On the other hand, to them, it is a real solution. Man lives under the constant threat of a nuclear war. Every man feels himself to be a stranger to himself, to his own family and in the midst of social relations. We are so busy with the various things that tension prevails everywhere. Man is in a state of despair and disillusionment. Hence in this tension-dominated situation, man is in need of privacy and solitude.

Philosophers, poets and literary figures have contributed much to society. In fact "it is the solitary isolation that really helped them to brighten the respective spheres with their insight. "Philosophy is essentially a personal rather than a social function. The truth he discovers takes no account of other people's reasoning. It is his own reason that must furnish the revelation of the supra human and the divine. Society does not aid him in his pursuit of his knowledge." 8

8 Ibid., p. 17
All these evidently show the intense solitude of the philosopher and the personal and incommunicable features of his philosophy. Berdyaev often refers to what he calls the Integral man. The Integral man, which to him is rooted in the heart of the being-itself. Realisation of the status of the Integral man consists in severing all his connections with the objective world. That is, only when he is alone, only when he exists in his own right, does he realise his divinity as a man. This solitude, is of an extreme type since it cannot be shared especially in the case of the ordinary men. Philosophers like Socrates, and Spinoza in their lives on earth fulfilled the destiny of man, experiencing alienation from the rest of mankind. This experience of alienation or solitude is highly rewarding, for it is the pathway leading to Truth.

Berdyaev speaks of a situation where a man who has encountered divinity within himself, longs for a communion with others. Berdyaev says that man has a desire to escape from the state of isolation to enter
into communion with the other self. "The Ego longs to emerge from its prison-house in order to meet and identify itself with another Ego: but at the same time, it must proceed warily for fear of encountering nothing but the object". Berdyaev is of the opinion that so as to be reflected in another, to be affirmed or confirmed by the other self the ego experiences a very deep solitude. It also desires earnestly to be heard and to be seen by other selves.

There are situations when man wants to be left alone, free from the busy surrounding which makes him tense. And when he is left alone, the seclusion that he is supposed to enjoy becomes a problem. The dreadful feeling of loneliness may still persist whether one is in the midst of others or whether one is alone. The mere presence of others is no cure for the loneliness that he experiences. As a means of escape, some resort to a state of isolation—but they may still contemplate over their gloomy loneliness which is intolerable to them. Even in solitude, they may feel lonely. When loneliness becomes a problem, we are not concerned with the presence or absence of others.

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9 Ibid., p. 69
Berdyaev also makes an attempt to analyse the nature of loneliness, and comes to the conclusion that the problem takes place at the spiritual plane, and not at the physical. If the problem arises at the physical level, it can be solved, by removing the obstacles that separate one from others. The isolated man can be made to establish friendly relation with others. Man feels himself to be a "stranger, an alien without a spiritual home".

The problem of loneliness has two aspects—one negative and the other positive. In its negative aspect it is an obstacle to the smooth running of life. Of course, life itself is an adventurous journey and the road to success is full of obstacles. The pragmatist observes that the success lies in utilising the constructive freedom one possesses and eliminating the obstacles which mar our ambition. Life really is a challenge; we have to meet it. Problems remain

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10 Ibid., p. 92
problems for the time being; problem-solving behaviour is in man. Problem, whatever it is, can be a great help to man sometimes. This is equally true with regard to solitude.

The solitude or loneliness plays an important role in man's spiritual progress for, it is the experience of solitude that makes man aware of his personality. This is the positive aspect of loneliness. Each and every man experiences solitude in his life at one time or the other. But only a few becomes aware of it and truly reflect on it. Thus solitude has an important place in the spiritual progress of man. When left alone, some men, during the old age suffer from mental symptoms. As far as old age is concerned this problem is a grave one. Some old men find it very difficult to keep the psychological equilibrium in the best manner possible. The result is that they lose the 'Sense of living', undermine themselves to a very great extent. It is observed that in some persons who are over ambitious, and destructive by nature, old age and feeling of loneliness can create obstacles, which are of a serious nature.
Berdyaev opines that through many ways of knowledge the individual attempts to conquer solitude. Social life and sexual relation are instances of such attempt. To him, even "man's longing for knowledge is really an expression of his endeavour to overcome solitude". 11

Man is enriched with the gift of a variety of talents by which he obtains knowledge of the external world. But this knowledge of the external world alone is not sufficient to overcome solitude. The standpoint of objective society and the standpoint of communion of inner existence and of close intimacy with the other are the two ways from which the problem of knowledge may be approached. Of these only the latter approach has the capacity to overcome solitude. Of the two aspects of knowledge, one consists in understanding the relationship between the knowing subject and Being. The other aspect deals with the relationship between the knowing subject and other Egos, which is the world of men and society. As far as the first aspect is concerned the problem of solitude can be analysed by

11 Ibid., p. 96
the knowing subject who takes part in the mystery of existence. In the second aspect of knowledge we can see that through the social process it only succeeds in achieving a superfluous result in so far as it is capable of blunting the Ego's sensibility and consciousness.

Just as in the case of love and friendship, only when the Ego identifies with the Thou, that a real conquest over solitude is possible. This can be applied in the case of knowledge too.

Berdyaev is of the view that social life which a man learns will not enable him to overcome solitude. Man has to play different roles in society. He has to enter into rich and varied relations in the society, not first is existence in nature. It is the pleasure-principle that at first rules his life. Later when the principle of existence is not sufficient, when man confronts the reality-principle, realises that life in itself is not of worth and has the human spirit. To such a man reasoning to 'loneliness' (Social life, the existentialist Philosophy, knowledge is first of all concerned with the Ego and the Thou, since it is essentially personalistic in outlook. But, to win over solitude it is essential to transcend the Ego in the intellectual or emotional sphere of life. The ego
transcends itself in **two different ways**; in one way it **identifies** itself with an object of a general principle and in another way it **enters into communion** with the Thou. In the process of settling up society, the ego merges with the objective world and this act of the ego is marked by a positive value. Overcoming objectification is a pre-requisite to overcome solitude. For overcoming objectification it is necessary to realise the nature of the Spirit which is possible only in the highest plane.

Berdyaev is of the view that social life which a man leads will not enable him to overcome, solitude. Man has to play different roles in society. He has to enter into rich and varied relations in the society. Man at first is egoistic in nature. It is the pleasure-principle that at first rules his life. Later on the reality-principle operates in him. Man, when he confronts the reality principle, realises that life is not a bed of roses, it has thorns in it. At such a moment some men resort to 'loneliness'. (Social life, according to Berdyaev, is a form of Objectification.)
Berdyaev says that there are four types of relationship between the individual and society. Among these four, the first one deals with the general relationship between the individual and society. Men of strong imitative instincts come under this category. Man is so engrossed in the social environment that he hardly notices solitude. In the second type of relationship the individual does not get actively involved in the social affairs. Such people do not have any conflict with their social environment. They do not experience solitude and are called indifferentists. In the third type as different from this, the individual experiences solitude even while keeping away from social interests. Though a harmonious relation does not prevail between him and the society he is ready to compromise with his social environment when there is a need for it. Such people are called compromisers.

In the last kind of relationship, the individual is marked by his interest in the regeneration of society even while fighting against the prevailing social order. These people are aware of both solitude
and society. They are deeply interested in social affairs and are the reformers, creators, and spiritual conformists.

The analysis of the various types of Social relationship between the individual and society evidently shows that only men of prophetic type can overcome solitude and not the compromisers.

The attempt to overcome solitude by means of sexual relation will be a futile one, because sex forms one of the important causes of human solitude. Left to himself man is incomplete. This incompleteness caused by sex makes him aspire to be complex. This can be achieved only by transcending sex.

Berdyaev's position is that solitude can be really overcome only through communion. Communication helps to associate two individuals externally. It takes place in the objective. Communion enables man to overcome solitude, because it is a case of identifying oneself with others. Berdyaev holds that this communion which is the goal of human life is essentially
religious. "Communion involves participation, reciprocal participation, interpenetration". 12

An analysis of the problem of alienation is inevitable in Existentialism. The term 'alienation', as we have noticed, is quite often used in the sense of mental attitude and mental malady. In the beginning the term was meant to indicate the fall of man from divinity. Self-alienation was the term used for it in philosophy. Such a self-alienated man loses his selfhood and he tries to identify himself with his original form. Failure in this attempt causes in him the feeling of alienation. He becomes hostile to the external world. Alienation has its origin from the crisis of modern life. This forms the very basis of Existentialism and spreads through all human relations. Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky and Kafka led an insecure life in the society. F.H. Heinemann in his book 'Existentialism and Modern Predicament' opines that both Kierkegaard and Hegel echo the view that

12 Ibid., p. 188
"Alienation is a self-estrangement of the mind, not, however, of the abstract or universal, but of the individual mind or the self".\textsuperscript{13}

Mas as conceived by Sartre is also in a state of alienation. Man does not master his own destiny. Since he experiences alienation first in the family it must be studied in relation to the family relations inside a society. Man experiences alienation, which he wants to remove by his free-choice, and there is a dialectic of freedom and alienation. Sartre says that to be alienated the individual must be an organism capable of being influenced by the dialectical action. "Sartre made use of the term 'personal alienation' to describe the nature of bad faith".\textsuperscript{14}

The abolition of alienation can come only through group action, where the formation of group is important. In a group, what is predominant is the


\textsuperscript{14} Anthony Mansers, \textit{Sartre-A Philosophical study}. (University of London: The Athlone Press, 1966) p. 178
group-mind. An individual mind is replaced by a group mind in a group. So also an emergence of group-consciousness is present only in a group and not in an individual in his isolation. Team-spirit, participation, the feeling of oneness—all these find their suitable place only in a group. Individual's initiative, can very well develop only in group. It is a psychological fact that man's enthusiasm and inspiration and longing for development etc. get strengthened only in group-situation.

For Sartre the terms 'alienation' and 'estrangement' point to the characteristics of individual consciousness and social structure wherein individuals are controlled by the consequences of their collective activity in lieu of controlling the consequences of their activities. Thus there are a variety of definitions and it is indeed difficult to say which is the best one. Hence it is better to define the term broadly so as to make possible the existing uses and to differentiate between the various forms of alienation so that one can have a clear understanding of the variety of phenomena. This will prevent possible confusions.
All the thinkers who have made use of the term have mentioned various forms of alienation. But very few have done it explicitly. Hegel, for example, attempted no explicit forms of alienation of the form of classification, because according to him a process of alienation and dealienation was the essence of all development. In this case if necessary, the various stages in the development of the Absolute can be looked upon as different forms of alienation as explained by different thinkers, it is necessary to mention a few of the basic criteria on the basis of which the classifications have been made. The first deals with differentiation of alienation on the basis of the nature of that which is alienated. For example the distinction between alienation of things and of selves. Further subdivision can be made if one has to distinguish different types of things or selves. In alienation of selves individual alienation and social alienation are distinguished. Again among social alienation itself, the alienation of societies, of social groups, of social institutions are differentiated.
The second criterion is applicable only to alienation itself since a thing can not be alienated from itself. Only a self can be alienated from itself other than being alienated from something or somebody. Further subdivision can be made on the basis of different aspects of the self such as from its nature, its body, its feelings, its needs etc. According to the third criterion differentiation of form of alienation is possible on the basis of the fact whether what is alienated is alienated on account of its own activity or through the activity of the another. Here we should take note of the fact that a thing can be alienated only through others. But a self can be alienated through others and through oneself.

Karl Marx in his 'Economic Philosophic manuscripts' distinguishes between four forms of alienation. These include alienation of man from the products of his own activity, from the productive activity itself, from his human essence and from other man. Twentieth century writers differ greatly among themselves in summerising the basic form of Alienation.

Frederick A. Weiss differentiates between three basic
forms of alienation. These are self-anesthesia, self-elimination, and self-idealization.”

Existentialists hold that man as man is self-alienated. It is a fact that man leads an authentic existence. But at the same time situations arise where he has to lead a nonauthentic life.