CHAPTER VI

Conclusion
CONCLUSION

M. N. Roy, a distinguished personality of modern India makes a position for himself in the international field among so many great personalities. However, in his own country, he is not as famous as he deserves. The most striking point of Roy's personality is that he is both a man of action and a man of thought and he reconciles them so brilliantly throughout his life.

He is entirely a self-made man. With a little education, he has joined political movement, and has started his revolutionary life as nationalist, then works as a Marxist and ends as a Radical Humanist. Throughout his entire revolutionary life, he has to rely only on his wits, intelligent and courage, to forge ahead. Due to the brilliance of his mind, which he has acquired through deep study and mastery over the theory and practice of communism places him in the highest position in the communist history. Whatever he has achieved in the abroad and in the country is his own creation. But such a person is ignored by Indian people. It is strange that in a country so given to hero worship, Roy should not have become a popular idol. The reason may be his critical
approach and straightforward personality and his severe criticism of Gandhi who at that time was the national hero of India. Another reason, perhaps the uncompromising aspect of his character, because, with a little differential attitude towards Gandhi and some understanding with Nehru he might have found an important place for himself, but Roy, as a person never compromises anything, which he thinks as right. In this context, the reason analyzed by S.N. Ray is acceptable. In a tradition bound country like India, Roy’s radical rejection of India’s so-called ‘spiritual heritage’, his view of Hinduism as an ‘ideology of slavery’, his persistent stress on cultural revolution as an essential component of any political economic and social revolution, are not acceptable, that makes him far away from popularity.

Even in his writings, there is no ornamentation, no tub-thumping, no irrelevancies, and no evasion. He writes so boldly, to approach any matter, he thinks to be right. His writings are intelligible for those people who understand his style of thought and his background of ideas. Therefore, he is not concerned with others reaction, about him and his activity. He is only concerned with the perfection of his thought and action.
In the international field also though he had connected with so many great personalities even with some, he had emotional attachment, he never accepted their thoughts without analyzing and criticizing them. His belief on ‘free thinking’ is the cause of his break from Communist International. With little adjustment and diplomatic silence he could have stopped it, but his uncompromising character never allowed him to do so. Insistence on propagating the truth as he has seen it is one of the dominant characteristics of Roy that keeps him away from popularity as well as power. However, he is indifferent to both throughout his life.

Starting his revolutionary life as a nationalist in the narrow confines of colonial Bengal, Roy stepped forward into the wider field of world Revolution, which cultivates Roy’s concept of revolution. While living in Russia, in the midst of revolution and radical reconstruction, and also in Germany, a country in revolutionary ferment, Roy had become a part of a cosmopolitan world community of revolutionary, whose mental horizon stretched far beyond their own countries interest. Even though, he has never forgotten his own country. In the international field, he places the problems of his country. His supplementary thesis regarding colonial countries proved his alertness towards his own country. Therefore, Roy is a life long revolutionary, which he has started as a nationalist, then
communist and ended in his Radical Humanist Movement. But for Roy the word 'revolutionary' is not used in the ordinary sense of the term. On the contrary, Roy's scheme involves a long-term process of social change. So Roy's method of social change is 'revolutionary'. He has added another concept 'romantic' with 'revolution' as he claims that revolution is a highly romantic view of life. He reconciles revolutionaries will and power of reasoning and it is this balance of reason and emotion, of logic and passion, which enlightens the personality of Roy in those formative years of his stay abroad as a revolutionary.

In the evolution of his ideology, Roy is, mostly connected with Marxism, which traces his life into a new turn. It is due to his contact with Marxian Ideology and his deep study on various field of knowledge that M.N. Roy is now what he is. His attachment with Marxism and Socialism begins in 1917, when he studied the basic books on socialism particularly the works of Karl Marx. However, he has become a full-fledged Communist in 1919, which is continued till he founded Radical Democratic Party. It is after 1940, Roy has questioned some of the fundamental tenets of Marx which leads the evolution of his own system of thought, i.e., Radical Humanism. However, founded on Marxism, his philosophy is departing from official Communism in so many points. As
Roy thought, 'Marxism is not a closed system', that it is a 'method of thinking' and Communism is not appropriately applicable in Indian situation. "By examining things as they are in India, we came to the conclusion that our previous notions of class relation, acquired from text books written on the basis of experience in other countries, did not quite fit in with relation to our country". He claims that communistic thinkers like Marx, Engels, Lenin etc., deliberately excluded moral and cultural values from their ideology. That is why communist revolution took place only in culturally under-developed countries. However, Roy gives much importance on moral values that implied cultural values, which belongs to Roy perhaps for his Indian background. This is some how, the impact of Buddhism on him, which is mainly concerned with moral values. Though Roy denies the cultural richness of Indian tradition, he is, also agreed that in Indian situation communism is not applicable. Even criticizing the Indian culture as "spiritualistic" he some how accepts its richness.

Roy's departure from communism is mainly due to his love for freedom. Individual freedom is most essential for the development of individual as well as society according to Roy. So the communistic interpretation, which is expressed by Marx and Engels in Communist Manifesto is that after communist revolution, 'we shall have an
association in which the free development of each is the condition for free
development of all’, has been wholly belied. Roy claims that this
interpretation of communism minimizes human freedom. Communism as
a purely economic system did not promote full development of political,
economic and social freedom of man. Even the economic system built up
in the communistic states is anti-humanistic. Therefore, Roy traces the
concept of ‘Philosophical Revolution’, which he thought generates the
value of the future society. For any social revolution, philosophical
revolution must be necessary, and he found such revolution in his Radical
Humanism. His philosophical revolution, i.e., Radical Humanism is a
deduction from the history of democratic and communistic revolution,
positively in the first case, negatively in the second. Roy thought that
Radical Humanism as a philosophical (cultural) revolution is more
properly applicable for under-developed country like India. He is quite
right that in Indian society where majority of people are poor and
illiterate, social revolution should be different from the revolution that is
applicable for other country’s situation. But it does not imply that
communism is not suitable for Indian social order, as Roy claims.

But Roy’s Radical Humanism is not a complete departure from
Marxian ideology. Taking his cue from the early phase of Marx thinking,
he attempts to build a liberal brand of philosophy. So he may be called a revisionist of Marxian Philosophy who reformulated it by freed itself from Marxian dogmas. Pointing out the weak points of Marxism, Roy maintains that neither Marx, nor Engels, nor Lenin come from working class, so their ideology do not arise from proletariat. The class struggle of their ideology totally rejected by Roy, as he thought that it ‘makes social progress sterile and stagnant’. Instead of giving, much importance on working class Roy traces the attention to middle class, as he thought middle class intellectuals play an aggressive role in social progress. He is true, to some extent in giving priority to intellectual development for social progress. Some may criticize it as meaningless, because in case people who are hungry, priority should be given to economic security instead of intellectual work. But it is equally true that our problems can not be solved until and unless we have got clear ideas about their solution. So, to attain economic prosperity, man must depend on himself. Therefore, Roy’s solution of the economic problem is different from that of Marxian interpretation. For Roy, economic problems are to be solved in such a way as to ensure a better climate for men and women to unfold their potentiality. Thus, unlike Marx his economic security includes individual freedom also. Roy’s significant departure from Marx rests on his recognition of the role of individual.
Marxian concept of economic determinism is, severely criticized by Roy. Economic determinism as Roy claims, as a dualistic concept cannot be deduce from materialism as Marx holds. It is not simply true that the economic mode of production is the determining factor of all aspect of human history. The motive force of all activities of man is not economic, there are many other motives having no relation with economic one. Roy accepting 'determinism' shifted it to explain the physical universe, which he thought as a determined process. He identifies reason with determinism, in order to connect the missing link in the chin of evolution. But he himself, is not satisfied with his suggested solution which is extremely sceptical.

While working in the Indian field, Roy has to face the Gandhian ideology, which is strongest in the number of its supporters. As both Gandhi and Roy, belong to same background similarities obviously seen in both of them. Particularly in case of their attitude towards morality, that is, generally absent in western countries. However, Roy’s morality is materialistic as it is, connected with reason, which for Roy is a product of evolutionary process; Gandhi’s morality is spiritual connected with God. Though morality of Roy is rational, it is not completely above the
influence of ‘Spirituality’, which belongs to Indian tradition in both of them. As a man, Roy has admired Gandhi, but his criticism of Gandhian ideology makes him ‘Gandhi’s enemy number one’. Roy severely criticized Gandhi’s conservative attitude towards modern science and technology and his spiritualized nationalism. Leaning on spiritual superiority of Indian culture, Gandhi spiritualizes nationalism, because for Roy, nationalism is another name of Gandhism. Again, in the name of criticizing western culture as materialist, he rejects modern technology, industrialization and nearly everything that is concerned with modern civilization. No doubt, Gandhi’s rejection of modern technology is unacceptable, but Roy’s approach towards modernization is not also totally, acceptable. Too much of industrialization is not suitable for country like India, because majority of Indian people involved in agriculture. Roy has also agreed with this point.

Roy criticizes Gandhist or Nationalist view regarding the uniqueness of India and presumably, therefore that India happens to be having a private revolution of her own. As he thought, India as a part of world, India’s nationalist revolution is not distinct from other countries revolution. So what is applicable to the world as a whole, must be applicable to India with the necessary modification. But Roy is also
conscious about the distinctness of Indian social order. Because of that, he formulates a new ideology, which he thought as suitable for Indian situation in which he reconciles modern technology with moral values for social reconstruction, which is not the mark of western culture. The meeting point of both the personality is that both are indifferent to popularity and power.

Roy's cosmology is monistic materialism based on Darwin's evolutionary theory, in which he adds some philosophical explanation to tie up the missing link in the chain of evaluation. He explains the emergence of reason and other mental activities in his own way, as he has not found any scientific explanation of these, in biology. Therefore, he reconciles psychology with physics. His psychophysical relation of man rests partly on science and partly on philosophy. He has added idea with fact, to solve matter- mind problem.

Again, Roy explains life to have originated as a novelty in the context of the physical universe governed by deterministic laws. However, he cannot give an adequate account of how the capacity of matter to produce life operates. Explaining it not a metaphysical; but as an epistemological question, Roy deduces his theory of knowledge from
materialism. He explains possibility of knowledge, truth, etc. in relation with reason, and man’s search for freedom, which he derives from his metaphysical theory. Rests on materialism, he accepts experience as the source of knowledge, however he equally relies on certain assumed principles in explaining mental phenomena.

Roy being a materialist, has unbound faith in the objective existence of the physical world and thus tries to lay down a theory of knowledge that ‘guarantees the objective existence of the physical world’. Like a realist, he is conscious of the existence of physical world, but he is equally conscious of the subjective rationality of mind, which he calls ‘innate rationality’. In this point, he is closer to Kant’s theory of knowledge as he reconciles reason and experience. But his explanation is different from Kant which is not critical as Kant held.

Roy explains the whole of human history with his monistic materialism. As he says, “There is an unbroken chain of evolution from vibratory mass of electric currents to the highest flights of human intelligence, emotion, imagination to abstract philosophical thought, recondite mathematical theories, the sublimest poetry, the master works of arts”\(^2\). Perhaps his deep study on the entire history of philosophy

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inspired him to tie up the whole of human history into one thread. He tries to draw out a complete monistic picture of the world through biological evolution of science, which shows his great intellectual efficiency. He has started with psychology and anthropology and they together with allied science merges biology - the science of life. Then biology with biochemistry merges in chemistry and the dividing line between chemistry and physics has disappeared. The result of this unbroken chain is the descent of man from the fiery mass of the primeval physical being to the pluralistic picture of the world of to day. Even he deduces the human brotherhood from his materialistic evolutionary theory, which is possible as man belongs to the same source; as they are by nature rational, possess similar instinct and impulse. However, he ignores other factors, which influence man in making his nature that differentiate man from man.

He declares his philosophy as materialism which is different from "eat, drink, and be merry" type and also from "mechanistic" and "dialectical" materialism. Rests on science; he has added some moral values to his materialistic philosophy that makes his materialism a distinguishing mark. Indian background pursues him, in this point also.
Believing in materialism, Roy rejects spiritualism and religion. Concentrating on man, he denies the possibility of any supernatural power like God, immortal abiding principle in man like soul and any religious rituals like prayer, worship etc. and other superstitions. In this connection, he particularly criticizes Indian spiritual culture that differentiates Indian culture from Western. He is right in holding that ignorance is the cause of man’s belief in superstition. Even the existence of God, is not scientifically proved, which depends completely on ‘belief’ and soul is until today a controversial matter that has needed more research on it. However, unconsciously Roy accepts spirituality in the sense of spiritual values.

Roy belongs to Brahmonical family background, which inspired and reinforced his penchant for theory, his elitism and his strong moral temper. In his youth, he is deeply religious in believing Hinduism, which never left him totally throughout his life and the result is his search for ‘those abiding, permanent values of humanity’. Therefore, in spite of rejecting, religion, God, Prayer etc., deep in Roy’s thought, spiritualism prevails. Again, in connection to spiritualism, his analysis and criticism of standard of civilization and Indian culture is not acceptable. Corollary to it, he also rejects possibilities of the intuitive knowledge, but in all
cases, we cannot rely only on positive knowledge acquired through experience.

The central theme of Roy’s Radical Humanism is man’s rationality, morality and freedom, which Roy deduces from pre-human biological heritage. His philosophy is based on, the assumption that human nature is essentially rational, which is a new dogmatism. Through ‘reason’ or ‘rationality’, he explains every aspect of human nature irrespective of other influencing factors. His epistemological, axiological, sociological problems all are deduction from man’s rationality. The first confusing factor in his concept of rationality is his uses of the term “innate rationality”. As a believer of scientific materialism, Roy is an empiricist; he examined everything in the light of empirical evidences. Whereas, the word “innate” represents something prior to experience. So when he says, ‘the notion of Natural Law is empirically derived, there is nothing mysterious about it. The regularities of nature are the facts of man’s experience. The notion of Natural Law, therefore, results from the innate rationality of man’ is quite a confusing matter.

Like Socrates, he depends too much on reason. But unlike Socrates he does not ignore the irrational part i.e., instinct, emotion, impulse etc.
He has connected these concepts with reason through causal connection, which is not also scientifically tenable. Even he identifies instinct with reason in explaining reason of primitive man. However, 'instinct' and 'reason' are not identical. Again, in conforming to his faith in reason, he denies the possibility of any revealed wisdom, as it is not confine to sense experience. But if one accepts evolution as the governing principle of human lives, as Roy does, there is no reason why the possibility of any other experience should be denied.

Through the causality in nature, Roy derives morality from man's rationality. Man is by nature moral, therefore, he concludes that rational ethics is possible. Depending on rational faculty, he is closer to Kant and far away from Gandhi's religious morality. Again, Roy refers to morality sometimes as *Sui Generis* and sometimes as empirically deduced. But it is not explained how one is able to hold the two positions at the same time. Moreover, explaining values as *Sui Generis*, Roy traces the concept of 'conscience', i.e. one type of self-awareness, which is not empirically verifiable and scientifically explainable. To avoid this problem, may be Roy identifies conscience with social responsibility. In Roy's own words, 'man's conscience is nothing more mysterious than measure of the consciousness of his social responsibility'. Identifying values with social
responsibility, he says, ‘only a moral man can constitute a moral society’. For this, he appeals all individuals to be moral, for social progress and creating moral society. No doubt, individual has a great role in social progress, but it cannot be regard as only way of social progress.

Roy’s concept of morality is to some extent closer to Socrates, when he is concerned with truth, knowledge, and values. Unlike Marx, he does not believe that moral values are mere superstructures upon the economic mode of production.

Roy’s concept of freedom is so wider that it includes all aspects of the term and nothing can be, left out from its domain. It signifies the progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of potentialities of individuals as human beings. However, these potentialities are biological. Therefore, freedom is not simply a political or economic content. But Roy does not clearly mentions about the nature of these potentialities and about their realization. Roy’s use of the comprehensiveness of the term ‘freedom’ undoubtedly acceptable, but his concept of attaining complete freedom is not practically possible which is a confusing matter. When he says that, at no stage man can be completely free, because ‘Quest for freedom is a continuation on a higher level of (231)
intelligence and emotion of the biological struggle for existence'. This makes the search for freedom, a never-ending process.

Mentioning his points of departure from Marxist theory, Roy says, 'when the struggle for existence takes place with purposiveness, on the human level of evolution, we call it quest for freedom'. However, Roy adopts mechanical evolution to explain human evolution, but in this point, using the term 'purposive', his evolutionary theory acquires a teleological character. Again, Roy has associated his concept of freedom with happiness. Placing intellectual freedom as supreme, he explains it as desirable for human 'happiness', which places him closer to hedonistic philosopher, particularly Mill. May be this is because of his materialistic outlook. Even his indifferent attitude towards God and religion is his love for intellectual freedom. Which he cannot eliminate completely throughout his life.

Moreover, his measurable character of freedom lies 'Freedom of Society must be the totality of the freedom of individuals', which is nearer to Mills altruism. Explaining measurable character of happiness Mill says, "Each person's happiness is a good to that person, and general happiness, therefore a good to the aggregate of all persons". But it is
doubtful, if it is possible to measure the attributes like 'freedom' and 'happiness'.

Roy's approach to freedom is different from other thinkers approach. Many of the earlier thinkers took freedom as political issue whereas Roy considers it as biological problem. Thus, it implies that, Roy considers the issue more fundamental than others. Roy's Radical Humanism is a social philosophy in which he concentrates mostly an individuals and his freedom. He explains all aspects of society in the context of human freedom. 'Society is a creation of man in quest of freedom' and social progress is possible through the continuous search for freedom of man, as he says 'it is the basic urge of all social advancement' as it is the 'progressive elimination of all the factors – physical, social, psychological'. Roy's suggestions for social reconstruction are revolutionary, which involves a long-term process of social change. His method of reorganization of society starts from educating the people. However, he is equally conscious of 'intellectual tyranny' which lead man to slavery. To construct moral society, he gives too much importance of morality of individuals without considering other factors, as society is a complex network of interacting and conflicting group interests and associations. Ignoring this, he asserts that – 'make
man good and society will be good automatically'. However, the practical approach of his morality cannot be brush aside totally.

Again, to establish 'a new world of freedom', he stresses on economic re-organization of society. But in this context, he criticizes Marxian planned economy as 'a fetish of economic planning' as it compromises individual freedom. Roy's contention is that if well-being is actual, it must be enjoyed by the individual alone.

Moreover, Roy's Radicalism strongly depended on utilitarianism. Due to his utilitarian attitude, he has associated the society with the individual life. It is also closer to existentialist humanism as Roy claims the reason for the crisis of his time, is 'the crisis of human existence.' Roy claims the whole of human existence has thrown into chaos and confusion. But his assumption 'man is essentially rational' makes him different from existentialist approach 'existence precedes essence'

Roy's New or Radical Humanism pleads for a scientific outlook that tries to bring out a rational harmony in the life of individuals and social organizations through knowledge, education and a spirit of cooperating living. Though it is an outcome of his later phase of life, its root
grows from his early life, when he was a school student. No doubt, his philosophy opens a new vista for human being, but his too much faith in man’s power to create himself a new, makes him too much idealistic. As his philosophy is the result of his life long pursuit, it covers perhaps all the aspects of individual and also of society.

Divorced from Communism, Roy suggests, Radical Democratic approach to politics. He is convinced that the real guarantee of democracy is moral and cultural level of its people, for which he relies solely on education but here he uses the term in a very loose sense, because education cannot be remedy in all cases. This is because of his minute observation of Indian condition. So, failure in politics he becomes a full-fledged humanist. However, in case of a man like Roy, ordinary criteria of success or failure do not apply. As his field of work is India, his humanistic approach is suitable to Indian social condition in particular, whereas his approach is universal in character. As his humanistic approach includes all possible aspect of human nature, individual or social, S. N. Ray rightly traces the reference of Terence, which is more properly applicable to Roy. Like Terence Roy could say, “I am a man; therefore nothing that is human is alien to me.”

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No, philosophy can be absolutely, new and in every philosophical system, much is taken from the thoughts of earlier philosophers. So in the philosophy of ‘New Humanism’ every thing is not new. However, it emerges as a philosophy of modern man without any bondage. In spite of the weak points of Roy’s philosophy, we have to accept that his ideas are so vital, and touch every human heart. Therefore, we can conclude that Roy’s Radical Humanism is the result of the wealth of his ideas, which provide food, for thought and inspiration for action to generations to come. Perhaps in the course of time, his ideas find a greater acceptance and the path laid by Roy, will solve the crisis of mankind in a better way.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

2. *Beyond Communism*, -M.N. Roy, p. 45