CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF REASON

Framework

This chapter consists of three sections. In the first section, we have elaborated Roy's objections to various theories and systems. In this context we have discussed Marxism and Idealism in greater detail since Roy's basic quarrel is with these two philosophical systems. In the second section, we have elucidated Roy's understanding of the concept of reason and noted some of the problems latent therein. The last section deals with Roy's interpretation of history.

SECTION I

Introduction

In this chapter we propose to discuss the concept of reason as formulated and expounded by M.N. Roy. 'Reason' is central to Roy's theory, in fact it is the very foundation on which is built the theory of Radical Humanism. In the formulation of Radical Humanism, Roy's attempts were directed towards building an alternative theoretical system; for, according to him, all hitherto existing philosophies were either fallacious or were deficient. The logic behind Roy's attempting to build an alternative system is explained by V.M. Tarkunde in his introduction to Beyond Communism,

"Politics being a part of social life, political ideals and political
practice must be correlated not only to each other but to a total view of existence with a clear conception of the basic instincts of man, the place of the individual in society and the general course of history and evolution.\(^1\)

In Roy's words, his theory of Radical Humanism is a total one, 'a cosmological conception' which can be applied for explaining the entire scheme of nature -- including society.\(^2\) Thus, it is clear that Roy was attempting to build a system of thought. As a system-builder, however, certain tasks have to be performed, certain expectations need to be fulfilled. We shall examine later on whether Roy has been able to fulfill these tasks and to what extent.

What motivated Roy into formulating the theory of Radical Humanism? The answer to this question lies in Roy's moral concerns. Consequently, the concept of reason acquires, for Roy, a moral or ethical value -- for he poses reason as an answer to what he identifies as the crisis of the 20th century. This crisis is not only a crisis of the breakdown of political, economic and social systems of modern civilisation, but as stated by him,

"...it goes deeper, and therefore, it has been rightly characterised as a moral crisis -- a crisis involving not only the corporate life of mankind, not only its social existence, but the very being of man, man's mind, his spirit, his soul."\(^3\)

Writing about the same elsewhere he says, "The burning problem of our time is the problem of morality, particularly of social morality, of finding a common norm for moral behaviour."\(^4\) Thus the crisis was identified as basically a moral crisis or a crisis of morality, both of the individual and of the society as a whole.
We wish to argue that for Roy, reason as an ethical value is inseparable from reason as an ontological value. In other words, what Roy tries to do is to ontologise reason. Though reason acquires a moral value in his theory, it is not as a discriminating faculty of the mind; rather, Roy seeks to ontologise reason by arguing that reason is a biological function of the human being. Thus, what he attempts to demonstrate is that man is moral because he is rational, and this is so because of his biological make-up.

The genesis of this moral crisis, according to Roy, lay in the intellectual realm. The intellectual impotency of modern times to provide answers to various queries of mankind, had created a state of confusion and hopelessness. According to Roy, fallacious ontological and moral theories exist and these undermine man's faith in himself. He writes,

"...all the evils of our time -- political instability, economic insecurity, impoverishment of the masses, rise of totalitarianism, danger of dictatorship, the growing menace of yet another world war, to mention only the most outstanding ones -- could be traced to one single cause, namely, wrong notions about human nature...." (Emphasis ours).

These 'wrong' notions or doctrines which Roy attempts to tackle are mainly 'Marxism', and 'Idealism'. We shall attempt to elaborate the problems therein, as identified by Roy. Likewise, Roy seeks to identify the problems within Liberalism and also problems raised by the new natural science theories, which undermine the claims of materialism. We shall examine these too.
Marxism

The year 1946 marks a watershed in Roy's intellectual evolution, for he ceased to subscribe to his earlier beliefs. Marxism, which till 1946, had been his 'Weltanschauung', ceased to be a theory which was sufficient and capable of providing an answer to the needs of modern times. Initially, Roy's rebellion and volley of criticism was directed against communist practice, both of the Communist International and of the Soviet Union. However, after 1946, Roy began to discover chinks in the hitherto infallible theory of Marxism.

Roy rejects Marxism on the grounds that it is mechanical, deterministic, reductionist and dualistic. In his opinion there were certain crucial problems within Marxism: (1) Marx's materialistic interpretation of history; (2) Marx's ontology or the concept of human nature; (3) Marxism lacking an ethical theory. The three issues suggested cover the fundamental areas of any 'system' and therefore, ultimately Roy seems to be rejecting the entire Marxist 'system' as such.

Marx's Materialist Interpretation Of History

According to Roy, Marx's philosophy of history is fallacious for three reasons: (a) it is only a history of the means of production; (b) it gives no importance to ideas; (c) it eliminates man from the process of history.
Roy argues, "...it is palpably absurd to regard history as a succession of events brought about by the automatic development of the means of production...."^ According to Roy,

"The materialistic conception of history fails when it dismisses ideal systems (ideologies) as mere superstructures of economic relations, and tries to relate them directly with the material conditions of life...."(Emphasis ours).

First and foremost, Roy has objections to Marx's connotation of the term 'material'. According to him, Marx's concept of materialism must be revised and reformulated in the context of the new discoveries of natural sciences. Roy holds that Marx's notion of 'material activity' and 'material behaviour' are both incorrect. Roy argues,

"What is material activity? If the adjective 'material' is used for physical, then it has some sense. But the physical activity of the most primitive man is conditioned by some mental activity. It may be very little differentiated from the physiological reaction to environment. Yet, it is something qualitatively different from the fall of a stone, or the growth of a plant, or the flight of a bird. Ideas and thoughts do not result from physical behaviour; they are influenced by physical and social environments. The rather confused argument with wrong words and inaccurate descriptions led to the conclusion that 'life is not determined by consciousness but consciousness by life.'"(Emphasis ours).

Roy tries to explain why there is a fallacy in Marx's materialistic interpretation of history. He says,

"Marx identified the primitive man's intelligent effort to earn a livelihood with the biological struggle for existence, and came to the conclusion that the origin of society and subsequent human development were economically motivated. The point of departure of the Marxist historiology was the mistake of confounding physical urge with economic motive."(Emphasis ours).

Thus, for Roy 'material' implies only that which is physical
Next, Roy takes up the point of 'determinism'. Roy is in agreement with Marx that history is a determined process, but he differs in the interpretation of determinism on two points: (1) Determinism, according to Roy, is a logical concept derived from the natural laws. Roy argues,

"Determinism is a logical concept. It is inherent in a determined process; no extraneous factor intervenes; because, in that case, the process becomes dualistic.... Economic Determinism, being a dualist concept, cannot be necessarily related to Materialism." (Emphasis ours).

For Roy, determinism can only be a determinism of natural law, and this is the only interpretation of determinism which he believes is consistent with Materialism. For Roy, Materialism implies only naturalism. Logically therefore, he holds that Marx's notion of determinism, which he terms 'economic determinism' (sic), is inconsistent with Materialism and in fact introduces something which is external to nature. This makes Marx's notion of determinism dualistic. Roy believes that a correct materialist theory must be a Monist theory. Marx's 'economic determinism', according to Roy, does not logically follow from Materialism, because Materialism is a philosophy, while 'economic determinism' is only a method of interpreting history. Therefore, once again 'economic determinism', for Roy, is inconsistent with Materialism. (2) The other point that Roy raises in connection with Marx's 'economic determinism' is that history is determined by several factors and not by economics alone. Roy argues,

"History, particularly cultural history, is also ideologically
determined. Therefore, it is an error to conceive Historical Determinism as purely economic. History is determined, but there are more than one determining factors...."11

Thus, Roy argues that Marx's notion of Materialism itself being fallacious, his notion of Determinism is also logically wrong. As a result, Roy says, Marx's Materialism is mechanical,11(a) dogmatic11(b) and dualistic. Therefore, Marx's materialist interpretation of history, Roy concludes, is completely misconceived.

The entire argument presented by Roy here seems terribly confused. On the one hand, he criticises Marx for being dualistic in his determinism; on the other hand, he argues that history is determined by several factors and not by economics alone. Roy is in fact making a case for natural determinism as opposed to Marx's social determinism. What Roy really seems to be arguing then, is that ontologically and epistemologically, materialism must be Monist Materialism.11(c) By this Roy implies that thought and ideas and objects are all ultimately reducible to one factor, namely matter. There are several problems with this kind of an argument, which we shall examine later.

The Role Of Ideas

We now come to Roy's objections to Marx's theory of history. Roy accuses Marx of not having recognised the importance of ideas in history. Roy writes, "Marx allowed no place to mental activity
in the process of social evolution; indeed, not even in the process of development of man himself. Roy is of the opinion that mental activity is totally absent in Marx's concept of history, and in the evolution of society; therefore, society appears as a lifeless machine. According to Roy, history is determined more by man's brain than by his brawn. For this reason Roy considers Marx's understanding of history to be incorrect.

According to Roy, since Marx does not recognise the importance of ideas in the historical process he fails to appreciate the importance of criticism, particularly that of religion. Roy writes,

"His failure to grasp the historical significance of the religious mode of thought is also surprising. Because of that defect in his historical sense, Marx was unable to appreciate the importance of religious criticism. Religion provided the moral sanction for the continuation of the political and social status quo. To undermine its authority, therefore, was a revolutionary act of fundamental significance."

Next, Roy accuses Marx of having reduced ideas to mere reflections of the material base. The objection that Roy was raising concerned the role and nature of subjectivity, or consciousness. This problem had already been taken up as an issue, by some European Marxists. In the 1920s, George Lukacs, Karl Korsch and Antonini Gramsci, had come forth with their criticism on the then prevalent understanding and interpretation of history. Twenty years later, Roy was articulating the same issue, but in a totally different manner. But what they all commonly objected to was the reduction of the
super-structure, or culture, to being a mere reflection of the base, or economic structure. This kind of an analysis of the relation between base and super-structure was rather mechanical and deterministic, rather than dialectic, a point well brought out by John Merrington.\(^\text{15}\)

Consequently, the super-structure did not have an independent existence, it merely reflected the base.

Roy argues that the Marxist materialist conception of history fails when it dismisses ideal systems as mere super-structures of economic relations, and tries to relate them directly with the material conditions of life. Roy says, "A new idea must be referred back to an old idea. Philosophy has a history of its own, and it is not a kaleidoscope of phantoms...."\(^\text{16}\) Therefore, Roy concludes that historical determinism fails to provide a holistic understanding of history whenever its exponents take a one-sided, partial view of history ignoring the importance of ideas.

**Man In The Process Of History**

Though Marx had declared that man is the maker of history, Roy argues that Marx did not really believe that he is so. Roy explains,

"But Marx did not really believe that man was the maker of his destiny; his view of history and social evolution was essentially teleological, fatalistic. Therefore, he combatted Feuerbach's Humanism propagated by his followers who called themselves 'true socialists' and developed by a succession of brilliant scientists."\(^\text{17}\)
Roy argues that Marx's materialism was mechanical and deterministic because it had broken away from the materialistic tradition which was truly humanistic. Roy argues,

"Breaking away from its admitted source of inspiration, the Marxian dialectical Materialism de-humanised humanity by subordinating its entire history, political, social, cultural and intellectual to a secular teleos, and rested an ill-conceived romantic view of life on a soulless mechanistic Materialism which he claimed to have rejected." (Emphasis ours).

Roy believes that Marx had given undue importance to the economic factor, the means of production and had in the process turned man into a cog in the wheel. Such an argument, Roy maintains, goes against the humanist spirit which Marx originally possessed.

Roy's objections to Marx's materialistic interpretation of history can now be summed up. They are as follows: (1) that it is reductionist because it explains everything in terms of economics; (2) that it is mechanical and does not recognise the importance of ideas or consciousness in determining history; (3) that it is deterministic for it sees the direction of change as inevitable.

Let us examine how far Roy's charges are valid. First of all, it may be noted that Marx never used the term 'economic determinism' and had always referred to his theory as a materialistic conception of history. Though there are passages within Marx's writings where he holds the economic structure, the relations of productions, to be the real foundations of society, or where he has narrowed the material
conditions to the instruments of production ("the handmill will give you a society with the feudal lord and the steam mill a society with the industrial capitalists"; The Poverty of Philosophy) it is incorrect to accuse Marx of reductionism on the basis of such phrases. This has been very well argued by David McLellan, "It is obviously illicit to generalise such phrases and credit Marx with a theory of 'technological determinism." Engels later admitted a problem created by their own over-emphasis on determinism and necessity. Engels wrote,

"Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasise the main principle vis-a-vis our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place, or the opportunity to give their due to the other elements involved in the interaction...."

Hence, Roy's objections are justifiable but only partly. Roy was actually reacting more to the Marxism that then prevailed, which was reductionist. It was the understanding of dialectical materialism of the first generation of Marxists, Plekhanov and others, which became the Communist Party orthodoxy during the Russian revolution and the Comintern period of the Third International. Roy was introduced to this tradition of Marxism and was involved in the activities of the Third International. Within the Marxist camp, a rebellion against such reductionist Marxism had taken place which attempted at reinterpreting Marxism differently. This interpretation of Marxism, as 'humanist' was attempted by Lukacs and Korsch in the 1920s and continued later in the works of the Frankfurt School. Roy, who had been closely associated with the Marxists of this period, was also rebelling, but with a difference.
The attempts at reinterpretation adopted by other Marxists were within the paradigms of Marxism, retaining the difference between subject and object; the dialectical interaction of the two was emphasised instead of their being reduced to either-or. Roy, however, in his attempt to reformulate and reinterpret Marxism, gave up the logic of Marxism, gave up the dialectical method and reduced subject and object to matter. We shall see later on how the charges he makes against Marx of being reductionist in fact apply to him.

The difference between Marx's materialism and the materialism of the 18th century materialists is precisely what Roy has fallen prey to in his attempt to transcend the problem which he rightly identifies. The 18th century materialism had been criticised by Marx for leaving everything to nature, thereby leaving man out of their account of the influence of material conditions.

Marx's concept of 'materiality' was historical and not a-historical. It was the history of matter -- nature as transformed by man through his action, labour or practice. It was the materiality of society and different from the materiality of inorganic matter. Marx is in agreement with the epistemological materialism which argues that matter precedes thought. Marx also recognises that man is different from other beings because of his intelligence or consciousness. Roy himself has noted this, but misses the point Marx was making. Marx is concerned with human history and not the history of nature, and therefore, he
goes further and points out that man begins to distinguish himself from other animals when he begins to produce his means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by his physical organisation. Marx was trying to show the beginnings of human history, which is the creation of man himself and not directly a creation of nature. So Roy's criticism that Marx does not recognise the importance of mental activity in determining history is rather misconceived. Marx does recognise this, but he goes further and points out that human history begins only when man distinguishes himself from other creatures of nature, when he begins to transform nature through his labour by producing his means of subsistence. Thus, Marx is in agreement with epistemological materialism which argues that matter precedes thought, that matter is reality and the basis of human history and thought; in other words, that priority rests with matter. But Marx differs from this kind of materialism in that he does not reduce thought to matter. Here he is in agreement with dualism which holds matter and thought to be different and yet, on some fundamental points, differs from it. Roy Edgley, has very succinctly brought out this difference. He argues,

"It (Marxism) rejects idealism and dualism but contrary to the tendency of philosophical materialism it is not reductionist. It does not, that is, assert that mind, consciousness and thought are reducible to material processes and thus ultimately identical with them. It holds, with dualism, that material reality and ideas are different, but against dualism it claims that this difference is not an ontological opposition and independence but rather a qualitative distinction compatible with causal interaction and the natural historical emergence of consciousness from matter. As materialism it claims that existentially material reality is independent and consciousness dependent, and that historically, causally and epistemologically material reality is primary and consciousness secondary."
Marx rejects the materialism of the 18th century in which the subject-object relation was a passive one. The assumption of this kind of materialism is that the cognitive relation of the subject to the object is one where the subject directly confronts the material object and his thought passively reflects the object. For Marx, the relation of subject-object is not a passive one but an active one. Knowledge, for Marx, is a product of sensuous activity and intellectual labour. Knowledge and beliefs are actively produced and as such are social and historical products. They are not the products of pure contemplation or passive reflection. Roy objects to Marx's emphasis on action and believes that 'pure thought' is the instrument for acquiring knowledge. Roy writes, "...foundation of Marxist Materialism is not matter,....it is man's relation with matter. Again, an essentially idealistic position...."23

Roy seems to have totally misinterpreted Marx. He has not really understood how Marx, while following the Hegelian subject-object relation, has totally transformed it and incorporated it in the materialist theory.

Marx had rejected the Hegelian philosophical claims and the idealism of the Hegelian system. Conceptual thought is ontologically rooted, according to Marx, in man's sensuous activity, his labour, and is not an independent process. Human beings are natural material beings, whose material practices are both mental and physical. These
actions, both mental and physical, affect the material reality which exists independently of them. These material practices are basically those of production of the means of subsistence. And these practices, according to Marx, influence our mental practices. Material reality is reflected in thought, not simply as an object, but also as the material practices of that thought's socio-historical context. Thus, Marx transforms Hegel's idealism and dualism by appropriating it in his scientific materialism. The traditional problematic of thought and matter is replaced by that of theory and practice.

**Roy's Objections To Marx's Ontology**

According to Roy, Marx's concept of human nature, his theory of man's being and becoming was fallacious for: (i) it does not accept anything as stable in human nature; (ii) it does not distinguish man from other matter; (iii) it does not recognise the importance of mental activity in the process of man's being and becoming.

Roy argues,

"Man, according to Marx, being a physical organisation, his relation to matter is the relation of one material entity to other material entities. Where does consciousness and intelligence appear in the interaction of dead matter? In other words, what makes man different from a lump of dead matter? Begging all these crucial questions, which Materialism must answer to be convincing, Marx simply takes man for granted, as an elementary undefinable, as the 'personification' of the Hegelian Absolute Idea."

Thus, according to Roy, Marx fails to distinguish man from the rest
of nature, and therefore, man ultimately appears as a personification of the Hegelian Idea.

The problem with Marx's ontology, according to Roy, is that Marx sees man only as 'economic man' and not as 'thinking man'. Roy explains what he means,

"The 'economic man', whose appearance coincides with the production of his means of subsistence, may be nothing more than the ensemble of social relations. But the human species has a much older history, which vanishes in the background of the process of subhuman biological evolution. Marx entirely ignored that entire process of becoming of man before he entered into social relations. Consequently, Marx knows nothing of the human nature which underlies the ensemble of social relations, which induces men to enter into those relations." (Emphasis ours).

For Roy, human nature is a product of biological evolution and there is a continuity throughout the whole process of evolution. Therefore, Roy is of the opinion that human nature is stable and constant. Without such a stable human nature man, according to Roy, could not have been differentiated from animals. Roy argues,

"That substratum of human nature is stable; otherwise the world of men could not be differentiated from the world of animals ruled by the laws of the jungle. That rockbottom of human nature antedates the economic and political organisation of society. The origin, of mind is there. In that sense, mental activities are determined in the earlier stages by physical existence and thereafter by social conditions. But the becoming of man involves the parallel process of mental and physical activities. The relation between the two is not of causality, but of priority. From primitive consciousness, mind evolves in the context of a biological organism; the latter being an organisation of matter, the priority of being must be conceded to matter." (Emphasis ours).
Further, Roy holds that since Marx did not carry the analysis of mental phenomena beyond social history, his understanding of human nature is wrong, and therefore, "his materialism is dogmatic, unscientific, ...." Roy holds that Marx did not give priority to matter (by which Roy implies nature) and therefore, Marx's ontology is incorrect.

Let us examine Roy's objections to Marx's ontological argument.

In Marx's ontology, man is a natural being who is a part of nature and yet different from it. Marx writes,

"Man is directly a natural being. As a natural being and as a living natural being he is on the one hand furnished with natural powers of life -- he is an active natural being. These forces exist in him as tendencies and abilities -- as impulses. On the other hand, as a natural, corporeal, sensuous, objective being he is a suffering, conditioned and limited creature, like animals and plants. That is to say, the objects of his impulses exist outside him, as objects independent of him; yet these objects are objects of his need -- essential objects, indispensable to the manifestation and confirmation of his essential powers."

Thus, for Marx, man is a natural being with certain powers and needs. What exactly these terms connote for Marx is explained very lucidly by the noted scholar Bertell Ollman,

"For each natural power that he possesses man feels 'impulses' (needs) to realise it; and he carries 'tendencies' which direct this realisation towards particular goals. Taking eating as a natural power, man's impulses which drive him to eat are clear enough: he is hungry. The abilities which enable him to eat include all that he does when eating. The tendencies which direct him towards satisfactory objects are his taste and his general knowledge as to what is edible and what is not...."

The satisfaction of these needs, not only requires powers
to do so, it also necessitates certain objects which are external to him. For Marx, every natural being has its nature outside itself. This means that the nature of any natural being is not some mysterious hidden 'essence', i.e. rationality, as Roy argues, but something that defines itself as the necessary relation of the objective being to its objects. This is the necessary mode of existence of all natural beings including man, and is not specific to man alone. What then differentiates man from other natural beings in Marx's conception?

And here arises the basic difference between Roy's argument and that of Marx. What makes man a specific part of nature, i.e. human, is that he is a "being for himself". What Marx means by this is explicitly put forth by Bertell Ollman,

"By describing man as a being 'for himself', Marx is referring to man's self-consciousness, to his awareness of himself as an individual, active in pursuing his own ends. This is how he confirms himself through knowing."

Man confirms and manifests himself in his being in two ways, both of which are sensuous activities. One, by looking, hearing, smelling, feeling, tasting humanly, i.e. specifically, and secondly, by manifesting himself as a "species-being" through the activity of a kind, of a quality and pace which only he can. This is industry or creation through labour.

Thus, both in his being and knowing, man is different from other natural beings. Man's recognising himself and others as specific beings is a human achievement. This Marx calls a 'conscious self-transcending act of coming-to-be, where nature transcends itself, or mediates with
itself and becomes man, though remaining even in this process of self-transcendence a natural being. Thus in Marx's ontology, the specificity of humanness is derived from man's history, which to him is known history. This begins with man's 'coming-to-be' or the act of 'self-transcendence'. Thus, self-consciousness as the essential feature of human beings does not, however, mean that self-consciousness is opposed to the world of facts. It is not a state of estrangement that self-consciousness is derived from, but from a real sensuous world of man in his relation with nature. Therefore, to posit an abstract form of man, as Roy does, leads him away from a realistic materialist ontology and philosophy of history. Meszaros has rightly pointed out that the objectivity of such claims that start with the abstract man is false objectivity for it deprives itself of real objects.\[^{31}\]

Without the transformation of biological needs into human ones, art and morality would be unknown to man. For they are possible only because man is the creator of his human appetites or needs. Morality and art are concerned with human appetites or needs and not with the direct and unalterable determination of the natural being. In the absence of a human history, there would be no art or morality. Therefore, human nature is derived from history and is not something inherent in nature. In Marx's words, "The nature which comes to be in human history -- the genesis of human society -- is man's real nature; hence nature as it comes to be through industry even though in an estranged form, is true anthropological nature."\[^{31(a)}\]
Roy's Objections To Marx's Ethical Theory

The third fundamental objection that Roy raises is regarding Marx's ethical position. Roy's questioning is directed at finding out why Marxism, as he sees it, lacks an ethical theory. Roy's motivation in conducting this inquiry is to provide an answer to what he regards as already pointed out earlier, the moral crisis facing the world. The genesis of this crisis lies in false moral and ontological theories. And Marxism, to Roy is one of them. Logically then, Roy's attempts are directed towards constructing an alternate moral theory to tackle this moral crisis.

Roy's inquiry was directed towards the following questions:

(1) where are values derived from, or what is the legitimating source of morality? (2) are values permanent or are they relative and temporary?

According to Roy, the basic problem with Marx's ethical argument is related to his incorrect ontology. By denying that there was anything stable in human nature, Marx had, according to Roy, negated morality itself. Roy argues,

"....the negation of a constant element in human nature leads to the negation of morality. Without the recognition of some permanent values, no ethics is possible. If they are not to be
found in human nature, morality must have a transcendent sanction. The choice of Marxian Materialism, therefore, was between the negation of abiding moral values and relapse into religion. Theoretically, it chose the first, although in practice dogmatism eventually also put on its stamp of religious fanaticism.

Thus, Roy links the lack of an ethical theory in Marx to Marx's incorrect ontology. The denial of anything stable, innate, inherent in man, creates a relativist ethical theory which ultimately, Roy argues, is moral nihilism.

Since Marx does not locate anything stable and permanent in man as the basis of morality, Roy argues, he necessarily locates it in social reality -- history. And this, according to Roy, leads to a relativistic ethical theory. Roy attributes this relativism to the negative influence of Hegel. In New Humanism Roy argues,

"While the ethical relativism of the Utilitarians was rational, Marxian relativism, notwithstanding its appearance, is dogmatic, being a projection in the future of the Hegelian and moral positivism. In order to establish the dictum that might is right, Hegel rationalised immorality. His positivist ethical doctrine that there is no moral standard, but that what exists is rational and therefore good is moral nihilism. There is no difference between the Hegelian positivist doctrine of morality and Marxist relativism in that respect..." 

Thus, Roy argues that Hegelian positivist ethics justifies what there is, for what is real is rational, and the Marxist relativistic ethics justifies the reality to come on the basis of what exists. The future that Marx predicted, Roy argues, becomes the present justifiable, as was seen in the Soviet Union, and therefore, the Marxist attitude to moral questions
had become positivist.

Roy argues that Marx was a humanist, was moral, and believed in individual freedom. However, according to Roy, this humanist, moral, libertarian spirit of Marx had been vitiated by his materialist interpretation of history, which Roy refers to as 'economic determinism'. It is only when this 'economic determinism' is rejected that Marx's true humanist libertarian and moral spirit can be saved.34

The need for an ethical theory, it might be argued, arose for Roy because of his own experience as a member of the Communist International. By 1928, Roy was expelled from the International on grounds of being a reactionary and revisionist. According to him, this was totally unjustified and unethical. In his last letter to Stalin, Roy wrote, "I cannot reconcile myself to the idea that decency, loyalty and honesty should have no place in the catalogue of Bolshevik virtues."35 Roy could not comprehend why he, who had been loyal and honest, should have been expelled from the Communist International. According to him, his only crime was that he thought independently and had expressed views which were different from the official line of the Communist International.

With the rise of Stalin, and his large scale purges, trials and executions of his own politbureau colleagues, many Marxists began
to question the authority that sanctioned such excesses. They raised
the question as to whether it was morally right to carry out these
operations under the name of the revolution. The justification of all
these excesses as being revolutionary was, therefore, seriously question­
ed. A sense of moral nihilism prevailed. Roy too experienced it and
deduced the lack of morality as arising from the theoretical weakness
of Marxism. For Marx had not, Roy argued, elaborated an ethical
theory in his total system. As a consequence, the communists conducted
themselves according to the principle that the end justified the means.
Related to this was the issue of capture of power as the main object
of political practice. Roy argued,

"...so long as power remains the object of political practice,
it cannot be handicapped by irrelevant scruples, it must be
guided by the dictum that the end justifies the means."36

Therefore, Roy held that the communist political practice, which
was primarily concerned with the capture of state power, could not
but avoid unscrupulous political practice.

For morality to be restored to public life, Roy argued, a politi-
cal theory must be formulated which does not make capture of power
the precondition for any necessary social change. That is what Roy
set out to do in the formulation of Radical Humanism.37

Roy's objections to Marx's ethical argument are related to
his ontological theory, which we have just discussed. Roy's belief
that a stable factor, (which for him is reason) can be the panacea for all immorality, is rather simplistic. It is true that Marx did not elaborate an ethical theory in the traditional sense, but since Marx's whole paradigm is different, it is unfair to hold that he had no ethical concerns. Marx does not conceive morality, ethics as some abstract principles and values outside man's material processes. Ollman explains Marx's ethical position, "....the real judgements which are made in any situation are a function of that situation and the particular individuals active in it. Thus, the very notion that it is logically permissible to take any attitude towards a given 'fact' is itself a judgement inherent in the circumstances out of which it emerges. Rather than being logically independent of what is, any choice -- as well as the idea that one has a choice -- is linked by innumerable threads to the real world, including the life, class interests, and character of the person acting. Judgements can never be severed, neither practically nor logically, from their contexts and the number of real alternatives which they allow ...."37(a)

In the now well recognised work of Eugene Kamenka, *Marxism and Ethics*, Kamenka though critical of Marx's position recognises the contribution of Marx in the area of ethical theory. Kamenka is of the opinion that Marx's ethical arguments have improved the understanding of moral problems even in non-Marxist ethical theories. He argues that the materialist interpretation of history with its emphasis
on historical change, class conflicts, has helped to lay the foundations of a pluralist ethics. It has assisted in elaborating a more realist approach to ethics, by showing that conflicting ethics and moralities exist, for different sections of society, both individual and social.38

**Idealism**

The second fallacious theory which Roy addresses himself to, is Idealism. For Roy, Idealism is synonymous with religion and superstition. It becomes necessary for him to demolish these theories in order to establish his own materialism, which was trying to prove that reason was an ontological fact of nature. If matter itself is denied, how could he then establish reason as an ontological reality? Therefore, Roy argues for a Monist Materialism.

According to Roy, the task of philosophy is to explain 'truth', and 'truth' for him, is the knowledge of the natural, physical phenomenon. Due to the paucity of knowledge of the natural processes, or truth, philosophy had deviated into metaphysics and theology, or Idealism. This was Roy's contention.

The key problems, within Idealism, according to Roy, were that: (1) It gives precedence to spirit over matter, and therefore, leads to a false ontology; (2) it places faith against reason, and consequently,
denies man freedom.

According to Roy, "Idealism places spirit before matter, thought before being, mind before body. It is the anti-thesis of materialism." Idealism believes, Roy argues, that there exists a world of spirit and ideas in themselves, and that this world is the real world which manifests itself in the phenomenal world. Therefore, the body is only a manifestation of that spirit. The basis of this fallacious theory, according to Roy, is ignorance of the truth, i.e., the natural phenomenon.

Roy proceeds to explain why ignorance prevails. According to him, the limited growth of science (which is the method of arriving at truth) prevented man from knowing more about the natural processes. It was the paucity of this knowledge of the 'truth' that had allowed philosophy to deviate into metaphysics and religion.

Thus, the major fallacy of Idealism, according to Roy, lay in its conviction that spirit precedes matter. This led to the belief in supernatural powers, and such a belief, Roy argues, undermines man's faith in himself. Man's urge for freedom and his spirit of enquiry, which Roy believes are innate in man, get submerged by faith. For freedom, according to Roy, is freedom from the control of nature, which can be arrived at only through truth, or in other words, through
the knowledge of nature. Man is denied freedom and dignity; he is instead sacrificed at the altar of religion and faith.

Roy goes further and informs us that Idealist theories have existed all over the world. Idealism continues to exist, even in the West, right up to the present day, though now in hidden forms. Roy holds that Idealism in the West, however, had been defeated rather successfully, and this had been brought about by the developments in science. Roy believes, in the tradition of thinkers of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, that science is liberating. It is liberating for it dispels ignorance and superstition. As science advances, man's knowledge of the natural phenomena increases, and man is able to control the forces of nature, to free himself from their control. So, though Idealism may still exist in some covert ways in the West, Roy believes that it is Materialism as a philosophy that dominates. And this, he asserts, is clear from the advances made by the Western countries in technology and science.

In India however, Roy argues, Idealist theories, religion and superstition still prevail. In the early years of Indian civilisation there did exist some materialist schools, like those of Charvaka and Sankhya. However, due to the lack of knowledge and the stagnancy of science, the Idealist schools of the Brahmin's could easily dislodge them. As a result, all progress of science was stunted and India remained backward
and in bondage.

According to Roy, though great advances had been made in the West, the inability of science to provide certain answers has proved to be a stumbling block in the path of freedom. Roy writes,

"...in modern times also, the inability of science to explain fully all the phenomena of nature, particularly the so called vital and mental ones, kept religious atavism alive to confuse philosophical thought and thus impede man's march towards spiritual liberation."

An additional factor which keeps Idealism alive, is the inability of modern science to utilise knowledge acquired by the different sciences, especially biology, psychology and physics in constructing a correct philosophical theory. Roy argues that the 'mental make-up' and the 'moral tone' of man have not kept pace with the growing knowledge of the phenomenal world and, "That is the root cause of the crisis of our times."^41(a)

We may note here one of the reasons (which is external to the theoretical compulsions) which provoked Roy into carrying out his crusade against religion and superstition, was his encounter with Gandhi and Gandhism. While Roy was out of India, his analysis of the Indian situation and his hope in the proletarian revolution was based on the reports sent in by his contacts in India. On his return to India, he realised that the situation was vastly different. Not only was the proletariat small in numbers, but ideologically too it was
still backward, held under the sway of religion. The faith of the masses in the Gods, prevented them from plunging into the much desired revolution. Gandhi, who had taken the country by storm, utilised this religious sentiment of the masses to organise them under the leadership of the Congress. In a scathing article on Gandhi, Roy argues that it was not Gandhi who had created the superstitious masses, it was the masses who created a Gandhi. They hailed him as their leader for he spoke a language they understood.

Elaborating on what Gandhism is, Roy writes,

"....what are the basic premises of Gandhian ideology ? The fundamental postulate is the religious view of human destiny. In this view, man, with the rest of the world, is a creation of God, his fulfilment lies in obeying the will of the creator......the deductions that follow from this postulate are obviously anti-humanist. Man's destiny being obedience to divine will, the urge of freedom......can only be either an illusion or a source of evil. The pursuit of individual development also ceases to have any meaning since the goal is self-abnegation. Besides, God being beyond the comprehension of human intelligence, the exercise of reason is but a presumption; wisdom lies in submission and prayer....""

The other fundamental postulate of Gandhism that denies man freedom, according to Roy, is asceticism. This is a masochistic ethics, says Roy, and is in direct opposition to the entire tradition of humanist morality. According to asceticism, mortification of the self is the condition of virtue and ultimately of moksha. Logically, for Roy, such an ideology is anti-humanist. Gandhi's political techniques of
ahimsa and Satyagraha were distorted forms of self-mortification, for they shamed the opponent into submission out of sheer compulsion to ease the pain being caused to the satyagrahi, even though he may not be convinced of the truth.

Thus, Roy was clear as to why he opposed Gandhi and Gandhism. Gandhism was an active form of Idealism and had to be opposed, therefore, tooth and nail for attaining freedom.

Roy's objections to Idealism are rather simplistic. To reduce Idealism to religion and mysticism is a gross error. The Idealism of Plato, Hegel, Kant, T.H. Green or Gandhi cannot be equated with Christianity or Hinduism. Roy's argument, that Idealism has been successfully defeated in the West because of the rise of science, is also a rather naive understanding of the historical and social process. The defeat of Idealism, by which he implies religion, in Europe, was possible not because of the rise of science alone. The power and authority of the Church was slowly undermined by the rise of secular powers -- the Princes of several states, the new trading class and the merchants. It was a combination of several factors -- material and ideal -- that brought about the defeat of the Church and loosening of the hold of religion. The complexity of the Renaissance period seems to be glossed over by Roy; consequently, a simplification results.
Roy's objections to the Idealist ontology, which holds that the real is the ideal, is in keeping with a realist materialist point of view. And we are in agreement with him on this point.

**Liberalism**

Roy does not have any fundamental theoretical differences with Liberalism, for his own theory of Radical Humanism belongs to a philosophical tradition of which Liberalism was an outcome. And this, basically, was the mechanical materialism of the Enlightenment. Roy's objections are more in the nature of footnotes to the same.

According to Roy, Liberalism was deficient for it lacked a sound moral theory, because it could not provide a scientific basis to reason. Secondly, the practice of Liberalism negated the philosophical principles of individualism. Roy states the basic problem of Liberalism thus, "....it placed reason in man, but conceived it not as a part of his biological being, but as a function of something transcenden-tal...."44

Hobbes, according to Roy, was the real revolutionary founder of Liberalism. His greatness lay in the fact that he was able to give a secular sanction to civic authority and thereby do away with the divine right of kings; that his philosophy embraced the entire universe
which was explained in terms of geometry and mechanics. Psychology and physiology were understood and demonstrated as biological processes in the context of mechanistic cosmology. Society too was explained as a complex body of atoms, governed by natural law. Hobbes' essential contribution and source of greatness lay in his conception that,

"The entire scheme of the Universe, including man with his body, mind and soul, was self-contained, and therefore independent of any outside influence, control or guidance. The great revolt of man against spiritual slavery reached the climax in Hobbes' philosophy; as the charter of human freedom, it laid down the foundation of Liberalism and Democracy."

The only shortcoming of Hobbes' philosophy, according to Roy, was that Hobbes' conception of reason, which was biological, i.e. born of an urge for self-preservation, was then still a hypothesis and not founded on scientific grounds. That was because of inadequate knowledge of the laws of nature and man.

Locke, who was Hobbes' successor, and who is generally looked on as the father of Liberalism had, according to Roy, a similar deficiency in his theory. His conception of reason was ambiguous. By equating the law of nature with the law of God, he allowed faith to creep into his otherwise rational philosophy. Roy states Locke's problem thus,

"...unable to find an alternative sanction for morality, Locke fell back upon religion: only a common religion could provide a generally accepted standard of moral behaviour. And what
is the essence of religion? Faith in something supernatural, beyond the reach of human understanding. Locke's Liberalism made room for faith at the cost of reason."

And thus, Roy argues, Liberalism moved away from its original ground of Humanism. This was primarily due to its inability to use scientific knowledge to form a secular morality. The problem continued into the 19th century. Locke's conception of reason was ambiguous neither did it retain reason in its classical metaphysical sense, nor as a biological function (such as the urge for self-preservation as in Hobbes). Reason was common sense based on experience. The utility principle of 19th century Liberalism, which came to be known as Utilitarianism or Philosophical Radicalism, was deduced from this ambiguous concept of Locke's. The Utilitarians rejected the doctrine of natural law which was the basis of democratic Liberalism and thereby drifted away from original Liberalism.⁴⁷

The fundamental fallacy of Utilitarian ethics, according to Roy, was the conflict between social and personal ethics. As Roy puts it, "(...conflict) between the proposition that men do, and ought to, pursue their own happiness, and proposition that they ought to pursue the greatest happiness of the greatest number."⁴⁸

Roy identifies another problem with Utilitarianism. It substituted the humanist principle which held each man to be rational and
a maker of his destiny with the humanitarian approach. According to the humanitarian approach, reason is advocated through legislators and magistrates. This sort of belief in reform from above was another way of calling for benevolent despots. Thus, according to Roy, 19th century Liberalism proclaimed its faith in individualism but actually drifted toward collectivism. It had also rejected the natural law, which was the basis of natural rights, the foundation of individual freedom and democracy. And then, Roy believes, Liberalism "committed suicide."  

So, to sum up Roy's criticism, Liberalism declined after reaching its high-water mark in the 18th century due to the fact that its secularism did not go far enough; that it was anti-clerical but not irreligious; that its humanism was not naturalist in the scientific sense, but inclined towards natural religion; that its rationalism was still partly metaphysical. Further, Liberalism placed reason in man, not as a biological property, but as a function of something transcendental. And finally, its ethics was not secular enough, in fact, it relapsed into religion.  

In practice the freedom of the individual, which is the central value of Liberalism, is totally negated. This is primarily due to the economic doctrine of laissezfaire, which was justified by the individualistic philosophy by placing man in the "helpless position in the wilder-
ness of cut-throat competition.\textsuperscript{51} The political and social practice of Liberalism expressed in the form of parliamentary democracy was also totally incapable of protecting the freedom and liberty of the individual. In fact, democracy cannot really control government, especially in the period between elections. It is a formal parliamentarism which cannot give a real democracy. Fascism could grow, Roy argues, because of the failure of parliamentary democracy. Liberalism then, was discredited even in practice.

Thus, the development of Liberalism in Britain ended up in a host of compromises. But Liberalism, as developed on the continent by Condillac, Cabanis and finally Holbach, acquired "the fundamental principles of Liberalism and democratic practice....\textsuperscript{52} The Liberalism of these thinkers was based on scientific naturalism and mechanistic psychology and physics. And this is what Roy considers to be the true foundation of his theory of Radical Humanism.

Roy believed that a revival of the humanist tradition which had its roots in the Renaissance and flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries, could provide an answer to the moral crisis which he had identified. For it was, "The eclipse of the humanist tradition that is the cause of this degeneration and decay....\textsuperscript{53} In his theory of Radical Humanism, Roy strives to deal with this problem. He places the individual (with his innate reason) at the centre of his system; society
comes later. This sequence, according to Roy, would revive the humanist tradition and put man in his rightful position as the highest/supreme being of nature.

**Scientific Theories And Their Philosophical Implications**

Another factor which Roy tries to deal with is the scepticism about materialism, and therefore, about matter, which was created by the new scientific theories of physics -- Quantum Mechanics and the mathematical physics of Maxwell and Hertz. Roy felt the need to counter the arguments of these theories because they were, in effect, denying the truth-value which science had acquired since the Renaissance. And Roy's theory claimed its legitimation on the basis of science. Therefore, Roy is compelled to defend the truth-value of science. For Roy, the implications of these theories in the area of philosophy were devastating. They had led to growing doubt and confusion about the plausibility of materialism, indeed to a "conclusive refutation" of it.

According to Roy, the abstract equations of Mathematics are not mere symbols, they are convenient methods of dealing with objective reality. "In reality, mathematics is an instrument of experimental science...."54
Quantum Mechanics also did not deny physical reality. As Roy writes,

"What, after all, did the famous 'crisis' of physical theories really mean? In the last analysis, it involved the conception of matter; it did not affect the existence of matter as such. The controversy centered upon the nature of matter, the existence of which itself, in some form or other, was not contested by any scientist of authority...."

Thus, Roy argues that only the conception of matter had changed from atom to energy; it did not mean negation of matter. "Matter survived the crisis." Therefore, the idealist philosophers who were jubilant at the refutation of materialism were mistaken, according to Roy.

Another supposed consequence of these new physical theories was the denial of mechanics, and thereby, of mass. Refuting the argument, Roy writes,

"So, the electron is not a mysterious entity. It does not destroy the conception of mass. It has a mass itself. Energy is not an immaterial entity. It is a form of matter. The new theories do not destroy the mechanistic conception of the Universe. They do not visualise motion without matter...."

The other new theory of physics which led to scepticism about matter was Einstein's theory of Relativity. Instead of denying matter, Roy argues, Relativity had only confirmed it. It had also changed the common sense conception of matter. A piece of matter was no
longer a persistent thing with varying states, but a series of inter-related events.\(^\text{57}\) The conclusion of the Theory of Relativity that nothing is permanent, that nothing endures, only corroborates the earlier materialistic view of Heraclitus and others. The conception of time, says Roy, is inseparably associated with the idea of evolution. "The space-time conception of the Theory of Relativity is yet another step in advance towards a materialist monism."\(^\text{58}\)

In refuting these prejudices generated by the so-called 'crisis of physical theories', Roy was hammering out a Materialist Monistic theory -- *that matter was not merely a conception, that it was an ontological reality*. Science had proved this beyond any doubt, Roy argues, and problems raised by the new physics were only epistemological and not ontological.\(^\text{59}\) Therefore, Roy chose to call materialist philosophy with a more appropriate name -- Physical Realism.

**Summing Up**

We have examined the various philosophical systems and political theories which Roy was trying to transcend. We have also noted Roy's theoretical compulsions in taking up cudgels with these three philosophies -- Marxism, Idealism, and Liberalism. Further, we have elucidated the need which Roy felt to disprove the claims of the new scientific theories which seemed to deny the ontological reality
of matter. Such scepticism would undermine the very claim of Roy's theory of Radical Humanism, which stated that reason is an ontological reality.

Having located the problems that Roy was trying to transcend, we can now proceed to elaborate and examine Roy's own theoretical formulation.

SECTION II

**Reason In Roy's Philosophical System**

Man is a rational being, and therefore, he is a moral being. To put it differently, man is a moral entity by the very fact of his being a rational being. This is the basic premise on which rests Roy's entire argument.

Let us first investigate Roy's definition and meaning of reason. Reason, according to Roy, is the simple, causal relation between things, which maintains a harmonious order in the physical world. The physical world is "law-governed". It is a self-regulating, harmonious, causal and determined process. The Universe maintains and perpetuates itself by its own laws of causation. There is no external factor of causation, it is a mechanical process in nature. And in man, "reason......is the
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Thus, rationality is innate in man, and is the expression of reason in nature. Physical determinism or causality, which Roy calls reason, is also manifest in man, for man is a part of nature. Writing about rationality during his jail years, Roy says,

"Rationality is the mental reflex of physical causality ...... Causality is reason in nature. If nature were irrational, that is to say, if causality were not an objective reality, an ontological category, rationalist thought would be impossible. Intelligence is a biological function, and as such, is a part of physical nature. Reason is born of intelligence. It is the consciousness of causality in nature."

Thus, for Roy, reason is the simple instinctive notion that every human being possesses -- that every object, every occurrence, every phenomena, in fact everything, is a result of some cause. This would be true of all things even though they may not be directly experienced. However, because of the belief in the connection which holds the world of experience together, their existence is taken for granted. Here, Roy makes it clear that belief is to be defined as a conviction regarding matters of fact or reality and not imagination or fiction.

Let us now proceed to unfold his ontological argument. Roy's motivation in formulating a new theoretical system, as already stated in the beginning of this chapter, is moral and ethical. Though this may be so, we shall discover that there is no separate moral theory that
Roy has to offer. It conflates with his ontology. What emerges is an uneasy amalgam of ontology and moral theory.

**Ontological Argument**

Roy's ontological argument is naturalist, basically a biologistic one. Man, he argues, is a creature of nature, who has evolved through a long process of biological evolution. Man being a natural creature, there is no difference between him and the natural world. He is composed of the same components as the inanimate world of nature. As Roy states,

"There is no difference between the organic and inorganic matter. All living bodies are formed out of such chemical elements as carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, sulphur, potassium, sodium, etc."\(^6\)

Since life or animate things grow out of the inanimate, there is a causal connection between the two. The physical universe is a law-governed system, living nature grows out of it; and therefore, Roy argues that "...it logically follows that the processes of organic evolution are also determined. Empirical knowledge, which culminated in the discoveries of Darwin and Wallace, corroborated this logical hypothesis."\(^6\)

So, first of all, Roy does away with the age-old difference between animate and inanimate. The discoveries of chemistry, physics
and biology enabled, in his opinion, this hiatus to be resolved. By
doing away with this difference, Roy also does away with another
difference -- that of subject-object. To him both are identical -- as
matter. Roy clearly states this,

"Modern psychology has eliminated the distinction between
the subject and the object. By doing so, it has solved the
old problem of perception, and freed philosophy from the
vicious circle of epistemology."

Roy's biologistic evolutionary ontology not only identifies
organic with inorganic matter, and subject with object, it also argues
that "humanness" antedates the origin of species. According to him,

"...just as life is the red thread running through the whole
process of biological evolution, similarly, there is a residue
of "humanness" underlying the flux of the process even before it
has gone beyond the border-land where the primitive man
is still not fully differentiated from his animal ancestry. The
origin of humanness, therefore, antedates the origin of species.
That is a logical corollary to the doctrine of descent." (Emphasis ours).

Next, Roy goes on to show what he regards as the only difference
between man and other natural beings. According to him,

"Conceptual thought distinguishes the mind of the savage
from that of the anthropoid ape. But let it be repeated, that
even then there is little anatomical or morphological difference.
Conceptual thought depends on language. So, it can be said
that man is fully differentiated from his animal ancestry
only when he coins words for expressing definite ideas. But
from this it does not follow that memory, some very primitive
ability of associating things and events, and the habit of express-
ing emotions through behaviour, are altogether absent in lower
animals."

So, although animals also possessed a memory, man's brain being far
more developed, man can coin words, whereas animals merely retain
the association of things.
Thus, language for Roy, "....develops to serve the purpose of co-ordinating disjointed ideas and emotions." Words originate in the course of biological evolution, and therefore, the history of philosophy, according to Roy, is closely linked with the history of evolution. Illustrating his notion of reason, Roy traces the development of the idea of causality. To Roy, even very early concepts like predestination, is the belief of everything being a result of or being caused by the will of god, but nevertheless caused.

Roy thus identifies man with nature, and this identification is deduced from the empirical knowledge of nature and man's biological evolution as seen in the physical world or nature. This knowledge, according to Roy, is not derived from logic but is, instead, an empirical fact sanctioned and testified by empirical knowledge. As he says, "....But the present knowledge about man allows the proposition that man is essentially rational" (Emphasis ours). The scientific naturalism of the eighteenth century had, according to Roy, successfully overthrown religion. Cabanis and De la Mettrie, both biologists, had shown how man was a machine like any other animal. These scientists had, by overthrowing Descartes' division between mind and matter, "....brought reason down to the earth as a function of higher biological organisms." Cabanis shows how the mind was not some supernatural thing, but a part of the body of man, functioning through external stimulus. This revealed how the earlier Cartesian belief was totally wrong.
Nineteenth century science had advanced even further, according to Roy, yielding more and more answers to more and more queries of man. Lamarck had demonstrated that life is a physical phenomena, that all phenomena of life depend on mechanical, physical and chemical causes.

Modern philosophy had been reinforced, Roy argues, by biological and psychological theories born out of the enquiries of Erasmus Darwin, de Tracy, Hartley, Cabanis (in the 18th century) and by Lamarck, Darwin and others (in the 19th century). The claims of these theories were based not on mere abstractions, but on the empirical proof of biological evolution. This new knowledge about human beings, their origin and nature had falsified, Roy holds, all earlier theories of creation or of genesis which attributed divinity as causa generis. At the same time, this knowledge now sanctioned and testified the 'belief' which had been prevalent throughout history -- that man is a rational being. Belief had now become fact: the empirical knowledge which, for Roy, is the ultimate criteria of truth and is, therefore, well-armed to face the onslaught of any scepticism.

Roy's Moral Argument

Having defined rationality in nature as causality, and rationality in man as the faculty of discerning causality (which is a biological property), Roy goes on to show how man is moral because he is rational.
At this juncture it is important to note that Roy describes the natural world not only as a law-governed causal process, he attributes this law-governed system with a *moral character*. For he says, "The Universe is a *moral order* governed by laws inherent in itself. Man grows out of that background." ¹² (Emphasis ours). Since man is a part of this moral order, he is naturally, i.e. constitutively moral, in other words, rational. From the simple definition of reason as knowledge of causality in man, we find that Roy attributes to it a moral connotation; reason-causality becomes rationality, which is a moral substance. Reason, Roy argues, is not a mystical faculty of the mind which evaluates or discerns right and wrong. Instead, it is a biological function, an appeal to conscience. And conscience, in Roy's opinion, is not what it is traditionally conceived to be. Roy does not differentiate between conscience and consciousness; conscience is simply a biological function which results from rationality. ¹²(a) In Roy's own words,

"Consciousness is the property of life in the zoological world. It means to be aware of the environments. Simple awareness is presently supplemented by reactions to the things of which the organism becomes aware. From that stage of biological evolution, there begins the growth of the nervous system to serve as the means of inter-relations between the organism and its environment. The growth culminates in the formation of the brain which, physiologically, is called the mind. So mind is the highest expression of the property of life called consciousness, and thought, that of reaction to simple awareness. The mind becomes conscious of the environments, the radius of which gradually expands until the entire nature is embraced. It being consciousness of a law-governed system, human mind is necessarily rational in essence." ¹³

Therefore, conscience is a purely physical function of man. Roy goes on to state how man's ideas, his values, his ethics and his will are also physically determined.
As he says,

"Man did not appear on the earth out of nowhere with his mind, intelligence, will, he is an integral part of the physical Universe....Therefore, man's being and becoming, his emotions, will ideas are also determined...." (Emphasis ours).

And further, "all ethical values are derived from the biological heritage of man...." (Emphasis ours). Accordingly for Roy, "All metaphysical concepts and ethical values, conceived and created by homo sapiens, are physically determined; the psyche is a daughter of the Mother Earth."

Man as a creature of nature emerged through a struggle for survival against all odds and vagaries of nature. This struggle for survival was born out of a biological urge which all natural creatures possess. Self-preservation is the common natural instinct of all natural creatures. In man, however, Roy argues, this biological urge for survival becomes purposive and this purposiveness is the only distinguishing mark between animals and man. Reflecting on this Roy writes,

"On the human level, the biological struggle for existence and survival is no longer carried on through mechanical adaptation. It consists in purposive efforts for the conquest of nature. Purposiveness differentiates man from his immediate ancestors...." (Emphasis ours).

Thus, what differentiates man from other animals is his purposiveness which, Roy clearly states, is conquering nature. 'Purposiveness' holds no other connotation for Roy. His concept of purposiveness, therefore, implies man's gaining more and more control over nature, discovering the processes of nature, or to put it as Roy does, man's understanding the 'rationality' or 'causality' of nature. With the development of technology and science, man puts it to use to claim more and more freedom from nature itself. Roy states that man's purposive activity
is directed towards more than merely controlling nature,

"The purpose of the civilised man's life is to acquire control of the forces of nature in order to check the blind evolutionary urge, to tame the animal in man and to promote the development of humanness. Ethical values are created in the process. That is how ethics is related to science and the relation is not accidental but casual." (Emphasis ours).

This (purposive activity of man) is what leads man to freedom, in fact, it is freedom. Roy argues,

"Man's struggle for freedom is a continuation of the biological struggle for survival on a higher level. Therefore, freedom must be defined as a progressive disappearance of the manyfold impediments to the unfolding of the potentialities inherent in man" (Emphasis ours).

Thus, man is totally free, for Roy, when he is able to create space for himself in nature and control nature through his knowledge of it.

Not only does this purposive activity of controlling nature define Roy's concept of freedom, it represents for him man's search for truth. "Truth", Roy says, "is correspondence with objective reality." Thus, truth is the recording of facts of the natural world. It is man's ever expanding knowledge of the natural phenomena. Therefore,

"....expanding knowledge of nature increases man's power to conquer nature. Truth being the content of knowledge, its relation with man's quest for freedom is again evident." Truth, for Roy, has no metaphysical or moral connotations as it does in traditional philosophy. It simply and clearly means for him knowledge of the natural world. Therefore, truth and freedom are very intimately linked in Roy's theory.
Having argued that rationality is an ontological reality, innate in man, Roy believes he has solved the moral and ethical problem which he had identified within Idealism, Marxism and the Liberal philosophy. With this perspective, according to him, "Moral values are placed on a firm foundation when they are referred back to the innate rationality of man. They need no other sanction than conscience which is not the voice of God, but results from rationality. The discovery of the physical basis of reason and the rationalist-secular sanction of morality frees Humanism from the mystic connotation traditionally associated with it." (Emphasis ours).

Thus,

"...we can have objective standards of morality....The understanding of the essence of man, the discovery of the fact that man is essentially rational, solves the problem." (Emphasis ours).

Not only does Roy assert that man is a rational being, he goes on to emphasize that man is essentially good. Roy states, "....an unprejudiced study of history reveals that the desire to be helpful to fellow men is a more fundamental human trait than competition and conflict." (Emphasis ours). Explaining the origins of morality, Roy argues that one learns to co-relate between cause and effect from one's own experience,

"One knows from experience what is good for him and what is bad for him. Therefrom, he generalises that what is good for him is good for all like himself, and what is bad for him is also bad for all. That is the origin of morality."

To illustrate this, Roy explains how the early savage who had no concept of God, had a strong sense of good and bad. With him, it was instinctive, innate, prompted by his reason and not by some inner voice or God.
To conclude then, for Roy, the most important and fundamental questions regarding his moral quest were: What is the foundation or sanction of ethics? Can man be moral without any external sanction like religion?

By ontologising reason, by making man constitutively moral, Roy assumed he had solved the problem. All ethical values are derived from the biology of man; hence to be moral, man has only to be human. Roy concludes his moral argument thus,

"To be moral, one needs only be human; it is not necessary to go in search of divine or mystic metaphysical sanction. Humanist morality is evolutionary."

Some Observations On Roy's Ontological And Moral Argument

We perceive several problems with Roy's moral argument. First of all, let us consider his definition of reason. Reason, according to Roy, is causality, but how this causality becomes morality is never proved. Roy simply asserts that reason, i.e. causality, is an ontological reality of nature; man being a part of it, reason is constitutively ingrained in man, and therefore, man is naturally moral. Causality, which is the knowledge of cause and effect, becomes morality in man. Roy has never tried to explain how reason becomes morality, he simply asserts it. As assertion cannot become an explanation. We are, therefore, unable to understand or appreciate how man is moral merely because he possesses the knowledge of causality.
A.B. Shah in a brilliantly and succinctly argued article has pointed some of the problems in Roy's argument. Shah argues that Roy's deduction of rationality in man, on the basis of reason in nature, does not hold.

Shah maintains that Roy's attempts to derive the moral impulse from reason suffer from a major weakness. Shah writes,

"To assert that conscience is a biological function, even if on the level of consciousness, means that basically conscience is the same at all stages of conscious life, especially in all members of a species that has reached a given level of consciousness....According to the thesis in question, it would therefore follow that all human beings regardless of the stage of their cultural development -- primitive ancient, medieval, modern, in the East or the West -- share the same conception of morality. As a matter of fact, this is not true. Secondly, even granting the first part of the thesis so that conscience is characterised as a mechanistic, biological function at the level of consciousness, it does not follow that morality is rational. Nor does it follow that being rational in the sense of R(h), that is the capacity to think causally) implies being moral. (Emphasis ours).

One of the major difficulties in Roy's moral argument is that he has no explanation of evil. In any moral theory, both good and evil must be elucidated. Not only does Roy fail to explain evil, he goes on to assert that man is essentially good. Man's desire to help and co-operate is, according to Roy, more dominant than conflict or competition. In fact, for Roy, man is essentially moral, that is, good. Such an assertion fails to explain the difference between 'ought' and 'is', i.e. the difference between what is attributed as essentially good and what is in reality true.
Since Roy's morality is evolutionary, the struggle for existence is the struggle for freedom. And the struggle for freedom is nothing but the struggle for existence at a higher level. What does Roy mean by this 'higher level'? Does it imply the next stage of the evolutionary process or does it have a moral aspect to it? Is man superior to other animals because he is a moral being? Thus, this 'higher Level' remains unclarified and unexpounded.

B.S. Sharma has rightly pointed out another problem in Roy's moral argument. Sharma observes,

"Again, moral instinct is also made to be identical with an 'urge for freedom' which implies the 'unfolding of human potentialities'. But what he means by 'the unfolding of human potentialities' remains obscure. A potentiality is a capacity to become, or acquire, something in the future. But it is difficult to square this with Roy's general attempt to explain everything in terms of past evolution."

Sharma has correctly identified the problem. We would like to argue further, that Roy's claims are not limited to past evolution alone. Roy holds morality itself to be an ontological fact of nature, past, present and future.

There is still another problem in Roy's theory related to his moral and ontological argument. Roy's contention is that man is moral. At the same time, Roy holds that man is an integral part of nature, that the umbilical cord was never broken. Thus, Roy does not distinguish man from nature. How then can man be moral? For morality is specifically a human need and creation. Man alone possesses the consciousness
by which he makes choices. By exerting his free will, man determines his purpose, his goals, and the ideals that he would pursue. In Roy's argument, first of all, man is not distinguished from nature. Secondly, purposiveness (which, according to Roy, distinguishes man from other natural beings) means the discovery of nature, ultimately to be controlled by man for him to be free. For Roy, purposiveness has no moral connotations, unlike what it is associated with in traditional ethical theories of all kinds. So, if Roy claims man to be moral then he cannot be part of nature, and if he is an inseparable part of nature then he cannot be said to be moral. The problem, therefore, lies with Roy's ontological argument. If everything human has evolved through nature, i.e. morality, history, ideas, what then is specifically human? For, if all these have evolved through the natural evolutionary process, then they must be found in other natural beings too, at least in some forms. In other words, they no longer remain specific to man. A.B. Shah also makes a similar point,

"If the presence of R(n) (causality) implies that of R(h) (morality) in man, other living beings too must be credited with the power of rational thinking...."

Roy's argument that humanness predates the human species, because human beings have come into being through the evolutionary process, is also rather misconceived. How can something which is the specificity of some being, i.e. humanness of human beings, come into existence, before the coming into existence of that being?
There is yet another major problem in Roy's ontological and moral argument. Roy does away with the difference between subject and object. For, according to Roy, this is the solution to the problem of duality which has baffled all philosophers. Therefore, Roy holds that a pure Materialist Monism can be the only true explanation of man's being and becoming. It explains mind and matter, both as matter. Here, Roy seems to be influenced by scientific materialists of the 19th century such as Haeckel, Czolbe and Buchner among others. For, these thinkers had formulated a materialist monism and identified mind with matter.\(^\text{91}\)

Having done away with the difference between subject and object, the question arises whether Roy can then talk of freedom and morality. The concepts become irrelevant and meaningless if there is no subject. M.P. Rege has identified the fallacy in Roy's argument. Roy argues that nature is rational and man is a part of it, and therefore, rational. This position, according to Rege, seems to be an identification of subject-object. Nature, which is rational, rises to self-consciousness in man as conscious reason. A \textit{teleological process seems to be involved here}. Man becomes more and more rational, by knowing nature's rationality more and more.\(^\text{92}\) But the very definition of nature as a constitutive moral order, as done by Roy, leaves no scope for teleology.

Roy attributes to nature a moral character. Nature is a moral
order and man is an inseparable part of it, and therefore, man is moral. Nature, however, is not prescriptive, and it does not have any ethical connotations. It cannot, therefore, answer ethical questions such as, why we ought to act or not to act in a particular way. Roy does two things in his argument: (a) he posits an abstract ideality in nature; (b) he attributes to it a subjectivity, a consciousness. Both these are not in keeping with the scientific claims he makes. In fact, he is responsible here of some kind of mystification, precisely what he accuses others of doing. It is a departure from the empirical method which for Roy is the basis of science. Roy slips into an Idealist position by attributing moral connotations to nature. He has not proved following his own method, how nature has consciousness or subjectivity.

SECTION III

Roy's Philosophy Of History

Flowing from the logical compulsions of his theory to establish reason as an ontological fact, innate in man, Roy has to formulate a new theory of history. Marx had rejected the rationalist tradition which puts reason before man, wherein Reason works itself out in history or civilisation. Instead Marx argued that in order to arrive at rationality, man must learn from the laws of history. What is rational and what is not, is determined by each historical situation. This, naturally, was objectionable to Roy, for it was in total opposition to his claim
that reason, which is located in man as a part of nature, is the creator of history and civilisation. Therefore, Roy is compelled to construct a new theory of history to demonstrate how reason, which is innate in man, leads to the making of history. Reason, which for Roy is the faculty of thinking causally, determines history; therefore, ideas determine history. Marxism, according to Roy, conceives history as being determined economically presents, therefore, a lop-sided view of history for it fails to recognise the creative role of ideas, in other words, the role of reason in determining history.

Roy sees history as being a determined process and not separate from the determined evolutionary process of nature. Roy argues, "The social, political and cultural history is determined, because nature is a cosmos -- a law-governed rational system."\(^9\) (Emphasis ours). Not only does Roy argue that history is a determined process because nature is determined, he, in fact, sees human history as nothing distinct or different from the history of natural, biological evolution. Roy argues,

"...history is the record of man's struggle for freedom. Social evolution is a continuation of the biological evolution taking place on a higher level, where the struggle for existence, to be more effective, becomes co-operative and collective. That is why history is an organic evolutionary process."\(^9\) (Emphasis ours).

For Roy, human history and the history of natural evolution are not different, for the history of natural evolution was a struggle
for existence, survival: and human history is also a struggle for existence, but since it is on a 'higher-level', it becomes the struggle for freedom. Thus, the difference between the history of human beings and the history of nature is only a difference of levels.

This 'higher-level' of the struggle for existence is reached through the evolutionary process: man is the highest evolved being of nature with a developed brain which enables him to think. In other words, man is a thinking being, a rational being, and this is what distinguishes him from other natural creatures. At this point, we may take note of what G.P. Bhattacharya one of the noted scholars on Roy, has to say. Bhattacharya is of the opinion that there is validity in Roy's statement. He argues that Roy has made a difference between determinism in natural science and in human history. Bhattacharya writes,

"Roy made...a clear distinction between determinism in natural science and determinism in human history. The determining factors of history he pointed out, are many, and they can be divided into two qualitatively different set of categories -- physical or material and human or mental."

The point which Bhattacharya fails to see, however, is that Roy does not really differentiate between the physical and the human. For as we have already elaborated earlier, for Roy, both physical and human or material and mental are ultimately the same -- matter. As we have already noted, Roy has done away with the difference between subject-object and thereby reduced both to matter. Therefore, we do not agree with Bhattacharya that Roy's philosophy of history
is based on a valid difference between human history and the history of nature.

According to Roy, determinism in history is primarily 'ideal', which is why he says, "The history of thought is the key to the history of civilisation because it can be logically reconstructed." Roy argues that history is determined by ideas because man's action is always motivated by ideas; in other words, the idea comes first and then the action follows. He proceeds to illustrate how the first ideas must have determined history. Here, Roy takes recourse to 'imagination', for till today, the exact evolutionary transition from ape to man is not known. The 'missing link' may be unknown, but Roy says, the problem can be solved by "....conceptual thought, imagination, if you please." 

One can imagine, Roy says, a clever anthropoid ape hitting upon the brilliant ideas of using a stick to break the fruit from a tree instead of climbing to the top of the tree. And this was how the first non-biological tool was created. This production of the 'original means of production' was determined, but this determinism was not economic determinism. It was a result of a

"....mutation in the process of biological evolution....The production of the first tool was a deed done by an animal possessed of a highly developed brain capable of rudimentary thought. An idea in the brain of the first ancestor of man perhaps it could not as yet be distinguished from biological impulse -- preceded the act of producing the original means of production. The first non-biological, extra-organic tool
(----) was created by the ancestor of man in course of the struggle for existence, which provides the basic impulse of pre-human biological evolution.\(^8\)

Thus the act of thinking, the 'idea', was man's first act of freedom and,

"...marks the birth of the species; the nature of man is determined by that event. In it, thought precedes action. Consequently, ideas play an autonomous role in social evolution. They cannot be referred to economic origins because thinking animals created tools and founded society...."\(^9\)

Roy's next major argument is that ideas do not have any causal connection with social reality. He writes,

"The logical development of ideas and the generation of new social forces take place simultaneously, together providing the motive force of history. But in no given period can they be causally connected except in the sense that action is always motivated by ideas. A new idea must be referred back to an old idea. Philosophy has a history of its own, and is not a kaleidoscope of phantoms. Inasmuch as action is motivated by ideas, determinism in history is primarily ideal...."\(^10\) (Emphasis ours).

Anticipating the charge of being an 'Idealist', Roy tries to defend himself by arguing that ideas have an ontological basis and are not some vague spiritual entities existing in a world of their own. To show this, Roy explains the process of ideation. According to him, "Ideation is a physiological process resulting from the awareness of environments...."\(^10\) Roy's purpose in showing that the process of ideation is a physiological one, is to demonstrate that ideas, "...are not sui generis; they are biologically determined; priority belongs to the physical being, to matter...."\(^10\)
Having argued that ideas have an ontological base, Roy goes on to inform us that, in the process of the development of history, civilisation and culture, ideas have no relation to materiality. Roy writes,

"But once the biologically determined process of ideation is complete, ideas are formed, they continue to have an autonomous existence, an evolutionary process of their own, which runs parallel to the physical process of social evolution. The two parallel processes, "ideal and physical, compose history. Both are determined by their respective logic or dynamics or dialectics. At the same time, they are mutually influenced, the one by, the other. That is how history becomes an organic process...."

Roy fails to demonstrate, however, how they are mutually related, and how they influence each other. For he categorically argues that ideas have only a one way causal relation with materiality ideas determine action. Roy writes,

"But in no given period can they be causally connected except in the sense that action is always motivated by ideas...."

Next, Roy argues that the recognition of the role and importance of ideas in determining history does not mean an acceptance of Idealism. On the basis of knowledge of biology and physiology, Roy says, Idealism has been defeated. However, Roy is of the opinion that it is possible to combine Idealism and Materialism. Roy writes,

"In so far as it claims nothing more than that ideas have an independent history of their own, that the history of philosophy is the master key to the problem of reconstructing the history of the race, from the dawn of civilisation, Idealism flows into Materialism, the two together providing a comprehensive explanation of the past and present, and a rational guide for mankind exploring the still unknown depths of the future."
The problem with this argument, however, is that since Roy does not accept the Idealist ontology which affirms the unique role of ideas as valid, he cannot base his argument the way he does here. Roy was trying to incorporate Idealism precisely where it opposes Materialism, at the ontological level. It is, therefore, impossible to combine Idealism and Materialism into a holistic viewpoint. Bhattacharya, in his evaluation of Roy says,

"A materialist par excellence in the field of philosophy, he (Roy) appeared to be more or less an idealist in his theories of history. To the extent he conceded to ideas a decisive role in history and regarded them as the master-key for interpreting the past, Roy was an idealist...."^106

Though Bhattacharya makes a note of this he does not find it inconsistent with Roy's materialist claims. For he holds the ontological base, which Roy had tried to give to ideas, as proof enough of his materialist argument. We have already presented our views against this claim and tried to show its inconsistency.

According to Roy, the urge for freedom innate in man, which led to the creation of the first tool, and therefore to freedom, sometimes gets submerged. Or as Roy puts it, "....the march of history is obstructed"^107 by external factors, like the needs of an established order. However, this urge for freedom reasserts itself and man creates new ideas, formulates new philosophies which will liberate man by creating new social orders.

It would be interesting in this context to follow Roy's explanation
of the origins of society. Roy poses the question and proceeds to answer it,

"Why did man create society, and how? He did it in course of his struggle for existence. Coming out of the background of biological evolution, the human species starts its struggle as individuals. In the course of time, the isolated individuals realise that, together, they could carry on the struggle more successfully. That was the origin of society."

This explanation of the origin of society is based on scientific knowledge, and therefore, has absolute truth-value for Roy. Roy argues,

"Biology and anthropology have acquired enough empirical knowledge to trace the descent and evolution of man and also the origin of society. There is no room for any doubt that society is a creation of man. The individual, therefore, is prior to society and the State. The latter are the means for attaining the end of freedom and progress of man...."

Thus, according to Roy, society was created for the purpose of carrying on the struggle for freedom collectively. However these 'means' (society & state) which were created for the purpose of attaining freedom, Roy says, had now enslaved man. They denied him freedom by suppressing his urge for freedom. In Roy's opinion, it is the lack of knowledge of the origins of man so far in history, which made the submergence of freedom by these 'means' possible. Roy asserts that the mystery of the origins of man having been solved, man need no longer remain in bondage.

Since history is determined primarily by ideas, Roy's logic
leads him to argue, "The method of the science of history is criticism, as observation and experiment are the methods of the physical sciences ...." Roy explains that history is recorded in two ways -- the physical and the mental. The physical records are, implements, ruins of buildings, relics of art and crafts, etc, while the mental are written records. It is the latter records that Roy holds to be of primary importance, because it is only with their help that the physical records can be appreciated. In this context, Roy argues that philology is of utmost importance; with the help of philology, history can be reconstructed. And therefore Roy states,

"History of languages thus is a part of the science of history.... words originate in the course of the process of biological evolution to serve as vehicles for the expression and communication of primitive emotions and ideas. Languages develop to serve the purpose of co-ordinating disjointed ideas and emotions. So, the history of languages is the early history of the evolution of thought -- the history of primitive philosophy...."

Some Observations On Roy's Philosophy Of History

From the elaboration of history just concluded, we can now make certain observations.

First and foremost, the history of man, for Roy, is inseparable from the history of nature. There is a dominance of biologism here, as it is the biological urge in man for freedom which provides the motive power to man in history. History is nothing but the assertion and the submergence of this biological urge for freedom. History
therefore, is not really man made, everything is ultimately a product of natural evolution.

Secondly, though Roy claims to be a materialist monist, a dualism pervades throughout his argument. This occurs because Roy is unable to show any link between ideas and objective reality, or object and subject. He maintains both to be separate, emphasising that ideas have no connection to objective or social reality. They do not originate in the social materiality, but in the course of biological evolution he argues. They have a logic and history of their own, which has nothing to do with the social materiality. Roy's materialism shows only the process of ideation that takes place in the brain. Once ideas are formed they are totally independent. Therefore, Roy says, "Ideas develop by themselves in the right or wrong direction."

At the same time, he argues that social forces and ideas move more or less parallel to one another and also influence each other. But this relation of influence is conceived in only one way. Roy does not explain why the social forces and ideas develop simultaneously, 'side-by-side' and why they are complementary to each other. If there is any connection it seems to be, for Roy, only accidental and not causal. Thus by isolating ideas from objective social reality, he ultimately removes ideas from history itself. In Roy's assumption, it appears as if ideation itself becomes the objective reality.
Ideas and objective reality, subject and object emerge, in Roy's theory, static and totality independent, for there is no interaction between them. If Roy is unable to show the relation between ideas and matter, that is, show how ideas determine reality, as a materialist he should be able to establish at least the relation between matter and ideas. Yet Roy fails to do even this and in the process emerges as a dualist despite all his claims to monism.

In Roy's monist materialism, dualism and mechanism prevail, for there is no concept of mediation between the subject and object. Marx had successfully overcome this problem, because he realised the importance of productive activity. As Marx rightly pointed out in his Theses on Feuerbach,

"The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism — that of Feuerbach included — is that the thing (....) reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object (....) or of contemplation (....) but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively."[13]

The secret of Marx's transcending the limits of a dualistic, mechanical and contemplative materialism is his category of mediation which he had learnt from Hegel. Hegel's idealist monism, though idealist, was nevertheless a monism because subject and object were related through activity -- mental activity. Marx, by turning Hegel upside down, maintains the monism -- but now a materialist one. Subject and object are mediated through man's sensuous activity -- labour. As I. Meszaros correctly concludes,

"....No philosophical system can be monistic without conceptually
mastering, in one form or another, the complex dialectical inter-relationship between mediation and totality....

Thus, Marx demonstrates the relation between subject and object and does not reduce one to the other. Subjectivity is derived from materiality and not abstractly, i.e. through interaction with it. Objectivity becomes related to the subject not through contemplation or observation as objects existing outside it, but through the process of 'practice' or labour. It becomes a part of it and at the same time is different from it.

As against this Roy's claims to being scientific are not tenable. His materialism emerges as a materialism that is metaphysical, and therefore, basically idealist. It is idealist for his materialism is only metaphysical. And the irony is that materialism is, for Roy, the only logical perfect philosophy.

Roy's materialism claims cognitive authority over other subjects, and argues for a materialist ontology and epistemology; in fact, it attempts to go beyond material reality itself. And yet, Roy fails to work out the full logic which can sustain this claim. Roy Edgley has discussed how thinkers holding similar positions land themselves in a predicament which leads to total failure. As Edgley succinctly puts it, "Inevitably, it (philosophical materialism) replaces this (materialist) basis with an idealone, with the a priori ideas that philosophy takes as its own: the empirical methods of science and commonsense give way to empiricism, and materialism
survives, if at all, only in the form of the doctrine that this epistemology has an ontological basis, a basis not in material reality but in the necessary idea of material reality..."

Roy's materialism seeks its legitimation and justification from the mystification of the role of ideas in history and not through the real sensuous activity of man in relationship to nature -- praxis. Roy's attempt at constructing an alternative philosophy of history proves misconceived and finally does not achieve what it had set out to. As a result, Roy is not required to know the real, concrete, sensuous, material activity of life.

Roy, as we have seen earlier, was trying to build his theory of history in the face of the Marxist theory of history as preached by the Third International. The Third International's understanding of history was, no doubt, mechanical and deterministic. But in his attempt to present an alternative to this kind of interpretation of history, Roy goes to the other extreme and tries to prove, rather unconvincingly, how history is determined by ideas and not by economics.

**Conclusion**

At the end of our elucidation of Roy's concept of reason, we are in a position to make some overall observations.

Roy's interpretation of Marxism is rather crude, and sometimes,
naive. The criticisms that Roy makes of Marx's theory in fact rebound on him. His criticism of the materialist conception of history, that it is reductionist and mechanical, apply to his own formulation. Roy's materialism is reductionist — a biologism of the 19th century which has been critically examined and rejected in the intellectual tradition of the West.

Roy claims to have formulated a system with an ontological and moral theory. However, Roy's claims are not backed up by sufficiently sound argument. He fails to provide a satisfactory explanation of the nature of reason. In fact, he has no theory of reason and morality. Reason has no grounding and there is no principle of morality. Purposiveness is only control of nature and has no moral meaning to it.

Roy's basic premise, that causality is rationality, is never fully established and ultimately emerges as only an assertion. Therefore, Roy's hope of finding a solution to the moral crisis, which he identifies, is never realised.

We shall now turn to the next key concept in Roy's system — renaissance — which is closely related to the concept of reason, which we have just analysed.
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