Chapter III

Social Philosophy of Radical Humanism

Man is the archetype of society, co-operative social relationships contribute to develop individual potentialities. But the development of the individual is the measure of social progress. Collectivity presupposes the existence of individuals. Except as the sum total of freedom and well-being, actually enjoyed by individuals, social liberation and progress are imaginary ideals, which are never attained. Well-being, if it is actual, is enjoyed by individuals. It is wrong to ascribe a collective ego to any form of human community (viz. Nation, class etc.), as that practice means sacrifice of the individual. Collective well-being is a function of the well-being of individuals.

M.N. Roy

Thesis One: Of New Humanism
SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF RADICAL HUMANISM

I. THE NATURE OF SOCIETY

The theory of the origin of the society expounded by Roy clearly states, that society is a creation of man. This idea emanated from the scientific theory about the descent of man. He remarked, "it logically follows from the theory of evolution, that mankind at a low level of development existed before society and state came into being and these are human creations. The logical deduction is corroborated empirically by the existence even today, of primitive tribes resembling almost like animal herds". Evidently, Roy did not include primitive tribes within the circle of social life. He considered the organic character of society as a rational act. The Hobbesian portrayal of pre-social mankind seemed to him more realistic. He was of the view, that man created society in order to conduct his struggle for existence and satisfy his urge for society. He said, "society is a creation of man - in quest of freedom. Co-operative social relationships were established originally, with the purpose of re-inforcing the struggle for existence, which the primitive man had undertaken as an individual". Thus, it is obvious that man's realisation for making the struggle for existence more effective brought him closer to other human beings and acting in collaboration with them. This caused the origin of society. In the words of Dr. Bhattacharyajee, "Roy's view about the origin of the society and its relation to the individual appears to be confusing and over-simplified. The generally accepted view of society is that social life arose out of the extension of the family life of the tribal life." Roy himself accepted the existence of primitive tribes, but he did not regard social life as a continuation of tribal life.

1. Roy, M. N: Radical Humanism, XV, P. 400.
He emphasised that society was a creation of an individual, though he did not explain how the primitive tribes were dissolved into individuals.

Further, his portrayal of society as the rational creation of individuals amounts to reviving the discreated theory of social contract, though he himself rejected the theory. In his words, "on the strength of this evolutionary view, we must reject the eighteenth century conception of social contract .... just as the human species itself as social organisation came into being in the early stages of the rise of man, perhaps by accidental circumstances and in course of time evolved in more and more purposive and complex forms".

In the view of Dhamendra Goel, Roy’s works belong to several genres of writing: History, Politics, Social philosophy and so on. His writings are not marked by academic rigour and often confuses sober analysis with didactic propaganda. Nevertheless, he was continuously engaged in deliberating on man and society. His memoirs apart, his works are mainly endeavours to understand events in their depth and historical significance. He even states on several occasions some general theses and develops a connected system of ideas to which he gives several names as radical humanism, scientific rationalism, materialism and so on. Irrespective of the name he may give to his point of view about human society, Roy desires that it be taken as the end result of scientific analysis and cherishes it to acquire detached objectivity. He writes, that there are laws governing human life, as they govern the physical universe and that, therefore, the problems, of politics are to be approached as scientific problems, if political and social ideals are ever to be reached.

Roy fully and self-consciously advocates rationalism in ethics, politics, and law. He disapproves of non-cognitivism, that has often found support among contemporary students of the science of ethics, axiology and politics. Norms are neither transcendental nor irrational whims.

They ought to be analysed in terms of historical facts of the society, in which they operate. There can be no gain in severing completely the world of fact from that of values, as the latter arises only through human deliberation, man's own place is in the world of nature and history. Roy deprecates every trace of harking non-cognitivism in the analysis of norms as the sinister legacy of theology, that must make room for thorough going scientific analysis. He is a materialistic functionalist in his approach and looks forward to inductive methods of investigation particularly with reference to history, politics, law, economics, and ethics.

Roy was strongly opposed to transcendental idealism and to cultural relativism. He maintains, that human rationality cannot fall back in the face of diversity of values. It is possible to work out a logic of rational preference and that in this our knowledge of the historical process of human society can be of great help. Roy's notion of rationality is basic to his social philosophy. It is based on the fact, that what distinguishes human society from other phenomena is the existence of a mentality, which is constituted of knowledge, knowledge that is cumulative and is gained through ideas and shaped through language. Rationality is both an ideal as well as a descriptive term.

For all his divergence from Marxism, Roy holds that social philosophy forms by itself a force in the process of making a society. In this sense, he refuses to be brow-beaten by the counsels of academic social analysis, that the seeker of truth must remain not only detached, but also wholly independent of
any responsibility to shape society, so as to be free of bias. Like Kwame Nkrumah, he may think of such academicians as slightly irrelevant to society—'engulfed in their intellectual hermitage they excuse themselves from philosophical comment on social progress or social oppression'.

Roy thinks social philosophy to be a contemplation of reason applied to facts of history, of society. Roy is confident, that regardless of the entangled web of constant change in society, it is possible to understand the different planes of interacting phenomena that constitute society. It can be done for the satisfaction of one's curiosity, or for equipping oneself to transform an existing society into an ideally, rational society. One should understand how various elements that may be sub-patterns on different planes, occur, inter-act and transform a society. A philosophy of society amounts to explicating these sub-patterns in the first instance, understanding their role in the web of society as a whole, and eventually to determining the order of inter-action, that these different-levelled sub-patterns underwent in the history of a society. If human reason can achieve this understanding, Roy thinks it will be capable of taking society towards the ideal of rationality. True social philosophy is thus only a step towards the more important human responsibility of building a rational society.

The very large number of possible answers makes for considerable perplexity. Quite often, one becomes a victim of ambiguity in trying to formulate a framework, under which efforts may be directed to sketch the pattern of events, relations and values that constitute society. A basic clarification of the terms is useful. Society is not a simple homogeneous, object apart and above the constellations of elements that include human individuals, their wills and thoughts and the processes that embody them. It is Roy's view, that we should not constitute a false entity other than that of the human individual. Social

relations result from the activities of individuals constituting the society. Being human creations, they can be altered by man. Human will and human action are the primary factors of social existence. This is a major step in grasping Roy's meaning of society. It is important to realize, that what Ryle has called a category mistake and Whitehead has called the fallacy of misplaced concreteness have often been committed in some major writings on society. Roy's understanding is radically operational in its conception and avoids these idols and fiction of social philosophies. He could possibly under-line every word of the following remark of David Bideny that demands caution in contemporary anthropological theory in this respect.

That social and cultural facts require the postulation of distinct level of reality, each of which is *sui generis*. It being urged first, that neither social nor cultural facts constitute a distinct ontological level of reality intelligible through itself alone... this has led to fallacy of misplaced concreteness, whereby a category of phenomena properly termed an attribute of man in society became converted into an autonomous entity, independent of man and society.

II. INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

The origin of society and its relation to the individual is one of the most vital problems of social philosophy. All social philosophies tend to develop a leaning or preference in one direction, either towards society or towards the individual. The essential character of a social doctrine - whether it is authoritarian or democratic, totalitarian or individualistic, is determined mainly by the solution it offers to this problem.

The relation between the individual and society follows logically from the theory of the origin of society. It is not unreasonable to assume that a philosopher engrossed mainly with the problems of the age tries to construct a theory about the origin of society, which is consistent with the main philosophical views he seeks to uphold. A political philosopher hardly makes the painstaking research of an anthropologist to unveil the mystery of the origin of the society and state. He is more concerned with their nature, function and their relation to the individual rather than with their origin. His theory about the origin of society provides essentially a suitable background for his theories about their function, nature and relation to individuals. This is more or less true of all political philosophers of all ages. The difference between Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau about the origin of society can be explained more by their desire to justify different forms of government, than by any genuine difference on anthropological or historical evidence and interpretation.

Roy's view about the origin of society and its relation to the individual appears to be at once complex and oversimplified. The generally accepted view of sociology is that social life arose out of the extension of the family life or the tribal life, though there is a protracted controversy among the scholars as to whether the families arose out of the disintegration of tribes or tribes arose out of the amalgamation of families. Roy also admitted the existence, as already mentioned, of primitive tribes living almost like animal herds, but instead of regarding social life as a continuation of tribal life, he maintained that society was a creation of individuals, though he never explained how the primitive tribes dissolved into individuals later. He has not provided any evidence to substantiate his theory, that society is the rational creation of individuals. In the evolution of human society a distinction is generally made between the instinctive stage and the rational stage, the former gradually merging into the
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instinctive stage and the rational stage, the former gradually merging into the latter. This distinction in many schools of modern sociology has taken the form of a distinction between community and society. Ludwin Stein, maintains, that the community is an instinctive product and society implies conscious and deliberate co-operation. Gidding also makes a similar distinction between the instinctive and rational stage of social evolution. In India, Sri Aurobindo also made a clear distinction between the infra-rational and supra-rational stage of the social evolution. In his analysis of human nature. Roy referred to instinct as primitive reason and he derived the basic attributes of man's nature from his animal ancestry. Therefore, he must logically have traced the origin of society to primitive tribal life.

Roy admitted, that the problem of the relation between the society and the individual becomes more difficult in proportion, as society becomes more and more complex. But, the original purpose of all social organisation, he maintained, was to help man to develop the potentialities inherent in him as a biological organism. Therefore, Roy concluded that the social organisation, which inhibits the possibility of free development of human personality is contrary to the original purpose with which human society is created. National prosperity and social progress were considered by him as frauds, unless they referred to the progress, property, welfare and freedom of the individual, which to him was the only criterion of measuring social progress. This has not simply an economic connotation, but also a cultural significance. He wrote, "in modern society an individual to be free, must not only be able to enjoy the economic sufficiency and security, but live in a psychological atmosphere, free from cultural regimentation and helpful to the development of his intellectual and other human potentialities. Progressive attainment of freedom in this wide sense, by the individuals composing society, should provide the criterion for judging

It is important to condense Roy's version of various sub-patterns that bring about linear changes in society. As he opines, they do occur often in isolation, in one sub-pattern or more than one, simultaneously. Roy dislikes rigid determinism in specifying the *apriori* plan of change in several sub-patterns, and refuses to generalise for all such possibilities in social change. Roy holds (a) structure of authority, (b) means of production of system of norms for purposive social action, and (c) cognitive ideas as the most tangible distinct sub-pattern that manifest and institute social change. Roy, assimilates together values and ideas under what he (following Marxist terminology) calls ideology. He has rebelled against orthodox dialectics of Marxists theory of ideology sufficiently to denounce, generally strict class-interpretation of ideas. He recognises no definite schematism in the aforesaid four sub-patterns, far less the primacy of means of production and class-struggle as the engine of social change, in what Marxists call the super-structure of the class-culture. In fact, he is prone to emphasize the primary role of ideas, of values, man and his place in nature, as causative factors of history. Yet, Roy writes, that there is a mentality of an epoch that all share. The mentality of a serf is necessarily a mentally belonging to the period of feudalism. We find him denounce all religion as an instrument for keeping the masses in spiritual darkness, or else he prophecies that priest-craft had after all created some timeless cultural values, and pleads for acknowledging their contributions to the treasure of human culture. He writes: At the same time another set of values was created, which transcends all limits of time and space and goes into the accumulated treasure of human culture. It would be foolish to throw away.

Roy attempts to develop an extremely original theory of rationalist idealism, that should be based on materialism of science and should

accommodate creative freedom and rational continuity of history of society without going too far like Marx, who Roy thinks wrongly inferred determinism from continuity; 'The economic interpretation of history does not logically follow from materialist philosophy'. Roy has a rationalist vision which appreciates that 'religion binds man to his petty egoism, human spirit finds unrestricted freedom in materialism', and works on the belief, that 'brain is a means of production and produces; the most revolutionary commodity. Revolutions presuppose iconoclastic ideas'. This role of ideas in history, Roy incorporates in to his theory of social change and philosophy of materialism. However, it remains a prescription. It has not yet been attempted. He writes, 'a materialist’s general philosophy can be the foundation of a sociology, which makes room for creativeness and individual liberty without denying determinism'. This programme of delineating the active role of what Roy has claimed as ideas, or the collective outlook, apparently bristles with paradoxes of what Popper calls methodological historicism. Briefly, the paradox arises from viewing ideas simultaneously from two different levels of significance - as the fructification of cultural history from below and judging them as higher arbiters or primary active-principles fashioning history itself.

Roy finally ascribes a futuristic role to ideas in his apocalypse of linear triumph of reason against the deadlocks, fallacies and confusions of the irrationalities of the past. Mentality could be purged of all that is fossilized, sharply reconstituted to give new norms, that could be linked by the people so imbued with this new idea of science, to give birth to a really new humanist society that is free and yet intensely rationally organised. He writes in this

2 Ibid., P. 242.
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imbued with this new idea of science, to give birth to a really new humanist society that is free and yet intensely rationally organised. He writes in this enchanted futurist vein that is so different from his extremely cold style, "the humanist, libertarianism, moralist spirit of Marxism will go into the making of the new faith of our times. It is a part of the accumulated store of human heritage, which must be claimed by the builders of the future." He is not afraid of social prescriptions, nor sufficiently distrustful of social engineering, in spite of a clear grasp of the facts of dehumanisation, that follow any drastic transition from society as it is, to what reason could make of it. Roy cannot entirely give up rationalist optimism and does not even wholly dismiss the possibility of some futurist recrystallisation of society, as Popper does. Roy does not share his fear of dehumanisation of society.

There is yet another lacuna in Roy's analysis of mentality. Roy has not used the term either to refer to ideas or to values alone. This weakens it by ambiguity. Secondly, the use of this blanket term only further lands him in clouded talk about religious mode of thought, of Scientific or rationalist ideology. These terms do not always denote specific propositions and often mix feelings, ideas, and attitudes.

III. BASIC VALUES OF SOCIAL LIVING - FREEDOM, REASON AND MORALITY

According to Roy, the urge for freedom is the basic trait of human nature. The origin of this urge was also traced by him to the animal world and to the biological heritage of man. But, before analysing the origin of this urge, a clear comprehension of what Roy meant by it becomes mandatory. He defined freedom, as "progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of

* Karl Popper in our century has taken keen interest to show that whenever social philosophy employs blanket terms, it constitutes a danger to the society and invites dehumanisation of a closed society. (See his, Popper, K R, The Poverty of Historicism, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1957.)
unfoldment of the potentialities latent in man, these potentialities according to Roy are not divine in character, it is "biologically inherent in man". Man is biologically constituted with his complex nervous system and highly developed brain, that everyone has infinite potentialities of development within him. The urge for freedom, is a creative urge felt by individuals to develop these potentialities. Freedom thus has not simply an economic or political content, but refers to the all-side development of man's "intellectual and other human potentialities". A man cannot be free, unless he becomes conscious of the potentialities within him and feels the urge to develop them. Roy warned, that human freedom would not automatically follow from a certain pattern of socio-economic reconstruction, nor can it be imposed upon the masses by a group of well-meaning individuals. He said, that freedom must not be conceived as, "an ideal to be attained all at once, at some particular point of time, but as an experience to be made in every movement of man's life." In other words, freedom depends more upon the mind of the individual, his desire to unfold his potentialities in any external social condition. Roy conceived, not that freedom, as quite independent of the social context. He, admitted that the circumstances under which man lives sets a limit to human endeavours. "Made under adverse circumstances, Roy wrote, "the best of endeavours may not be fruitful, while under more favourable conditions they may bear fruit". But, there is no necessary relation between social conditions and human freedom, and even under the most favourable conditions, man may remain indifferent towards the development of his inherent potentialities. Roy pointed out, that "a comfortable physical existence often discourages all creative human endeavors and blunts the moral sensibility of human beings", which he said, "warrants the conclusion

2. Ibid, P. 277.
5. Ibid, P. 179.
that in a society which attaches greater importance to material well-being and economic prosperity, freedom may be placed at a discount”. Economic prosperity, in other words, would never lead to freedom unless the people individually feel the urge for it within themselves. “While economic sufficiency”, Roy wrote, “may be helpful to cultural growth, the view that the one is the precondition of the other is historically false and logically untenable”. It is obvious, that the miscarriage of the Russian Revolution led Roy to conceive freedom in this broad perspective. The Russian experiment showed that the economic prosperity may lead to human servitude and the change of the economic structure may not necessarily mean the change of the cultural outlook of man. He therefore, concluded that the concept of freedom must have, in addition to economic prosperity and political democracy, a cultural connotation and its basis must be sought in human nature itself, rather than in external environment.

According to Roy, the urge for freedom is embedded in human nature. Man inherited it from his animal ancestry: “the quest for freedom is the continuation on a higher level of intelligence and emotion of the biological struggle for existence”. The urge for existence is a universal urge for biological world and the human urge for freedom; Roy maintained the developed form of this animal urge. The animals try to exist, but man tries not only to exist but to prosper and to unfold his diverse potentialities. On the sub-human biological level, the struggle for existence is very largely mechanical. The environment, if unfavourable, may lead to the extinction of the organism, and the struggle for existence is the striving of the organism to save itself from the tyranny of nature. The organism conducts this struggle by a process of mechanical adaptation. Those who can adapt themselves successfully survive, and those who cannot,

become extinct. But, on the human level, this struggle for existence takes a
new form and it becomes purposive. Man does not seek simply to adopt himself
to the environment, but tries to change the environment to suit his purpose.
The proto-human ancestors of man had to depend upon their arms to pluck the
fruits and tried to prolong their arms in order to wage the struggle for existence
successfully, but the moment an anthropoid discovered that he could break a
branch with which to pluck a fruit beyond the reach of his arm, the struggle for
the existence became the quest for freedom. The biological evolution tended
towards the social evolution\(^1\). "With this branch man began, as it were, his
struggle to conquer nature and the modern highly developed technology is the
continuation of that struggle, which was "no longer for mere existence, but in
quest for freedom"\(^2\).

The struggle for existence developed into a positive quest for freedom,
owing to man's desire to be free from the physical limitations and at that,
instinctive. Roy pointed out, that it was due to the power of the human brain. It
was the human intelligence, that enabled man to make use of a branch to pluck
the fruits and the whole subsequent history of conquest, the nature was ultimately
due to the superior intelligence of man\(^3\). Thus, the urge for freedom is also
ultimately rooted in human intelligence or reason. It may be pointed out here,
that Roy's definition of freedom appears to be narrow and negative*. It is
simply the disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities
of individuals.

Roy defined, that freedom does not include the presence of the
conditions favourable for the development of human potentialities. In this

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* Though 'Freedom' is essentially a political concept, this point should still be discussed here
since Roy considered the urge for freedom as a basic urge of human nature.
conditions favourable for the development of human potentialities. In this connection, Laski, defined it as, "the absence of restraint upon the existence of those social conditions of which, in modern civilization, are the necessary guarantees of individual happiness". Here, we find a positive concept of freedom. By individual happiness, Laski actually implies "the continuous expression of his personality". Though Roy in his writings did not deny the importance of social conditions, in his definition of the concept of freedom, he ignored the positive social aspect altogether. This would stultify the emphasis upon the social conditions and might lead to the eclipse of the individual. Commenting upon Green’s concept of positive freedom, Roy wrote, that it "was the capacity of self-realisation, the conditions for the attainment of which ideal are guaranteed by an orderly harmonious social world. The implication of this positive idea of freedom is clear enough: Individual freedom is realised in the harmony of the community".

Roy tried to trace the origin of the human urge for freedom to the biological struggle for existence. The urge for freedom, as defined by him is not simply a desire for a comfortable life, but a creative urge to unfold the varied potentialities within the individuals. He refused to admit any casual relation between economic well-being and the urge for freedom, and referred to the great artists, poets and scientists, who lived in great poverty, but inspite of all hardships and handicaps were successful to unfold their creative talents. The urge for freedom as defined by Roy, is an ideal for man and the ability to conceive and follow an ideal is a special human attribute. But, an ideal should not be confused with the biological nature of man. Human nature deals with

2. Ibid., P. 49.
between what man is and what he should become, but still a line of distinction must be drawn between the two. The urge for security, comfort and prosperity, rather than the urge for freedom as defined by Roy may logically be considered as a continuation of the struggle for existence. Man’s struggle with nature may directly be related to his desire for a comfortable existence, but the urge to unfold one’s intellectual and other human potentialities is essentially a human urge, rather than a biological heritage.

In Roy’s ethical doctrine, freedom is the highest value - the supreme criterion of all value judgements. Whatever promotes freedom is good and whatever retards it is bad. He wrote, “Freedom is not an instrumental value. It is not a means to something: it is an end in itself”.

According to Roy, the quest for freedom leads necessarily to a search for the truth. The shaping of environment into some purposive form, to suit the interest of man implies knowledge of the environment. Any attempt to bring Nature under human control for the purpose of promoting his freedom presupposes knowledge of the laws of Nature. As man acquires knowledge of the laws of Nature, he discovers the truth because, as Roy has put it, “truth is the content of knowledge”. Roy ardently believed, that truth is not a metaphysical concept, but a matter of human experience, a matter of fact. He defined truth as “correspondence with objective reality – the relation between two objects of experience”. Knowledge of the laws of nature means the discovery of truth. The search for truth is intimately associated with the quest for freedom.

2. Ibid, P. 191.
4. Roy, M.N: Jail Volumes, Vol-II, P. 107(b)
Freedom, knowledge and truth are thus inter-woven harmoniously in the texture of his ethical philosophy. From this relation of freedom, knowledge and truth, Roy came to a sweeping conclusion. He wrote, "the hierarchy of humanist axiology thus is freedom, knowledge, truth. They are not autonomous, they are inter-related, logically as well as ontologically. Therefore, freedom cannot be attained by immoral means, nor can an enlightened man be a liar". But, a logical relation does not imply a moral connotation. The urge for freedom might have supplied the impetus to discover the truth by unveiling the mysteries of Nature. Once knowledge is acquired, there is no guarantee that it would be used only to promote human freedom. Science is the result of man's search for the truth, whereas it is used to destroy human civilization. The statement, that the enlightened man cannot be a liar is also highly misleading. If enlightenment includes moral excellence, then the statement is simply tautology; if it implies intellectual attainment, it is both empirically untenable and logically fallacious. Knowledge itself does not ensure self-control, which is the essence of morality. Knowledge is power and it does not indicate the way in which it will be used, because knowledge is ethically neutral.

IV. ROY'S SUPPLEMENTARY THEORY OF ETHICS

The Philosophy of New Humanism has been developed on the basis of three fundamental human tenets, namely, the urge for freedom, rationality and morality. All these tenets are very old, but Roy has sought to tread a new path by conceiving them in physio-biological terms and exhibiting them as embedded in human nature. An exception has been made in the case of human morality. Its source has been traced neither to physical nature nor to the pre-human biological stage, but to human rationality. In his attempt to reduce the categories of his philosophy to a minimum basic number, Roy has thus

designated human morality to a secondary status, which is, contrary to his intention.

By emphasizing the rational basis of ethics, Roy who has delved deep into the literature of the European Enlightenment, has followed the tradition set by it. The European Enlightenment has been characterised as the Second Renaissance and was far more outspokenly rational than the First Renaissance. The latter did often give quarters of religion, but the former inquired to rule out completely the religious view of life and as such gave an almost exclusive emphasis to reason as the sumnum bonum of human life, the key to the solution of all its problems. The philosophers of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment did not generally attach much importance to morality and looked upon it only as a subordinate attribute of human rationality.

Roy was also a great champion of human rationalism, but still his position was somewhat different from the philosophers of the European Renaissance and Enlightenment. These philosophers standing on the threshold of modern industrial civilisation were primarily interested in the intellectual onslaught of man, and this civilisation had not as yet presented any moral problem before them. Roy, living at the critical period of modern civilisation when the very existence of man was being threatened, ardently believed that the problem was basically a moral one. He was therefore, not merely interested in the intellectual onslaught of man and fighting the religious view of life. He was equally interested in the moral competence of man, and this should have led him to give human morality at least a co-ordinate status with human rationality.

The rationalist view of morality implies that morality, unlike the urge for freedom and rationality, is not embedded in human nature. Instead, a good
deal of calculation of interest goes into its making. While not denying altogether
the rationalist basis of morality, it must at the same time be pointed out, that to
define goodness exclusively in terms of self-interest has led people to emphasise
their rights to the neglect of their duties, and it is this devaluation of duties,
which has precipitated the contemporary crisis of human civilisation. People
cannot be blamed if they get from the self-interest view of ethic that the
performance of duty is not obligatory if some personal benefit is not derived
from it.

Social impulses which have made the social life possible, provide the
basis for the ethical life too and not the calculative disposition of the short-term
and long-term interests of individuals. The veracity of this statement is brought
out clearly in extreme cases, when a person goes forward to sacrifice his own
to save the life of another. In fact, our judgement on the moral excellence of an
action depends not upon how far it promotes the self-interest of its author, but
upon how far it serves the interests of his fellowmen, even at the cost of his
own interests. The excellence of a person consists in the community's judgement
of him and the morally excellent person is the one, who keeps other people in
mind in all his activities.

These social impulses have a physical origin. Matter is the source of
inexhaustible energy and has other primary qualities than sheer motion and
determinism. Another set of qualities is constituted by attraction and repulsion.
Attraction is the force exerted between bodies, which tends to draw them together
or resist their separation, while repulsion is at force having the opposite effect.
Both forces are essential for the effective functioning of the universe. A body
must resist repulsion, otherwise it would become a mere mathematical point,
and again it must resist attraction, as it would be scattered indefinitely through
space. The law of attraction of matter is known as the law of gravitation in the
vocabulary of scientists.
Roy points out that man's rationality and his moral sense are both products of biological evolution. He says: "The mystery of man has been solved by modern biology. Man is the outcome of biological evolution. In order to find the sanction of morality in man himself, and avoid at the same time the morals of mysticism, the roots of what is called conscience or moral sense must be traced in mechanistic biological functions articulated as instincts and intuitions. Biological evolution takes place in the context of the physical universe, its mechanism being a part of the cosmic mechanism. Life grows out of the background of inanimate matter. The descent of man, therefore, can be traced to the law-governed physical Universe. Man's rationality and moral sense, which are causally connected, are the expressions of cosmic harmony. Therefore, it is in the nature of man, as a biological organism, to be rational and moral, and as such he is capable of living with others in peace and harmony". Niranjan Dhar is therefore sceptical in his view, that Roy did not trace the source of morality to a pre-human biological stage.

Roy says that morality is 'rational', because it is embedded in human nature. A sense of fellowship would not have emerged in the course of biological evolution, if its emergence was not causally connected with the survival of the human species. Human survival required, that human beings should have a moral impulse and should be able to live in co-operation with their fellow beings. The moral impulse thus evolved in response to this need. Hence, morality is rational.

While morality is rational in this objective sense, it is also rational at the subjective level, of man as a thinking animal. The subjective rationality of man enables him to appreciate the goodness of the moral impulse, which is a

part of his biological heritage. The subjective rationality of man can therefore be the means of the development and refinement of his biological, moral impulse.

Roy states, that morality is "enlightened self-interest". The moral conduct of a person, which appears to an external observer as self-sacrifice, should appear to the author himself as enlightened self-interest. It is common knowledge that Epicurus once said that he wanted to be moral, not in order to please the Gods, but in order to please himself. It is also in this sense, that Roy observed in his concluding speech at the Radical Democratic Party Conference in Calcutta on December 29, 1948, "A country is not free, unless it is inhabited by free men, by men who believe that they can make themselves free; who are good, moral and virtuous, because it gives them pleasure to be so; who need no super-human authority to compel them to be so. We do not want any heavenly policemen to keep us on the right road. Unless man can stand morally on his own legs, freedom remains an illusion, and no society can ever be free, unless it is composed of free men, if history cannot strike out a new path guided by such principles, there is no hope for mankind".¹

Roy, while dealing with human freedom, did not address himself to the question whether in a given situation the will of an individual is self-determined or determined by external factors. Roy concerned himself with two aspects of freedom - freedom as the basic human value, and freedom of the will as a potent factor in the development of history. Freedom as the basic value was deduced by him from the biological urge for existence operating on the higher level of human consciousness. On the role of human will in history, Roy was anxious to show, not only that the human will was the most potent factor in shaping history, but also that it was not itself wholly determined by the so called basic economic reality. Thus he states, "Historical determinism

does not exclude freedom of the will. As a matter of fact, human will is the most powerful determining factor. Otherwise, there would be no room for revolutions in a rationally determined process of history". He also declared, "History is a determined process; but there are more than one causative factors. Human will is one of them. And it cannot always be referred directly to any economic incentive". As against the Marxian theory of economic determinism, he stated, "the dynamics of ideas runs parallel to the process of social evolution, the two influencing each other mutually". In fact, his book "Reason, Romanticism and Revolution" was an exposition of the role of ideas in human history.

An individual feels himself to be free, only when he is able to do what he likes and is not restrained by external compulsions. This is the normal meaning of freedom as the term is generally understood. It is in this sense, that Roy defined freedom as "the progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities of individuals, as human beings and not as cogs in the wheels of a mechanised social system". Roy further pointed out, that the struggle for freedom in this sense was a continuation of the human plane of the biological struggle for existence. By saying so, Roy added a positive content to the concept of freedom. Freedom, thus means the ability to live a life of physical well-being and mental enrichment.

A different problem presents itself, when the concept of freedom is examined in the context of the law of determinism. Since every human being is a part of nature, the question whether he and his will are not subject to the same law of determinism which applies to the rest of nature arises. It is of

course difficult to say how an individual reacts in a given situation. But this is so because of the multiplicity and the complexity of the factors involved. Presuming that all the factors in a given situation including the strength of likes and dislikes of an individual, the strength of his emotions and sentiments, the quality and force of his rationality, were criteria of precise measurement, this information were fed into a computer, would yield results in the affirmative. The human will is not free from the law of determinism.

The reality of an individual's freedom, and the justification of the claim, that he is a moral entity responsible for his actions, arise from the fact that his will contains a component, which enables the will capable of progressive self-control. The human will, in other words, is so composed as to be capable of improvement over a course of time, from childhood to adult stage and throughout the rest of life. Although in a given situation, the strength and direction of an individual's will is predetermined, the equation of forces may be different, if a similar situation arises in the future. The individual, in the meantime may have learnt to avoid a mistake committed in the past. An individual can be progressively free from the tyranny of determinism by being progressively a master of himself.

It is obvious, that the will of an individual consists of what he "wills" to do in a particular situation. His will is composed, broadly speaking, of two parts-(a) his likes and dislikes, his emotions and sentiments, in other words the cognitive part of his psyche; and (b) his sense of what is right and wrong, what is proper and improper, his reasoning faculty, in other words the cognitive part of his psyche. Man's mastery over himself arises from the progressive mastery of the cognitive part of his nature over its cognitive part, the mastery of reason over the emotions. Although at a particular time and in a given situation, the relative strength of the two components of an individual's will are given
quantities, the individual is able by a process of self-improvement to change
that relation of forces. An individual can, by the use of reason, mould his
character and thereby be progressively free from the tyranny of determinism,
while living all the time within its umbrella. Since this last consideration is of
some importance, it requires further clarification:

The source of freedom of the will is to be found in the fact, that human
beings have the capacity of moulding their will. The development of the
character of an individual, which is a rational function, is in effect a process of
moulding the individual’s will. This process is most rapid in childhood, but
usually goes on throughout the individual’s life. The will of a young man is
very different from the will he possessed as a child. At an early age, the process
of character-building is guided by parents and other elders in society, but in
later life, the process is best guided by the individual himself. It consists of
learning from past experience. A person unconsciously commits mistakes,
suffers the consequences and learns to behave better. Since learning is made
possible by the reasoning faculty, reason plays the main part in the moulding of
the will. Character building, it may be noted, does not merely consist of moral
development. There are other character traits, such as courage, discretion and
perseverance, which help an individual in his struggle for a better life, and
these traits also are gradually ingrained in the individual’s will in the process of
caracter building. Human will is free, because it can be determined to a
considerable extent by the individual himself.

The above interpretation does not come into conflict with the principle
of determinism. Assuming that the element of chance is excluded and all the
factors in a situation are known, including the nature and direction of an
individual’s will, it is theoretically possible to deduce how he is prone to
behave in that situation. His will is nevertheless free because, having learnt
from experience, he would behave differently in an identical situation which occurs in the future. **In the meantime the nature of his will would have undergone a change.**

That answers the question whether a person is responsible for his immoral acts. When a person yields to temptation and commits a theft, given the nature of his will at the time of the incident, he could not have acted otherwise. He is nevertheless responsible for his act, because it was possible for him to mould his character so as to avoid stealing and this he failed to do. He then becomes a free moral agent and is responsible for the theft he has committed.

It is true that the social environment influences the development of character, but the individual also plays an important part in shaping it. An individual is an autonomous moral agent and the maker of his future, because apart from his ability to acquire knowledge and the resultant power, he has the capacity to mould his character and become a better individual.

**V. ROY’S VIEWS ON IDEAL INDIAN WOMANHOOD**

Roy’s vision is contemporaneous to our times. It can be gauged by the fact, that he opens his discourse with a reference to the population problem and the need for birth control. Tagore also was in favour of artificial contraception and supported Margaret Sanger’s programmes in this respect, but in his essay on Indian marriage, he leaves the issue out of his ambit, while taking pains to elucidate Kalidasa’s vision of marriage as ‘a state of discipline’, where the sexual happiness of the couple is subordinated to the purpose of producing a heroic son. Roy, by contrast, makes mincemeat of the notion, that sexual intercourse is for the purpose of procreation. He sees the Indian masses as not yet ready for birth control, but knows it to be the only way out, and fifty years
later one cannot but admire his sense of direction. A high birth-rate was once necessary for human survival, and women paid the required price, but now the reverse is true, and the interests of the species as a whole and of the female subspecies have converged. Birth control is the key, which makes women's freedom possible; once in charge of their own fertility men refuse to return to the bondage of the ancient days. The control of human fertility is therefore, the pivot on which women's liberation turns. Fortunately, in India the necessity for birth control is now well recognized, but in many other areas of the Third World, countries where Catholic orthodoxy is still in control, or where neo-fascist religious fundamentalism exhorts women to raise sons for the battlefield (as in Iran), many spiritual battles are yet to be waged and won.

Roy does, in some of his analyses, get into tangles. When he says, that 'procreation is the biological by-product of that noble emotion', conversely it follows that because biologically speaking, in terms of evolution, is the 'noble emotion' a by-product of the powerful sex-instinct, it is in the essential service of reproduction. When he says that the connection between sex and reproduction is accidental, his statement is true only at a superficial level; the linking of such a powerful instinct to the reproductive process is surely a part of that unconscious pattern, that network of nature's tricks whereby survival of the species is ensured. The enjoyment of sexual intercourse and procreation are two separate entities and a couple practising birth control are by definition attempting to separate the two, yet it is nonetheless true, that the knowledge that they are trying to have a wanted child enhances the pleasure of a loving couple.

Roy's hope that affluence and free mixing would cause homosexuality to disappear does not seem to be justified by the experience of the West. While homosexuality is clearly environment-induced, there appears to be a nucleus of instances where the condition has a basis in physiology, where some people seem to be born with that tendency. A proper understanding of the phenomenon of homosexuality remains unexplained.

Roy emphasizes the economic miracles women can perform by going out to work in times of hardship, but whether they can necessarily find rewarding jobs in times of mass unemployment remains a mighty question. He points to a Western situation of his time: women acting as bread-winners and men remaining idle. This may have happened then, because of a certain pattern of job availability: a set of traditional male jobs disappearing and men refusing to prefer jobs opening up in new areas. In the current recession, in the West the picture is different. Women have already saturated the worst-paid ends of the work-force. When the recession came, they hit the bottom. Traditional ideas on male and female jobs have become largely obsolete, and both sexes are in seek of what there is to be had. The power-structure of society in favour of men has not, however, essentially altered yet, men being still in overall control. As a result, the competition between men and women has become intense and fierce, and the availability of women in the job-market often simply means, that irrespective of their qualification, they are ending up with the worst jobs and are being savagely exploited.

Roy contemplated all the implications of the situations where women are no longer men's possessions and dependents, but their equals. Real equality between men and women implies that in all human affairs the female way of being, doing and perceiving must be given as much value as its male counterpart; that women must have the same rights and opportunities as men to develop,
express, and fulfil themselves. It further signifies, that the power-relationships of the sexes to which humanity has been accustomed for centuries must end, that relationships between men and women must be non-exploitative; that men must be attentive to women's needs, as they expect women to be attentive to theirs; that man must not just take from women, as they have traditionally done, but must also learn to give, not board and lodging, because women are no longer men's economic dependents, but the living support they need to achieve and grow. These are revolutionary perspectives; it is not without reason that traditionalists fear the logic and momentum of the women's liberation movement.

In the West, the crisis of dialogue between men and women is felt to be of the order of an evolutionary crisis, which must be overcome if humanity wishes to survive as a species. While in the developing world women's liberation is seen to be necessary for economic progress, in the advanced industrialized countries the women's movement is expected to give a lead in saving the world from a possible holocaust. As male-dominated civilization appears to rush towards self-destruction, the question that is often asked is whether women will be able to interfere in time. In so far as the civilization of the West is the product of Western rationalistic humanism, the reliability of that ideology in the first place was doubted. It was felt necessary to give humanism an androgynous face. Such speculations Roy was inclined to ponder. The Indian humanist movement itself was conceived as being predominantly man-centred.

When sex is for the expression of the love of equals, when it is 'de-structured' out of its power-context, the qualities surface. For a long time, sexuality has been an area of darkness in the human experience, where some of the worst pains are endured, some of the worst humiliations inflicted, some of the worst power games played. For it to be lifted from those primitive morals,
the attitude towards human sexuality ought to become more relaxed and open. The best model we have of the love of equals is the model of friendship.

Roy appears to have envisaged relationships occurring on a one-to-one, one-at-a-time basis, proceeding by means of serial monogamy. However, according to him it is not the way of friendship. Friendship is not promiscuous; it is, if anything, selective; but one is perfectly capable of loving more than one friend at the same time. Erotic love is not essentially different. It is a fact that one can entertain love and attraction for more than one person at the same time, that falling in love with a new person does not imply falling out of love with someone else. The open admission of this psychological reality has been blocked by the possessive structure of man-woman relationships. Jealousy is the hallmark of a proprietary relationship, where the partners regard each other as their possessions. It arises when people convert themselves, their love, and their love makings into things, subject to the laws of ownership. Women are sometimes as guilty of this possessiveness as men. But if love turns to be the voluntary association of consenting adults, voluntary association with more than one consenting partner cannot be morally wrong. Sexual love cannot be an exception to the general rule of friendly associations. There is no reason that it should be a dark, exclusive, secretive, bilateral pact.

In a corrupt world, even non-sexual friendships are often marred by possessiveness and jealousy. Cicero’s *De Amicitia* is a classic text, which exposes the thorns that strew the paths of friendship. But to attain the ideal requires building a world, where human relationships are not distorted by power structures.

Increased longevity and commitment to individual growth over long life-spans do have a profound effect on personal relationships. There is a need
for assurance and emotional anchorage, as well as a need for personal growth and the two needs are to be reconciled. This can be done by not rejecting old friends but by welcoming new friends into the fold, by making friendships inclusive rather than exclusive. At different times, different friends play important roles in each other lives. Different aspects of one's character come into play in interaction with different friends, and a certain diversity of associates is necessary to bring the whole of one's personality into full play.

Women's liberation has therefore triggered off fundamental changes in the nature of sexual partnerships and families. On the one hand, men and women feel the need for less closed, more open, plural relationships. On the other hand, the involvement of men in housekeeping and the care of offspring is intensified. The work-load gradually shared out, and a greater involvement of men in parenting and domesticity is the only hope of making them into more caring, sharing human beings and of rearing a new generation of youngsters with the relevant values. Contrary to what is often imagined, women prefer sensitive, refined men to aggressive machos; they prefer men to be less selfish and domineering, more gentle and nurturing, capable of expressing their emotions and of showing their tenderness. Nor can lasting peace be built on earth, unless the male of the species is prepared to shed much of that ego and aggression which may once have been his asset for the purpose of survival. Hence a need to forge a new ideal of manhood as well. The new woman is already demanding a new type of partner, who will be as much committed to her growth as he is to his own; and if boys have to attain this new ideal, they must be raised in a new kind of environment. They must see their fathers in nurturing roles, so that they can learn to model themselves, accordingly.

The interesting aspect of the pattern of ideas in Roy's essay is the way it emerges from and enmeshes with his personal life, as is usually the case
with creative personalities. Gandhi’s advocacy of birth control by means of married celibacy reflects his own ascetic determination to practise the same. Tagore’s preoccupation with the way women inspire men’s creativity is linked to his own needs as a male artist; without a doubt, female artists have an equally pressing need to be inspired by men, but Tagore does not dwell on that. Similarly, Roy’s commitment to non-procreative sexuality, to divorce, and to serial monogamy reflects the patterns of his own personal life.

Roy’s thunderous denunciation of the ideal of Indian womanhood is encircled by ironies. First, each of the three relationships he is known to have had with women was exogamous: he never had to make his peace with the reality of Indian womanhood. Secondly, in Ellen his wife, he found by all accounts, not only a loving companion, but also an efficient secretary, a dedicated colleague, a devoted nurse, and an ideal hostess for the get togethers of life. She not only gave him absolute personal devotion, but also identified herself totally with his cause, serving both his personal needs and the needs of his cause cheerfully and selflessly, outdoing ‘even the most ideal Hindu wife’. He did not want children and she accepted that condition. His friends and colleagues effectively became her extended family, and to them she gave her generous attention exactly like a Hindu matron. Regarded as an incarnation of Sita by her Indian friends during her life-time, she was compared to Sati Savitri after her death.

The first two volumes of Roy’s jail-dairy are iconoclastic, preoccupied with the task of exposing the irrelevance and hollowness of invalid beliefs and ideals still held in high regard, including the ‘ideal of womanhood’. The Memoirs of a Cat introduced stringent passages to explode the ideal; and the threads of argument snowballed by the cat gathered volume and force in The Ideal of Indian Womanhood. According to the author, this “Collection of random notes and reflections at odd moments” was “meant to provoke thought”.
The Cat (a typical satirical device) projecting an unusual angle to expose distortions, that might normally go unnoticed makes certain observations, quite uncatlike, but shockingly valid, nevertheless. The cat’s main contention is that woman in this culture occupies precisely the status of chattel, used by the master as a privately owned means of production. The Hindu ideal compels the woman to become the property of a male not chosen by her, but forced upon her as lord and master, and faithful sex-slavery to this male is prescribed as her supreme duty; the fertile field, given to her by nature, is usurped, possessed, jealously forced in by the man who is, however, free to seek newer fields for conquest. The helpless wives are tied to the men by socio-religio-economic compulsion and are compelled to bear and rear children on whom they have no legal claim. Thus, the crude owner-menial relationship between man and woman finds its “crassest expression in the socio-religious law of the Hindu”. The cat dismisses the cult of sakti worship as a ‘pleasant legend’ to cover up ugly reality, and points out that the Hindu’s glorification of cows and women proceeds from the same cynical utilitarianism. As Roy puts it, “But, my deluded sisters, please look at the cow for the picture of your true position”. The cow is worshipped and exploited because she is a useful animal and so is the woman. The cat finds her own animal world much better than its human counterpart since the female there can perform her natural function as a free agent, and is not forced to bear children out of any obligation or duty, either to a master, or a family, a community, or nation.

The degradation of the mother to a mere means of production, the wise cat observes, was part of the ideal of a feudal-patriarchial society, which had once gripped the entire civilization, and was later discarded by Europe. But, India still remained bogged down in the past and hypocritically glorified her


stagnation as a spiritual greatness, a 'greatness' that involved, among other things, a complete denial of freedom and justice to the woman.

In 'The ideal of Indian Womanhood' the mask of the cat is set aside while certain threads of her argument are carried forward, elaborated and gathered together to organise a more pointed attack. Here, Roy questions some of the fundamental postulates of the Indian tradition regarding woman. The question of birth control starts off the discourse. Roy rejects Gandhi's solution as impractical, since Gandhi relied on woman's resistance, whereas Roy finds Hindu women not in a position to resist, absolutely helpless as they are, and handcuffed by unjust male dictates in the name of 'ideals'. What disturbs Roy is concerned with the shocking cynicism with which these 'ideals' subjugate the woman to a life of chattel slavery.

Firstly, in the Indian social custom and religious tradition a woman without a master is unthinkable. The codes of Manu have deprived her of all independence. In the name of perpetual protection, always a male dispensation, she is at the mercy of the male as father-husband-son at different stages of her life, so that she is never her own mistress. And although the Hindu marriage has been glorified as a religious sacrament, actually it means a sacrifice of the woman, a transfer of proprietary rights from father to husband, during which transaction the girl is not considered at all as an individual with intrinsic values, but just an object to be given away. This gift is accepted by the husband, on condition that she performs all the wifely duties, which are laid down by Indian religious codes and social customs. The itinerary list of duties includes (i) childbearing, (ii) complete subservience to the husband who should be served, pleased, worshipped (iii) faithful sex-slavery, even when there is no love on

his/her/both sides, and it allows no choice, no freedom to love or not to love. Once married or handed over to the man not chosen by her, she is obliged to lead a sex-life like animals even worse, because it is forced upon her as a duty. Although the ideal basis of sex-morality should be mutual consent and love, in the Indian Hindu order of things, neither the consent nor the love of the woman is required for the sexual satisfaction of the men. Thus, “religious marriage sanctions the commission of ‘rape en masse’ a practice both immoral and brutal. The Hindu marriage is clearly one-sided and unjust. For the woman it means no companionship, companionship being only a myth. Man is the protector of the weaker vessel, which he owns\(^1\), no freedom, no individual existence, only duties and an inflexible discipline. “The Hindu marriage grants women no rights whatsoever; it imposes only obligations, while for men, the marriage vow remains quite elastic”. So Roy finds the Hindu practice “not only illegal; it is positively immoral”. And he notes with disgust the cynically selfish motivation behind the glorification of this practice as ‘spiritual union’, ‘sacred bond’, in which the Hindu woman is designated as the incarnation of selflessness. It is assumed, that being called a goddess, the woman should not yearn for rights and privileges, neither be bothered about reciprocation of her love; she should have no personal desire, only the noble passion for giving. Roy explodes the “bubble of the fondly cherished delusions”\(^2\), and lays bare “the lie about the exalted position of the woman in Hindu society”.

In both the essays Roy attacks the frame work of values, which was already tottering, but which would not give way to a superior framework. He sees the tottering framework as a heritage of a feudal-patriarchial culture, which reduced the mother to a mere means of production, refused women the status of partnership, and subordinated her to the position of a dependent, enjoining upon her complete self-abnegation for the preservation of the

peritracheal family. Although discarded by modern Europe, this culture was being still upheld in India by orthodox people and falsely vested with glorious spirituality.

Roy points out, that this ideal was not only not spiritual but rather one proceeding from such crass utilitarianism, that it could find corroboration in the ideals propagated by the fascists of the time, including the fundamentalists of our time, who refused to accept woman as equal to man and wanted to condemn her to a life of stagnation, of the three C’s (cooking, childbirth, church).

Roy also pours contempt on the presumption of the male’s biological superiority to the female as being based on the same bad logic as was used by the white people prior to the Independence of India, to rule over and suppress the non-whites - exploitation justified in the name of protection of the weak by the strong.

Roy could not but feel a strong sense of revulsion at this cynical negation of freedom in the name of false ideals. And even his casual half-humorous remarks bear witness to this bitter revulsion. Roy felt, that this inhuman code of conduct for the woman was in its turn polluting the entire society, sending out criminal tentacles to suck away the natural moral strength of both men and women. The intense depth of feeling for people thus socially wronged is evident in ‘Why Men are Hanged’, a series of episodes recorded from his personal experience of life in prison.

With the humanist’s optimism, Roy felt that this false ideal was bound to go; it was a moral as well as a historical necessity. He noted with approval the beginning of a stir among Indian women, though “the great bulk of women still remains entrenched in superstitions”. Roy predicted an inevitable change in the attitude of women, inspite of the conservative resistance. This was to
proved to be real. “Demagogues will vie with each other to sway the people by appealing to the prejudices and superstitions of the people”1. As a result, the ghost of the dead past still hangs on, assuming increasingly a threatening pose in revived religiosity to which the politician must submit. Although Roy stressed the Indian woman’s subjugation to male-dictated unfair laws, in any authoritarian system it is still the male-dominated establishment - social, political, religious - that determines the woman’s role, decides for her whether she should marry early or late, should remain fertile or go sterile, should work and play outside or be pushed back into the perpetual cycle of kitchen-child bed-church.

It is said about Rosa Luxemburg, that she was not interested in any campaign for women’s rights, since she believed the inferior status of woman to be a social feature of exploitative systems, which would be eliminated by the advent of socialism. The experience of the socialist states has proved the hope to be rather naive. The problem is entrenched much deeper than the reach of social-political-economic changes. It is rooted in the psyche of both men and women, so that the subjection has continued so smoothly and unfelt over the ages, and still continues to remain so. Roy had caught a glimpse of the problem, when he bitterly noted how palpable untruth became a matter of current belief. He contends, not only men tell lies; women also believe in it as a matter of habit. The fear of freedom has been embedded very deeply into the female psyche and has flourished there through centuries. Roy had also marked the other side of the coin - the male psyche.

Roy had advised the enlightened woman to prove the intrinsic worth of a woman. It is of course not a very easy task in view of her situation; rather it is easier to submit to ritualistic religiosity and humiliating laws and conventions still very much in sway. Actually it cannot be the fight of a woman all by

In fact, the most persistent obstacle to freedom that Roy found in the Indian situation was not so much external as internal; it was the deeply entrenched force of reaction controlling and dictating an entire culture, which rested upon acceptance of discrimination, inequality and injustice in a thousand forms. In the garb of 'spirituality', it was crass materialism and utilitarianism, which still held their sway. In the orthodox view of woman, still very strong at the time, Roy detected the symptom of a deep-rooted sickness, the strong sway of a reactionary social philosophy, which was obviously outdated and yet could put up a very real obstacle to the emergence of a new India.

Even so far back as in *India in Transition* Roy had noted the growing trend of reaction in Indian politics. Chapter 7 of that book traces the early development of the forces of progress within the Congress, its work for social emancipation, and then finally its backtracking at the rise of orthodox nationalism. That even the 'Age of Consent' bill, seeking very marginal and minimal physical security for childbrides, could be opposed in the name of national glory, had disturbed Roy, and here lay the seed of thought, which later germinated in the prison diary. In jail, he had been eagerly waiting for release so that he could openly resume his work for the liberation and reconstruction of India. He had also realised the strength and extent of the grip of orthodoxy on the Indian masses and felt that in order to make political liberation a reality liberalisation of the mind had to precede it. So, in his own way, Roy began a war against traditionally held false ideals, which caused pervasive injustice.

The future, Roy visualised was to be founded upon the grave of the dead past. This vision remains unfulfilled after decades. It is never an easy task to do away with an entire complex of culture. So long as a vote-based democracy along with a populist brand of secularism exists, it would be impossible for uprooting orthodoxy. The fears Roy expressed years back have
proved to be real. "Demagogues will vie with each other to sway the people by appealing to the prejudices and superstitions of the people". As a result, the ghost of the dead past still hangs on, assuming increasingly a threatening pose in revived religiosity to which the politician must submit. Although Roy stressed the Indian woman's subjugation to male-dictated unfair laws, in any authoritarian system it is still the male-dominated establishment - social, political, religious - that determines the woman's role, decides for her whether she should marry early or late, should remain fertile or go sterile, should work and play outside or be pushed back into the perpetual cycle of kitchen-child bed-church.

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