We subjected the materialist philosophy, as formulated on the basis of the scientific knowledge of eighteenth century and nineteenth centuries, to a searching analysis in the light of the latest discoveries of science. The analysis revealed fallacies and deficiencies which, however, did not invalidate the basic principal of materialism. It is not a closed system of thought- a bunch of dogmas. It is a logical co-ordination and integration of empirical knowledge into an all-embracing explanation of existence. There, it requires continuous readjustment, amplification, enrichment and precision.

M.N. Roy
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PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF RADICAL HUMANISM

I. MATERIALISM AS COSMOLOGY

M.N. Roy was a thoroughgoing materialist. His philosophy is materialism and materialism is the only possible philosophy for him. It represents the knowledge of nature. Knowledge that is acquired through contemplation, observation and investigation of the phenomena of nature itself forms its basis. Therefore, his materialism is not a monstrosity it is generally supposed to be, it is not the cult of “eat, drink and be merry” as it has been detected by some of its adversaries. Materialism is a monistic system of thought. But, this ultimate monism would not negate the resort to pluralist concepts of making explicit the process of the becoming of matter.

Roy is very anxious to repudiate the prevalent association of materialism with some kind of philosophy of life or a mere pursuit of hedonism. Materialism is only on account of the evolution and processes of the cosmos and it does not mean sensuous egoism. It simply maintains, that the origin of everything that really exists is matter, all the other appearances being the various transformations of matter. And these transformations are governed necessarily by laws inherent in nature.

Roy’s Materialism is the only philosophy possible, restated with the help of scientific knowledge. Materialism has been the most relevant hypothesis for a philosopher like M.N. Roy, to lay the foundations for his rationalistic, philosophical thought and fruitful scientific investigation. Another, in the last analysis, merges into religion or ends in the absurdity or sophism. In Roy’s opinion, the basic principle

of materialism can be stated in many ways, that the world is self-contained and self-explained. The world exists objectively¹, physical as well as biological, there is nothing, beyond and outside it; its being and the becoming are governed by laws inherent in itself; laws are neither mysterious not metaphysical, nor merely conventional; there are coherent relations of events. Consciousness is a property of that, which distinguishes existence from non-existence, in a certain state of organisation. This philosophical generalisation of the various branches of scientific knowledge, may be termed objectivism, naturalism or realism or by any other name, but M.N. Roy prefers materialism. For him, it makes no essential difference. Only the term Matter has a historical meaning, as it rules out illusions and superstitions, which debate philosophy into religion.

The distinguishing feature of materialism is that it is not a closed system like all the other schools of philosophy. It is not a dogma. It is a method of approaching nature, history, society in all its diverse departments. In short, life as a whole, indeed, in the narrow and speculative sense, materialism liquidates philosophy, in as much as it declares, that there cannot be an end to the process of acquiring Knowledge.

Yet another feature of materialism is that sense-perception is the foundation of all knowledge. The implication of this feature is the denial of innate ideas. Consciousness does not exist independent of external objects. But, when it is asserted and more clearly by modern sensationalism as was done by Sophism, the firm ground of materialism is abandoned. So the starting point of materialism is the acceptance of the objective reality of things. The relation between the perception of a thing and the thing itself has been an enduring

¹ Roy, M.N: Materialism, P. 185.
subject for ages, the central contention of speculative philosophy. The development of natural sciences has put an end to that disputation. The known claim of any scientific knowledge would doubt that conception of a tree corresponds with the tree itself. Any such doubt has been dispelled, since man began to get acquainted with nature, through his activities, when a thing reproduced by a man corresponds with the original object of his perception, as there can no longer be any possible doubt about the objective reality of things and the correctness of the perception of them. According to M.N Roy, except thoroughgoing idealists, no modern philosopher has disputed the existence of the external world; excepting for the possibility of knowing it. Knowing is an act of mind. Knowledge, however, is not identical with thought, any more than thought is identical with being. Thought is mind's inherent property, whereas knowledge is acquired from outside. One is inherent, while the other is acquired from outside. Sensations are bodily events. They are causally connected with the external world. Knowing as well as perception takes place on the plane of direct physical contact. The causal chain is physical, not logical. Therefore, for Roy, all arguments of the subjectivity are irrelevant. The other link is similar to the causal connection between events in relation, between sensations and their external causes. It is governed by physical laws. The median link is the natural connection between the organs of sensation and the brain. It has also to do with the organic property of reaction to stimuli. The process is electrochemical. It is further subject to physical laws. Thus, perception is no mystery. Perception as well as sensation is an event in the physical continuum, which includes the body. Therefore, it puts mind in direct contact with the external world. It is not a contact between two qualitatively different entities. Mind
itself originates in the organic property of reaction to stimuli. So the last link is cognition. It is also a physical relation.

However, in the opinion of M.N. Roy, cognition is not a tacit perception or recording of messages from the external world. The messages are stimuli. Cognition is an intelligent reaction to them. Perception is an automatic organic reaction. Cognition is an interpretative, selective act. Knowledge is not a mere conglomeration of messages received at random. It is a characterising judgment about the nature of things, from which the messages come. Higher organisms with developed brains possess the faculty, not only of receiving impressions of the environment, but of weaving them into a coherent mental picture of the physical reality they represent.

For Roy, Knowledge results from the constant and continuous reference of precepts to their external sources. That is done in various ways - actions of daily life, planned experiment, intelligent observation, memory, thought and the domination by the unconscious of all our conscious behaviour. Knowledge is a conceptual scheme born out of insight into the nature of things. It is gained through critical examination, rational co-ordination and logical deduction of perceptual data.

Further, Roy's materialism is monistic. Philosophy has always disliked dualism, which has linked philosophical thought ever since. Descartes freed philosophy from theology, but placed it under the hegemony of the mind, which he conceived as an immaterial substance. But the anti-thetical concepts of mind and matter could not be reconciled by speculative thought, according to M.N. Roy. The development of natural sciences brought the reconciliation of mind
and matter within reach. Modern psychology began to unravel the mysteries of the mind aided by psychology. The new physics has overcome the last hurdle with its dynamic conception of matter.

Thus, M.N. Roy rules out all sorts of metaphysical dualism which divides the world into two separate realisms, material and spiritual. Metaphysical dualism also divides man into two entities. It also gives rise to a dualistic psychology and dualistic ethics. This dualism has always been a refuge for supernatural religion. However, man can be made spiritually free only through abolishing the supernatural. True spiritual freedom, according to M.N. Roy, does not mean the freedom to choose from among many religions. It means the freedom of the human spirit from the tyranny of all of them. Therefore, M.N. Roy's world view has hardly any room for supernaturalism to play any part in it. His theory of the universe is monistic Materialism. As a matter of fact, the philosophy of M.N. Roy follows from the general philosophy of materialism, restated in the light of modern scientific knowledge. His philosophy entails the philosophy of materialism applied to the problems of social existence. The application is the result of a logical co-ordination and integration of empirical knowledge into an all embracing explanation of existence. Roy was also of the view, that Materialism does not amount to taking a sheer hedonistic view of life. It consists in claiming the primacy of matter over the mind. Man's brain, which produces ideas is a lump of a physico-chemical combination resulting from the entire process of biological evolution, in its turn, the biological evolution occurs in the context of physical nature which is the world of dead matter. The Physical origin of mental phenomena solves the hitherto baffling problem of dualism between mind and matter, according to Roy.
It is true that materialism is still a hypothesis only. But there is no gainsaying the fact, that it is the most plausible hypothesis for fruitful philosophical speculations and scientific investigations. The other rival views of life like Idealism, and others are also no better than so many hypotheses bordering on ecclesiastical obscurantism. None of these views could even prove its assumptions and verify its postulates, as against this, even if some of them are not known at present, the categories of materialism are not obscure.

However, recently a serious challenge has been presented to materialism as a cosmology. It has started with the discovery of modern physics or new physics, that the atom is not the ultimate unit of matter, as a result of which matter has come to be dematerialised. The validity of the classical concept of causality has also been questioned, some scientists and philosophers then begin hastily proclaiming that when there in no matter as the sub-stratum of the world and there is no law of causality, then the cosmology and philosophy of materialism cannot stand. According to them, the universe is not a self-contained unitary whole which functions with the intervention of any outside force. Thus, they preach a neo-mysticism and revive the old idealist view of life, denying objective reality of the physical world. This entails a loss of faith in himself.

According to Roy, the contentions of sophisticated philosophers against materialism, based on their scientific arguments is in the ultimate analysis rationalised religion. It is a new flare up in the age-old struggle between religion and science. However, science must not be allowed to lose the struggle, if man is to be the maker of his own destiny. The mechanistic cosmology constitutes the foundation of materialism.
A humanistic ethics based upon a naturalist rationalism should have to be built upon the rock bottom of a mechanist cosmology and physical realist ontology. It does not matter much, that some scientists too have been preaching the idealistic implications of modern science. However, like many other scientists and philosophers, Roy holds that the modern discoveries of physics do not warrant any dangerous atavism. They have only brought about a revolution in the notion of substance, only perceptually but not in the conceptual sense. That is to say, the conceptual notion of substance remains, but its construction is differently conceived. It can be measured mathematically and hence it must be a physical reality.

Roy feels that ever since the days of Laplace, a whole series of mathematical theories have demonstrated that the evolution of our physical system could have begun from a primordial state of evenly distributed matter. Modern astral physics has developed the nebular hypothesis into a mathematically precise theory. It tells us about the stars and galaxies, their formations out of gaseous nebulae, and asserts that the process is going on even today, in the farthest part of the universe.

Roy thinks that the picture presented by the physical science of our day does not contain any indication, that the world ever had a beginning or will ever have an end. The process of physical evolution is not reversible, but it is recurring. The radiation from the sun does not return to the sun, but follows a circuitous route, yet to be discovered by science, it seems to crystalise into a

new source of radiation. Particular physical bodies in the cosmic organisation may possibly freeze to death. However, the heat radiated out of them is not lost. It re-enters into circulation through the formation of gross matter, and eventually, new stars. This takes place mechanically, at any point of the infinite process, without the intervention of any extraneous agency. The discoveries of modern science have completed the picture of a self-contained, self-operative, physical universe with all its obvious and admitted deficiencies. As Roy says, there does not remain much difference between scientific theories and poetry or any other art of work, if the world-picture of modern physics exists in the minds of the physicists alone. The discoveries of modern science may at best only require the restatement of the materialistic philosophy as physical realism\(^1\). Thus, Materialism does not depend upon the definition of matter in terms of any particular substance, whatever one may call it, simply it states that objective reality and an external world exist antecedent to, and independent of, the human mind.

According to Roy, the principal defect of classical materialism was that its cosmology had nothing to do with ethics. Then, it envisages a gulf between physics and psychology. But, this defect can now be removed by building a bridge over this gulf with the discovery of protoplasm which is a physical substance. The mental phenomena today do not require any extra physical explanation. The supreme importance of man lies in the fact, that in him the physical process of becoming has so far reached the highest pitch. Thus, the monistic philosophy of physical realism makes possible a satisfactory approach

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to the human affairs in the light of a world-view, which does not require assuming any extra-physical categories. Thus for Roy, mind and matter are only two aspects of the self-made world, which is self-sufficient and self-operating. Man is indeed free to thrive in this world, because he is a part of it. That is how the philosophy of Radical Humanism came to be born.

II. THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Roy’s philosophy of history implies his view of materialism of the Greek as well as the Indian. It is clear from his views, that he considers materialism to be the only possible philosophy and he prefers to say that only the term ‘matter’ has a historical meaning and also rules out illusions and superstitions. M.N. Roy tries to develop his philosophy against the background of the problems of the contemporary age, and to give it general validity of a philosopher, to integrate within the philosophy of history. The roots of Roy’s ideas on the philosophy of historiography must be traced to his own experience. He had no faith in the predominant role of objective forces in the making of history. He considered human ideas as more fundamental.

As Roy became increasingly aware of the significance of human ideas and values, the concept of the class and the theory of the class struggle correspondingly, lost their importance for him. He concluded, that the key to all social and cultural progress must be sought in man’s own nature, namely his urge for freedom and reason. His faith in materialism remained unshaken. And the main task before him was to reconcile the creative role of man with the philosophy of materialism. Roy conceived, history is not providentially ordained nor economically determined, nor is it simply an unravelling of the universal
spirit. Man has the power to make as well as to mar history. "The function of a revolutionary and liberating social philosophy is to lay emphasis on the basic fact of history, that man is the maker of his world - man as a thinking being and he can be so only as an individual." Roy's philosophy is an attempt to build up what we may call a humanist historiology. The genealogy can be traced to Greek thought. Protagoras and Epicurus, two philosophers greatly adored by Roy, emphasised the human role in the making of society and these ideas were enriched by the Stoics. This trend was revived by Vico and elaborated by Helvetius Condorcet, Michelet and others. Roy was largely influenced by the tradition of thought upheld by these thinkers and tried to revive it as against a mechanistic view of history.

Voltaire was the first to use the expression 'philosophy of history', but it has been used in different senses by different writers. Sometimes it refers to an enquiry about the extent and the nature of knowledge, that can be derived from history in contradiction to the knowledge that can be derived from physical nature. By 'philosophy of history', some writers refer to a cyclic theory with reference to which they try to interpret the whole pattern of social development. For some thinkers such as Karl Marx, philosophy of history means the attempt to find out the causal relation of historical events. In other words, it is a study in historical causation. Roy applied the expression of philosophy of history in this last sense.

The idea of causation in history is a very old one. In one part the sole cause of all historical developments is ascribed to the divine providence. In Hegel, the divine providence came to be replaced by a metaphysical reason and

history was conceived as a rational and orderly process, under the direct force of the Absolute. Later theorists sought to replace metaphysical reason of Hegel by a more lasting concrete material force as the guiding factor of history. Marx discovered this guiding factor in economics and Buckle in geography. Oswald Spengler discovered some quasi-biological lands regulating the rise and fall of civilizations. Roy discovered the driving force of human history is man's urges and ideas conditioned by material facts. Therefore, there is an element of eclecticism in M.N. Roy's philosophy of history.

Roy tried to develop his philosophy of history recognising fully, that the history of man is not an inevitable or pre-determined process. But, it is possible to discover in human history, an integrating principle with reference to which, different events may be related to each other and their social significance assessed. History was looked upon by Roy as a science, as a process of development. He said, "it is not a chaotic conglomeration of fortuitous events"¹ a simple chronicle of facts without any causal relation between them. Roy pointed out, that the close relation between the past and the present tends to show that social events are not arbitrary, but causally inter-linked. "The past is to be studied for a rational explanation of the present. The discovery of a rational connection between the past and the present of the human race shows off history as an evolutionary process. Consequently, it becomes possible to deduce some general laws governing historical events"².

Further, in the opinion of Roy the past is not there for the historian to study. There are two records. They are of two kinds - physical, namely implements, ruins of buildings, relics of art and craft and so on, and written

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documents, which can be called mental or spiritual records. The latter are of primary importance, because the significance of the physical records can be fully appreciated with their help only. Philosophy is the instrument for reconstructing a universal history of the past on the basis of a criticism of written records. Thus, history of language is a part of the science of history. On the other hand, words originate in course of the process of biological evolution to serve as vehicles for the expression and communication of primitive emotions and ideas. Languages develop to serve the purpose of co-ordinating disjointed ideas and emotions. So, for Roy the history of languages is the early history of the evolution of thought, that is the history of primitive philosophy. Since, without the aid of philosophy no history could be written, to that extent, Hegel was right in saying, that the history of philosophy was the history of civilization.\textsuperscript{1} However, the fact is that by a critical study of the records of the past, history discovers the hidden springs of human action. So the past can be reconstructed more accurately as the history of thought. As G.P. Battacharya has rightly pointed out, that Roy’s view of history as a determined process may create confusion, unless the particular sense in which he used the expression is clearly explained.\textsuperscript{2} He used the expression determined process in contra-distinction to what may be called the arbitrary or the mysterious process. A determined process in his philosophy meant a rational process and it is not necessarily predetermined. Roy’s view can best be explained by quoting from Von Mises on this subject. Mises argues, that determinism “does not predict future events. It asserts that there is regularity in the universe in the concatenation of all phenomena.”\textsuperscript{3}

Mises further writes, "the sciences of human action by no means reject determinism". The objective of history is to bring out in full relief the factors that were operative in producing a definite event. In retrospect, there is no question of contingency. The notion of contingency, as employed in dealing with human action, always refers to man's uncertainty about the future and the limitations of the specific historical understanding, of the future of events. It refers to a limitation of the human search for knowledge, not to a condition of the universe, or of some of its parts. By describing history as a determined process, Roy simply meant that all its events were caused by some factor or factors and do not appear arbitrarily. Roy accepted human will as the most powerful determining factor in history. Humanism, in Roy's philosophy appears to be closely related with the human urge for freedom. The meaning of the human urge for freedom, as formulated by Roy is its relation to the biological struggle for existence. The urge for freedom in the human will is to unfold the potentialities, latent within himself. Whenever an obstacle stands in the way of unravelling man's potentialities, his innate will to freedom tries to overcome it, and thus it forms the basic impetus to all round human progress. As Roy has put it: "From time to time, the march of history is obstructed by the requirements of the established social order, which sets a limit to human creativeness; mental as well as physical. The urge for progress and freedom, born out of the biological struggle for existence, asserts itself with a renewed vigour to break down the obstacle. A new social order conducive to a less hampered unfolding of human potentialities is visualised by men embodying the liberating ideas and cultural values created in the past. A new philosophy is born out of the spiritual heritage of mankind, to herald the reorganisation of society".

Roy tried to reconcile the freedom of the human will and the human urge for freedom with historical determinism, by taking human will itself as one of the determining factors of history. He admitted, that there is a great difference between the determinism of the physical nature and the determinism of human history. The physical nature generally follows mechanical laws. Therefore, man cannot change its course. But in the determinism of human history, the human will plays a dominant part and therefore man can influence its development. Determinism can still be maintained, if it is differentiated from predestination. According to Roy, human history is a determined but not a predetermined process. History is determined by various factors and human will is the most powerful of them. The role of human will is uncertain and unpredictable. Therefore, the future of history is not predetermined. If the events of life and society were predetermined, either by divine providence or by mysterious economic laws, there would have been, Roy admitted no human freedom. But history, nevertheless remains a determined process, since the human will, desire and endeavour in pursuance thereof are also determined. It is in the sense, that they are not mysterious, but follow from the biological nature of man.

However, Roy admits that there can be no absolute determinism in history, which cannot be differentiated from predestination by making man free to determine his future. Roy tried to combine free will and determinism in his philosophy of history. Roy used the expression determinism in history in the sense of activistic determinism of Von Mises.

The course of human history is uncertain, owing to the predominant role of man. Roy observed, "At any period of history, there are many alternative possibilities of development, but that uncertainty is about the future; in the past, history has taken one of the many possible alternative sources. Historiography explains specific causes of a preference in different parts of the world that allow formulation of some laws of history. In history, there is no predetermined pattern, no rhythm or dynamism of its own, independent of human will and ideas, but it may still enable us to discover a general trend. If history is made by man, it must be purposive, and if man is rational, it will be possible to ascertain the purposes by human intelligence. The analysis of history and human nature led Roy to conclude, that the main purpose of man in history is to realise his freedom. Man's urge for freedom supplies human history a clear direction. According to Roy, this does not imply a faith in continuous progress, without reversal. Both progress and regression were explained by Roy with reference to human ideas, which run in two directions.

III HUMAN NATURE AND LAW-GOVERNED UNIVERSE

Every system of philosophy is based upon a concept of human nature. Some consider man as a divine entity and some take him as a mere physical conglomeration and complex of material forces. Man is regarded by some as a selfish economic being, always trying to promote his own interests. On the other hand, many consider him as a social animal. Some consider that man is rational, while some consider him as essentially irrational, driven mainly by blind emotional urges. M.N. Roy's socio-political and economic ideas are a part of social science. Therefore, it must deal with the problem of human nature. In

order to ascertain human nature, man must be explained; but can not be explained in isolation. Roy’s interpretation of man naturally, raises the question of the origin of man and thus Roy’s philosophy enters into the sphere of metaphysics. Therefore, Roy observed, except on the basis of a philosophy embracing the totality of existence, all approaches to the problems of individual, as well as social life are bound to be misleading. In other words, a sound social and political philosophy must have a metaphysical foundation”

Roy was a materialist to the core. He maintained, that life came out of inanimate matter and man is the highest product of the process of organic evolution. He held, that experimentally life cannot be proved to be anything, but a phenomenon of matter in a specific state of physico-chemical organisation. According to him, all the attributes of man including his intelligence and emotion have a physical basis and can be traced back to the lowest form of organic matter.

Though Roy accepted materialism as an explanation of the origin of the world, inorganic as well as organic, Roy was not happy with the term materialism and he preferred the expression physical realism. According to Roy, human nature is determined more by physical and biological, rather than by social and environmental factors. In other words, man is the product of a long process of evolution - physical and biological - and the nature of man is determined by this process. First, Roy maintained, that human nature cannot be an immutable category, which is subject to an evolutionary process. He took up an evolutionary view of human nature and wrote. “It is a hackneyed saying that human nature

never changes. The truth, however, there is no sense in regarding the history of civilization as an evolutionary process.1 But, Roy maintained, that inspite of the evolution and changes, there are some constant features in human nature and the origin of those factors were traced by him to this process of evolution itself. Roy recognises the uniqueness of the individual, but as human beings they all have some factors in common, which forms the foundation of human nature.

In Roy's philosophy of Radical Humanism, two basic traits of human nature are emphasised, one is the rationality of man and the other is the human urge for freedom. Roy tried to trace the origin of these two basic traits of human nature to the physical universe and to the pre-human biological evolution, without postulating anywhere a transcendental category. In other words, he tried to interpret human nature in physical and naturalistic terms.

It is an old assumption of political philosophy, that man is a rational animal. Roy tried to discover the root of human rationality to the law governed physical universe. He wrote, rising out of the background of the laws which governed physical nature, the human being is essentially rational.2 There is strict uniformity in physical nature and all its phenomena are regulated by inexorable laws. Man, with his highly developed brain and nervous system serving as the means of inter-relation between the organism and its environment, becomes conscious of the law governed character of the universe. Roy wrote, "the mind becomes conscious of the environments, the radius of which gradually expands until the entire nature is embraced. It being consciousness of a law - governed system, human mind is necessarily rational in essence."3

In the physical world, man finds that nothing happens arbitrarily. Every phenomenon in nature is connected with some other phenomenon or phenomena. From this experience man, concludes that nothing can happen in nature without some cause. This makes him rational, and he begins to think in terms of cause and effect. Explaining the rise of human reason, Roy wrote: "Reason is the simple, instinctive notion, that every object of experience is connected with some other object or objects, which may or may not have been already experienced, but because of the belief in the connection, which holds the world of experience together, their existence is assumed". In his very words, the reason in man is thus an echo of the harmony of the universe. He pointed out, that reason did not appear suddenly in man, but in a rudimentary form it is present even among animals, though their activities still remained on the instinctive level. Further, he pointed out that an instinctive act presupposes consciousness and results from the automatic operation of intelligence. According to Roy, human rationality is a developed form of instinctive rationality present in the animal kingdom. He maintained, that man inherited the mental and emotional equipments of the animals as the basis of Humanness.

M.N.Roy thus traced the origin of human rationality to "the rational foundation of the objective physical world". In his philosophy, reason has emancipated itself in man from living nature. The process of emancipation began with the pre-human biological organisms and reached the culmination in man. Roy thus found a secular foundation for human rationality and made it independent of any transcendental significance. His main purpose was to

integrate materialist philosophy with human reason. He said, that "unless we can trace reason to the common denominator of monistic materialism, rationalism has no meaning for me"1. Trying to secularise the concept of human reason, Roy observed; "Reason is not a metaphysical category. It is the consciousness of the harmony of nature and as such an empirical reality. Rationality is a biological function, which is a microcosmic echo of the rhythm of the cosmos"2. Reason is an empirical reality, because it is represented by physical nature itself, (Physical determinism is reason in nature) and it is a biological function, because man becomes conscious of it owing to his highly developed brain, which he has inherited from his animal ancestry.

It should be pointed out here, that by describing man as rational, Roy has over simplified the problem of human nature. The dynamism of non-rational factors of the human mind has not been taken fully into consideration in his philosophy. It is true, that Roy did not exclude emotions and will from the concept of human nature, but he maintained that they could be reconciled with reason. "Reason being a biological property, it is not the antitheses of will. Intelligence and emotion can be reduced to a common biological denominator"3.

M.N. Roy explained his point of view, that "(Man) rose out of the background of the physical universe, through the long process of biological evolution. The "umbilical cord was never broken; man, with his mind, intelligence, will remain an integral part of the physical universe. The matter is a cosmos of a law-governed system. Therefore, man's being and becoming, his emotions, will, ideas are also determined; man is essentially rational."4 Man's

will and emotions are also determined in the sense, that they are caused by physical factors. They are rational in so far as they are not mysterious categories. Roy asserts - “will is not an irrational impulse”, which may be accepted. But, there is no denying the fact, that human will and emotions sometimes tend to go against rational considerations. Roy was not quite oblivious of this aspect of human nature. He wrote - although in a different context - that “most emotional acts are voluntary, but not rational as a result of free thinking. Will often defies reason”¹. The presence of will having a tendency to defy reason is a specific feature of man’s character and it makes human nature an extremely complex phenomenon. The physical nature follows a set of laws mechanically, which makes the physical system law-governed. The lower animals also follow their instincts, without having any tendency to it within themselves. But on the human level, the problem becomes complex by the presence of a conflict between different tendencies within man. Roy could not ignore this problem and he wrote: “the universe is a physical system. Having grown out of that background, the human being is also a physical system. But, there is a great difference: The physical universe is Law-governed, the laws being inherent in itself, whereas man possesses will and can choose. Between the world of man and the world of inanimate matter, there lies the vast world of biological evolution. However, the matter has its own specific laws, which can be referred back to the general laws of the world of dead matter; consciousness appears at a much later stage. Therefore, human will cannot be directly related to the laws of the physical universe.²

2. The Radical Humanist: July, 1976, P. 16
The analysis of human nature, as made by Roy appears to be empirically untenable. If man is by nature rational and moral, and is inspired by the urge for freedom, there should not be so much irrationality and immorality and encroachment on freedom everywhere in the world. If, as Roy categorically stated, the desire to be helpful to fellow-men was a more fundamental human trait than competition and conflict, the present state of exploitation, corruption, deceit and tension would remain unexplained. Man, in fact, is selfish and self-centered as well as social and co-operative at the same time. No theory of human nature would be adequate to explain man empirically, unless this dual nature of man is taken into consideration. Each of these concepts of man -- economic and selfish on the other -- is partially true, and therefore misleading. Roy wrote, that “if man is selfish and irrational, society must be a coercive organisation, a prison house to be guarded by earthly policemen, backed up by heavenly colleagues”.

Society is at least partially a coercive organisation that is maintained by the police and the army. To follow one’s interest in harmony with the social good is indeed a virtue, which every man should try to attain, but men actually very often follow their own individual interests, disregarding and ignoring the legitimate interests of others. While analysing human nature objectively, one must not ignore its vulgar and ugly aspects. Conflict and struggle are no less real in human society, than co-operation and mutual aid. It is arbitrary to state, which is the more fundamental trait of human nature. Trying to justify Roy’s view, Dr. Prakash Chandra writes: “One who is horrified with the phrase, that man is by nature selfish and thus jumps to the conclusion, that this being an irrational impulse, any effort to rational co-operation is bound to fail, takes the term in a very narrow sense. It is this vulgar interpretation of selfishness, which is responsible for the advocacy of laissez faire economy. The apologists of this theory justified it on the ground that this selfishness must express itself in aggressive competition, which

they wrongly inferred will finally lead to progress and well being in general. But, the facts speak otherwise. That selfishness being essentially virtuous from the social point of view had led, on the other hand, to co-operative and not competitive living'.

As a matter of fact, both competition and co-operation are facts of history. The roots of aggressive competition are also to be found in human nature and not in the laissez-faire theory, however fallacious this theory may be. The presence of both the tendencies in man must be admitted and the subordination of conflict and struggle by mutual co-operation should be taken as the measure of social progress. The optimistic picture of man drawn by Roy is in sharp contrast to the ugly realities of the present day society. "It is better to err, being over-optimistic, than otherwise," argues Dr. Dhar in this connection. The study of human nature supplies the raw materials, on the basis of which an ethical doctrine and a philosophy can be realised. If the study is unrealistic, the theories based upon it will be unreliable. Pessimism and optimism are equally dangerous in this case.

Anticipating this charge of over-optimism, Roy maintained, that though rationality and the urge for freedom are the basic features of human nature, these urges, however, do not remain at the conscious level of most of the people. He categorically stated that the urge for freedom is the most basic human urge, but most of the time it remains buried deep under the surface of consciousness. He also admitted, that very often men do not behave rationally and this was because "man has been told for ages, that his nature is to believe and to follow some higher authority". In other words, religion has undermined man's faith in his own rationality. Faith in the Divine will was, according to Roy, the basis of man's subordination to successive, oppressive terrestrial powers. Thus, religion also destroyed man's urge for freedom. Submission to Divine Power, and thus his urge for freedom was replaced by what Roy called fear of freedom, taking the phrase from Erich Fromm.

All the evil aspects of man’s social life cannot, however, convincingly be explained by the simple assertion, that man has forgotten himself under the influence of religion which is, in Roy’s own analysis, the product of human reason. The problem of human nature is much more complex, than what he thought it to be. Along with passions, impulses, selfishness, there is also reason in man and his moral and cultural progress is the result of the attempt to foster the rational faculty, bringing other elements under its control. This does not necessarily require the postulates of the rational and moral man as an empirical reality.

IV. SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

For Roy, all approaches to the problems of individual as well as social life are bound to be misleading, except on the basis of philosophy embracing the totality of existence. In other words, a sound social and political philosophy must have a metaphysical foundation. It is of great importance to trace the relation between philosophy, science and society. The bearing of science on society is obvious. Ethics must be given a higher place in social philosophy, including political thought, if the crying need of honesty and decency in public life is ever to be satisfied. But for the purpose, moral philosophy must be related to science. Social thought and political practice can not be harmonised with moral values, so long as there appears to be no relation between science and philosophy.

Associated with religious meaning, belief in the supernatural and engaged in speculation about reality behind appearance, philosophy differentiated itself from science allotting to the latter the inferior function of enquiring into transitory rational phenomena. However, not withstanding the
pretensions of metaphysicians to discover the final cause in the light of pure reasons in reality, science and philosophy have always been interrelated with alternating priority. According to Roy, in the earliest period of the history of human thought, science of course in a very primitive sense preceded philosophy. In the next period, speculative thought overwhelmed the early quest for the knowledge of the material world - of experience. Philosophy in the opinion of Roy, inspired the resurgence of science towards the close of the middle ages, at the bottom of modern civilization. Since then science forged ahead, one after another unravelling, the mysteries of nature. But philosophy smiled benevolently, contending that the pure reason of speculative thought alone could penetrate the mysteries of the super sensual transcendental realm to which they belong, maintaining that truth and reality were beyond the reach of empirical knowledge.

Further Roy referred, to recognise its secular sanction revealed in the light of biological knowledge as part of speculative philosophy and failed to find its roots in man himself. On the other hand, though as yet largely metaphysical, social and political philosophy came under the influence of rationalism. It seemed, that there was no causal relation between ethical values and the world of science. Moral philosophy was baffled by the problem of deducing values from facts. Social behaviour and political events appeared to be beyond the jurisdiction of axiology. In the last analysis, religion remained the only sanction for morality. But, in proportion religion became a mere conventionality as science undermined the faith in the supernatural.

Consequently, the position of morality in public life became very precarious. Religion came to be the anchor of private life for the modern man. It cannot logically dictate the norms of his social behaviour and political practice, having no bearing on the public life. Thus political practice was completely divorced from moral values, which could have meaning only in man's private life anchored in religion.

In Roy, Science and philosophy were an alternate to reformulate the philosophy of materialism in response to the developments in the natural sciences. The term philosophy has a very vague meaning for the average educated man. It stands not only for speculative thought, but also for poetic fancy. This vague, all embracing sense is generally prevalent particularly in India, according to Roy. It is true, philosophy is not distinguished from religion and theology. In Roy's opinion, it is believed to be the distractive feature of Indian philosophy that has not broken away from the medieval, as modern western philosophy had done in the seventeenth century.

Philosophical doctrines based upon faith cannot be tested by the standards of scientific knowledge. As a matter of fact, such doctrines deny the standards of scientific knowledge that can be applied to them. Therefore, their tests must be logical. The belief that the world was created once upon a time, is accredited to the idea of god. No creation is possible without a creator. Physical research has exploded the doctrine of creation, personal or impersonal, and consequently rendered the idea of God untenable.

A believer may disregard all the evidence of science and arguments of natural philosophy. M.N. Roy wanted to meet the believer on his own ground.
He wanted to expose the fallacy of the logic of his faith. According to Roy, the faith in God has a rational foundation. It results from the primitive man’s search for the cause of things. God is postulated as the cause of the world. If everything must have a cause, it is quite logical to ask the creator of God himself. The usual answer of religion is, that God is eternal. The search for a final cause must lead to *regresso ad infinitum*. Roy opined, that there is no reason why we should stop at God and call Him the final cause. To do so, is to abandon the notion that everything has a cause. Once it is admitted, that something may be self caused as done by postulating God as the final cause, many have their cause inherent in their own being. There cannot be any logical objection to the view, that the world is self caused, it was never created and it remains eternal.

Science progressively reinforced this logically tenable position, by finding the cause of the natural phenomenon in nature itself. So, according to Roy, the germ for the destruction of the belief in God is embedded in its own rationalistic foundation. It may disregard the evidence of Science and the arguments of Natural Philosophy. But, it can not stand the test of its own logic, which drives it into the fallacy of *regresso ad infinitum*. Here, the purpose of M.N. Roy is not to criticize any type of philosophy. It is to draw the philosophical conclusion of modern scientific theories. Religious philosophy must be reflected upon, if it is found that modern scientific research does not lead to a mystic and spiritualistic view of nature.

Faith in the supernatural does not permit the search for the cause of natural phenomenon in nature itself. Roy thinks, that the growth of the natural sciences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries enabled modern western

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philosophy to repudiate the superstitious creaks of religions. The contention, that modern physical research leads to a mystic supernaturalistic view of the world means that science has been defeated in the historic struggle against religion. Further, Roy opines that in the classical form idealism cannot be resurrected. The neo-spiritualists, therefore, do not find classical idealism tenable. They hold an agnostic view, nature is inscrutable, it is impossible to know what the physical world really is, the nature of reality is beyond our ability to know.¹

All this means, that modern physical research compels a return to the faith in the supernatural. Even classical idealism would not go so far, because it is based on rationalism, having grown out of the revolt against religious superstition and theological dogmas. For Roy, philosophy must break away from religion to perform its function, starting from the reality of physical universe and consequently head towards materialism.

Therefore a mystic view of the world is a negation of philosophy. It liquidates philosophy and resurrects faith. If scientific research really compels us to take a mystic view of the world, then philosophy must revert to its old occupation, that is to speculate about the hypothesis of a spiritual reality behind material appearances, about the postulate of a ‘World God, soul and its relation with individual souls and such other problems, that can never be solved by man himself, limited by his material being². Then, the ideal of human existence would again become the accomplishment of an impossibility; realization of the infinite by the finite. If it is true, that science has found it

2. Ibid, P. 573.
impossible to explain the phenomenon of nature, without assuming the acknowledged causes, the philosophy must relapse into the morals of idle speculations about problems that are insoluble by their very nature. The belief in supernatural forces would have to be revived. Religion would be restored to its old place of supreme authority. To speculate, about the nature of God as the embodiment of the supernatural, would be the highest intellectual occupation. But, on the contrary if it is found that a neo-spiritualism does not necessarily result from modern scientific research, then it must be admitted, that the historic battle between religion and science has ended in a victory of science. This historic battle between religions and sciences, superstitions and reasons, faith and knowledge will still have to be fought in those places, where it has not yet been fought.¹

According to Roy, philosophy and science, both in theory and practice, cannot be two different things. Philosophy, to be useful, must be stripped of all metaphysical and mystical speculations and brought to the hard realities of life. As soon as we are able to do this, a logical connection is established between philosophy and science. As a matter of fact, knowledge cannot be acquired in isolation from the physical existence, our knowledge being “nothing more mysterious than the sum total of such impressions caught by the retina of our eyes as well as by our sense-organs and stored in our brain”².

With man, there is noticed for the first time in the historical process an intelligent reaction to his environment. Both science and philosophy had their common origin and a desire to explain the physical phenomena, to live more satisfactorily on this earth. The original habit of assuming supernatural causes

of the different natural phenomena was also a manifestation of the scientific spirit, that everything has a cause. Besides, such assumptions are also integral parts of a scientific enquiry. In that age of intellectual backwardness, these served the purpose of arriving at a hypothesis. The gradually accumulating store of knowledge now enables man to explain things in terms of physics. Knowledge goes on endlessly. Both philosophy and science are coincident with that process. Philosophy has so far supplied the hypotheses which, when confirmed, attain the status of scientific truths.

Roy held, that to be a politician and a revolutionary, one should have to be a scientist. He must have a conviction, that the world has not been created by any supernatural power; it can be re-made by human efforts and in fact it has been so re-made, time and gain in the past. In the process of social evolution, certain principles of political organisation were formulated. These principles are not, however, abstract conceptions but are determined by concrete conditions affecting the life of man organised in society. When the existing conditions of society continue to affect mankind in an adverse manner, there arises the necessity of changing them. For this, however, the conviction can come only from the knowledge, which constitutes the essence of science, and “only from that kind of philosophy, which does not pretend to be something superior to science”.

It has been contended from certain quarters, that modern science does not encourage this spirit. It has reduced the ultimate reality to electrical waves, which behave electrically and are not law-governed. A conclusion has been sought to be reached from this phenomenon, that humans are not in a position to acquire a true knowledge of the physical existence. Scientific knowledge is thus, only

a creation of the mind, and a transcendental existence is the only reality. This neo-scientific conception of the reality knocks the bottom out of all social and political philosophies, based on the conviction, that man can play a decisive role in the transformation of the world.

The philosophical implication of modern science is a favourite subject with Roy, and he has dwelt upon it at every available opportunity. According to him, the implications of modern science are quite different from that which has been sought to be given above. It necessarily implies that one must have a mind to know. From this it does not follow, that nothing other than the mind exists and our knowledge about the physical world is only a project of one’s mind. It is true, he contended, that electrical waves are not material entities as popularly conceived. But, they are nevertheless physical categories. Otherwise these could not have been brought under the purview of physical research. Moreover, it would not be correct to say, that the universe is not governed by laws, probability itself being an expression of determinism. The world is still studied as a cosmos, although it is no longer of inert mass, but of dynamic events.

Modern science has however, according to Roy, tried to obliterate the distinction between science and philosophy. The problems of time, space, substance, and so on, which have so long constituted the province of philosophy have now been brought under the jurisdiction of science. Philosophy has thus to stage a retreat before the advance of science. No speculative philosophy would at present any more enable us to return to the pre-scientific view of the universe or to entertain an anti-scientific view. This does not go to mean, that philosophy has no more any role to play in the modern society.
Contemporary scientific knowledge is divided into several separate compartments without any visible link among them. But specialisation should not result in isolation. According to Roy, it is the task of philosophy now to coordinate and synthesise the knowledge acquired in the different departments of science and derive from them a set of fundamental principles for guiding the human race. Henceforth philosophy would thus function as the science of sciences. Only by discharging this function, it would have to prove its rationale during the modern age. Philosophy must no longer give handle to wild imagination and contradict the scientific view of the universe. So far as the function of modern philosophy is concerned, Roy's position thus seems to be analogous to that of Spencer and Whitehead.

According to Roy, faith in religion was incompatible with the sovereignty of man. Religion makes man an instrument in the hands of providence and so curtails his freedom. He opines, that human freedom was conditional and depended upon the liberation of man from the clutches of religion. This is the reason why he made materialism an indispensable condition of freedom. In religion, man occupies a privileged position, he represents the divine force. Instead of restricting his freedom, it gives man supreme self-confidence. The divine character of man supplies a philosophical basis for human brotherhood and cooperation, favouring thus the cause of democracy and mutual social relations. The philosophy of materialism dislodged man from that position and he was reduced to a machine. Science gave man power, but he ceased to remain sacred. Human relation tended to become more and more mechanical, divorced from ethics. Power without ethics has given rise to the present crisis, when human
civilization itself is being threatened with destruction by the very power acquired by man. A remedy must possibly be sought in a new system of rationalistic ethics.

Roy asserted that man was not religious. He said that human nature is not to believe in some benevolent super-human power. He took up the attitude of an orthodox materialist about the origin of religion though he no longer considered it as an instrument devised by the exploiters to perpetuate the system of exploitation. Roy said, that "religion is a product of man's reason and urge for freedom - the two basic attributes of human nature". He agreed with James Frazer, that the age of religion was preceded by the age of magic. Roy held, that faith in magic, however erroneous, had a rational basis. It was based upon the assumption, that the same causes would always produce same effects. In the primitive age, owing to his ignorance man believed that the magicians by sheer force of spells and enchantments could produce desirable effects. As experience exposed the limitations of the power of the magicians, man imagined a number of Gods controlling the various phenomena of nature. Thus arose the Gods of natural religion, which, Roy pointed out, "was the rational effort of the barbarian to explain the phenomena of nature and his experience thereof". In his search for the cause of such natural phenomena as rain, storm, movements of the stars and so on, man postulates various Gods and Goddesses of the natural religion. The search was an expression of his innate rationality his faith that everything must have a cause. Monotheism followed as a logical corollary to the primitive rationalist's view of polytheism. The Gods of natural religion

must be traced to one fundamental cause and thus arouse the notion of the Almighty Creator. Roy maintained, that the Gods of natural religion as well as the supreme being of monotheism, was analogous to the hypotheses of science. Both science and religion are attempts to explain the mysteries of nature, and Roy regarded religion as a primitive stage of science. He characterised religion as "a rational system of thought, limited by the inadequate store of positive knowledge". On the same grounds he described religion during his Marxist period as "the naive form of nascent science". Religion and science are thus two stages in the spiritual evolution of man, both determined by man's urge for freedom and his rationalistic nature. The religious spirit of absolute dependence upon God represents, according to him, the human urge for freedom, because, the urge underlying the sentiment of surrender is a desire - desire for deliverance with the help and grace of God. It is an intelligent act - an act committed with a purpose believing, that it will produce the desired result.

Roy pointed out, that the basic assumption of religion, whether polytheism or monotheism is that Nature is a law-governed system and that its laws are made by some superior power. Religion urges man to propitiate those superior powers, either by sacrifice or by prayer ultimately for his own welfare. Religion does not deny order in nature, but ascribes it to the inscrutable will of God. The idea of the law-governed universe, inherent in religious thought, laid the foundation of modern science, which tried to find out the laws of nature within Nature itself, instead of postulating a superior power as law-maker. Aided by the increased store of knowledge, human reason gave up religion as an

unnecessary hypothesis, but moral values must survive religion and therefore they must be integrated with secular philosophy.

Roy believed, that the system of secular morality was of vital importance for human freedom. In the first place, in this age of secularism, brought about by the development of science, moral values anchored in religion would have meaning only in man’s private life. In the absence of secular morality, a secular state may logically degenerate into a state without morality. On the other hand, any attempt to revive religious morality would inevitably go directly against the modern principle of secularism. The only remedy to this problem is to rear moral values on the scientific principle of secularism.

Secondly, Roy believed that, not only secularism but the freedom of man itself was incompatible with religious morality. He wrote, that “the religious faith in man’s moral essence limits sovereignty, indeed it is a negation of the liberation concept. In the last analysis, it implies that man, as man cannot be moral to be so, must feel himself subordinated to a super-human power. With this paralysing spirit of spiritual subservience, man can never be really free.” As already mentioned, Roy believed that the freedom of man is incompatible with the omnipotence of God, religious morality was condemned by him as ‘spiritual terrorism’.

Roy’s concern for moral values and his attempt to integrate them with the rational nature of man instead of associating them with religion or treating them simply as a super-structure upon the given socio-economic factors can be traced back to his earlier writings. In the jail volumes, he wrote, “the religious

man's morality is either hypocrisy or performed under duress. A materialist is moral by his own conviction. He practices virtue not as a payment for a place in heaven or for the salvation of the soul, but simply because he can not help it”. Roy is a materialist on fire as H. J. Blackham has rightly pointed out, his materialism is moral by his own conviction.

V. DYNAMIC ROLE OF IDEAS

Roy made a clear distinction between determinism in rational sciences and determinism in human history. He pointed out, that the determining factors of history are many and they can be divided into two quantitatively different sets of categories, physical or material and human or mental. He states, “after the generation of ideas, the single basic current of physical events bifurcates so to say: the biological world, on the higher level of evolution, it is composed of a double process dynamics of ideas and succession of physical facts”.

Ideas have always played an autonomous role in history. It is implied in the doctrine that man creates society, that humanist doctrine underlies the Marxist theory of revolution. The refusal to recognise the fact that from time immemorial, ideas born in man’s brain, itself an outcome of biological evolution, have preceded human action and thus stimulated historical developments, logically leads to teleology. Only sophists can distinguish between absolute determinism and predestination. If the events of life and society were predetermined, man could never have any control over them or even conceive the idea of changing them. It makes no difference whether the absolute determining factor is God or the means of production. In either case, man is not a sovereign entity and is therefore incapable of making his own destiny.

1. Grover, Verinder, (Ed.): Political Thinkers Of Modern India, P. 726.
The origin of the laws of social evolution must be traced in anthropology, in the nature of man. Man is not a living machine, but a thinking animal. An impulse felt by an anthropoid ape, approximating rudimentary thought, marks the birth of the species; the nature of man is determined by that event. In it, thought precedes action. Consequently, ideas play an autonomous role in social evolution. They cannot be referred economic origins, because thinking animals created tools and founded society. But ideas are neither *sui generis* nor of any metaphysical origin. They come from the human brain, which is a lump of a specific physico-chemical combination, resulting from biological evolution.

Human history, like natural history, is a determined process. But it is self-determined; and it is not absolute determinism. There is more than one determining factor, and they mutually influence their scope of operation. The dynamics of ideas and the dialectics of social development are parallel processes, both stimulated by man's biological urge for freedom. They naturally influence each other. A truly revolutionary social philosophy must recognise this basic truth of history. Only then it inspires the will to reconstruct society, without destroying individual liberty.

The Marxist conception of history fails, when it dismisses ideal systems (ideologies) as mere superstructures of economic relations, and tries to relate them directly with the material conditions of life. The logical development of ideas and the generation of new social forces take place simultaneously, together providing the motive force of history. But, in no given period can they be causally connected, except in the sense that action is also motivated by ideas. A new idea must be referred back to an old idea. A philosophy has a history of its own, and it is not a kaleidoscope of phantoms. In as much as action is motivated
by ideas, determinism in history is primarily ideal. Historical determinism comes to grief, whenever its exponents take a superficial one-sided view, ignoring the dynamics of ideas. If man is treated as automation, a small wheel in the gigantic social machinery, a puppet in the hands of economic providence called the forces of production, then the purpose of social revolution is bound to defeated. Instead of a commonwealth of free men, there would be a streamlined, electrified prison house, where a deceptive sense of security, if not actual physical comfort, would kill the inmates spiritually.

Philosophically, the materialist conception of history must recognise the creative role of intelligence. Materialism cannot deny the objective reality of ideas. They are not *sui generis*; they are biologically determined; priority belongs to the physical being, to matter. But once the biologically determined process of ideation is complete, ideas are formed; they continue to have an autonomous existence, an evolutionary process of their own, which runs parallel to the physical process of social evolution. The two parallel processes, ideal and physical, compose history. Both are determined by their respective logic or dynamics, or dialectics. At the same time, they are mutually influenced, the one by the other. As such history becomes an organic process. Roy enunciates "If the present can be convincingly explained by a more rational understanding of the past, then it will be evident that only a synthesis of Idealism and Materialism, more correctly speaking, a dispassionate and comprehensive appreciation of the entire heritage of human thought, can be the only philosophy of the future. Such a non-partisan philosophy will throw a flood of light on the thick gloom which today hangs on the horizon, and blaze new trails for humanity, out of the present impasse".

To put the proposition more precisely, what is needed is a restatement of materialism, so as to recognise explicitly the decisive importance of the dynamics of ideas in all the processes of human evolution - historical, social, political and cultural. Epistemologically, idealism stands rejected the older problem of perception, which baffled philosophers for ages, has been solved by modern materialism with the aid of the latest knowledge of physiology. The gulf between physics and psychology thus is no longer unbridgeable. A bridge is thrown across by merging psychology into physiology. All components of the most highly developed organism can be reduced to carbon compounds, which are physico-chemical substances. Vitalism cannot introduce a mysterious metaphysical factor.

Roy tried to interpret modern European history since the Renaissance by the general principles formulated by him. For a clean critical appreciation of his philosophy of history, it is necessary to refer to this interpretation, in brief outline, which is found almost exclusively in one book, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution.*

Roy's analyses the history of modern Europe, determined by two currents of thought, one originating in the Renaissance and the other in the Reformation. According to him, the form represents rationalism and is the source of inspiration for all libertarian movements in subsequent times. The matter continues the religious tradition and is related by him to the mysticism and collectivism of the modern period.

VI. CRITIQUE OF MARXISM

The philosophical and sociological writings of Roy indicate a progressive breaking away from his Marxist antecedents and affiliations. As a person, Marx evokes great praise from Roy. He regards Marx as a merciless critic of social injustice in the traditions of the great Jewish prophets like Berdyaev, Gehrlich, Sombart and Edward Heimann. M.N. Roy also regards Marx’s impassioned moral plea for social justice as a legacy of the Jewish prophets. He considers Marx, in essence, a humanist and a lover of freedom. He wanted to restate the “humanist, libertarian, moralist” kernel of Marxism after freeing it from the dogmatics of economic determinism. So far as the teachings of Marx are concerned, either he repudiated them or made substantial modifications to them. He writes: Marx’s proposition, that consciousness is determined by being, placed materialist metaphysics on a sound scientific foundation. His subsequent thought; particularly sociological, however, did not move in the direction indicated by the significant point of departure. Marxism, on the whole, is not true to its philosophical tradition. In sociology, it vulgarizes materialism to the extent of denying that basic moral values transcend space and time. With the impersonal concept of the forces of production, it introduces teleology in history, grossly contradicting its own belief, that man is the maker of his destiny. The economic determinism of its historiography blasts the foundations of human freedom, because it precludes the possibility of man ever becoming free as an individual. Yet, contemporary sociological thinking has been considerably influenced by the fallacious and erroneous doctrines of Marxism, which do not logically follow from its philosophy. Roy provides detailed criticisms of Marxism:

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
The materialism of Marxism has certain limitations, according to Roy, who is critical of the almost empirical account of knowledge that Marxism provides, thus neglecting the creative role of the human subject. Marx, under the influence of Hegelian dialectics has rejected the eighteenth century materialism of Diderot, Helvetius and Holbach as mechanical. He had also repudiated the humanist materialism of Ludwig Feuerbach by whose Essence of Christianity (1841) he had been influenced. M.N. Roy holds that the rejection by Marx of Feuerbachian humanist materialism or what Woltman calls anthropological materialism was unfortunate. Roy is critical of the Marxian rejection of the autonomy of the human being. Marx glorified the social struggle. He did not pay adequate attention to the worth and significance of the empirical individual. Hence, Roy clamored for a revolt against the fatalism implicit in the prophetic sociology of Karl Marx.

Roy adheres to the view of Berdyaev, that the acceptance of the dialectical methodology introduces an idealistic element in Marxism. The movement through thesis and antithesis is a characteristic of logical argumentation. It is incongruous to say, that matter and forces of production move dialectically. Roy says: "The dialectical Materialism of Marx, therefore, is materialist only in name; dialectics being its cornerstone, it is essentially an idealistic system. No wonder that it disowned the heritage of the eighteenth century scientific naturalism and fought against the humanist materialism of Feuerbach and his followers". Roy emphatically states, that the dialectic is a category of idealistic logic. To equate this process of subjective idealistic logic

with the total objective nature of reality is an unfounded belief. In his papers contributed to The Marxian Way, Roy criticized the dialectical methodology. But the criticisms are not very profound and they mainly refer to the point, that reality is not to be revealed by the master-key of the dialectic.

The Marxian interpretation of history is defective, according to Roy, because it allows slender role to mental activity in the social process. History cannot be interpreted solely with reference to materialist objectivism. The intelligence of human beings and their cumulative actions are very powerful social forces. In the Marxist philosophy of history, ideas are regarded as the epiphenomena of matter. Consciousness is posterior to reality. Although some of the later Marxists tried to introduce the concept of interaction between ideas and social forces in place of the older theory of the dominance of the material and social reality, it remains true that in the Marxist philosophy of history the creative role of ideas is minimized and the upholders of this doctrine of primacy of ideas, as for example the "True Socialists" of Germany, are designated as fanatical Utopians. M.N. Roy seeks to re-state Marxism. He puts forward a theory of two parallel processes - ideal and physical, composing history. It is true that ideation is a physiological process consequent upon the interaction with the environment. But once it arises, ideas have a logical evolution of their own. There is a mutual influence between the dynamics of ideas and the dialectical progression of social process. But Roy categorically states, that in no specific historical context "can a causal relation be traced between social events and movements of ideas." He writes: "Philosophically, the materialist conception of history must recognize the creative role of intelligence. Materialism cannot

deny the objective reality of ideas. They are not *sui generis*; they are biologically
determined; priority belongs to the physical being, to matter, if the old-fashioned
term may still be used, but once the biologically determined process of ideation
is complete, ideas are formed, they continue to have an autonomous existence,
an evolutionary process of their own, which runs parallel to the physical process
of social evolution. The two parallel processes, ideal and physical, compose
history. Both are determined by their respective logic or dynamics, or dialectics.
At the same time, they are mutually influenced, the one by the other. That is
how history becomes an organic process" 1. The theory of the parallelism of
ideas and the texture of the objective society implies, that no direct specific
correlation is possible between a system of ideas and a set of events.

Roy criticizes the economic interpretation of history. He says, that before
man became a *homo economicus* in quest of economic amenities, he was guided
by biological considerations. An anthropological study of the primitive history
of man indicates that the early activities and struggles of the human species
were centered on finding out means of subsistence. These activities were directed
and motivated by the urgent drives and urges of man, which were biological in
nature. Biology and not Economics dictated the early activities of mankind.
The theory of historical materialism is faulty to the extent, that it does not seek
to explain and analyse the primitive history of the human species. Even in later
history of man there are diverse types of activities, wherein mankind finds
satisfaction, but which cannot be comprehended under the rubric of 'economics'.
Thus, economic determinism does not necessarily follow as a logical corollary

from the philosophy of materialism. It is possible to be a materialist and accept divergent criteria of historical interpretation-power determinism, or climatological determinism or physiological determinism. Political power, climate and the physiological structure of the inhabitants are also material forces. Hence, there is no necessary and inevitable connection between the philosophical materialism and the economic interpretation of history.

According to Roy, the ethical foundations of Marxism are weak because it is relativistic and dogmatic\(^1\). Marx states in the radical behavioristic doctrine, that in the process of his struggle with nature, man changes his own nature. There is nothing stable in human nature. He accepts the total malleability of human nature. The psychological foundations of Marxism are weak, according to Roy. He adheres the popular to view of the eighteenth century materialists, that there is something constant in human nature. The negation of a permanent element in human nature would imply the negation of ethics. Ethics can not be built without the acceptance of some constant elements in human nature, which make essential the realization of some permanent values. In opposition to Marxism, Roy accepts, that there is something stable and permanent in human nature, which is the basis of all duties and rights: The subordination of man to the overwhelming dominance of the forces of production is a neutralization of his autonomy and creativity. Moral consciousness is not a product of economic forces. As a departure from the Marxian ethics, Roy has put forward an evolutionary scientific humanist ethics, which exalts the sovereignty of man and believes in the axiological hierarchy of freedom and justice. In place of the Marxist thesis, which interprets ethical norms in terms of class struggles, Roy

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\(^1\) Marxism was doomed to betray its professed ideals and ideas because it rejected the moral appeal, so strongly championed by the Utopian socialists.
accepts that there is something permanent in ethical values answering to the *innate rationality* of man.

Marx rejected the liberal concept of individualism. This he did under the influence of the Hegelian thesis of moral positivism. From the metaphysics of the rationality of the real follows the ethical doctrine, which sanctifies the existing moral standards. This is a philosophy of *Machtpolitik.* In his neglect of the value of individual autonomy, Marx proved disloyal to his humanist Feuerbachian antecedents. By rejecting the liberal and utilitarian concept of the individual, Marx betrayed his earlier humanism. The moral degeneration of the movement of international communism results from the relativism of ethical criteria, and the exaltation of the Hegelian type of moral positivism.

Roy casts doubts on the sociology of class struggle. There have been different social classes in history. But, besides the force of social tension and struggle, there has also been operative a social cohesive bond. Furthermore, the failure of contemporary society to get bifurcated into antithetical polarized sectors adds additional material for doubt upon the Marxist thesis.

Marx has been accused of being a false prophet in his statement regarding the disappearance of the middle class. As a matter of fact, the expansion of the economic process also leads to the increase in the number that constitute the middle class. Furthermore, the cultural and political leadership of the middle class in a patent fact of post-1919 world history.

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., P. 29.
4. Ibid., P. 34.
Like Karl Mannheim, Roy also accepts, that there is an element of voluntaristic romanticism in revolutions. Revolutions are the representations of collective emotions heightened to a pitch. Conceptually, the idea of revolution exalts human efforts to remake the world. Revolutionary romanticism is thus antithetical to the dialectical determinism. The contradiction in Marxist historiography arises from the attempts to combine the rationalist belief in history and cosmos as a determined process with the enunciation of the teleological concept of the freedom of revolutionary will and action in changing the texture of that process. Thus, Roy feels that materialistic determinism and revolutionary teleology cannot be reconciled. Hence, he says that at its very birth, Marxism contained elements of contradiction. The simultaneous juxtaposition of scientific reason and teleological revolutionary romanticism, which merges the individual in the collectivity led to their mutual neutralization and Marxism degenerated into the cult of collective irrationalism. The later aberrations and violent practices of totalitarian Communism are to be traced to this original fallacy of Marxism.

M.N. Roy discusses the weakness of Marxist philosophy and the sociology of historical materialism. But, he does not enter into the technicalities of Marxian economics. He does not give any evidence of being conversant with the Marxian theories of accumulation of capital, capitalist reproduction and the possible contradiction in the labour theory of value, propounded in volume one of Capital and the price of production theory in volume three of Capital. As a Marxist critic, he could have drawn additional strength from the writings of Bohm-Bawerk, Ludwig von Mises and Tugan-Baronovsky.

3. Ibid., P. 223.
VII. ROY AS A CRITIC OF GANDHISM

In 1923 M.N. Roy published One Year Of Non-Co-operation. Here in, he paid tributes to the saintly personality of Mahatma Gandhi and compared him to St. Thomas Aquinas, Savonarola and Francis of Assissi. He acknowledged the efforts of Gandhi in mobilizing mass actions from 1919 to 1922. He recognised four constructive contributions of Gandhism: (i) use of mass action for political purposes, (ii) consolidation of the Indian National Congress, (iii) The liberation of the National forces from governmental repression by the ‘slogan of non-violence’ and (iv) the adoption of the techniques of non-payment of taxes and civil disobedience.

In this book, Roy noted several shortcomings of Gandhism. (i) Gandhism lacked an economic programme to win mass support. (ii) It wanted to unite all sections of Indians - exploiters like the landlords and capitalists with the exploited peasants and workers. (iii) The incorporation of metaphysical propositions into political action was unfortunate because political dynamism was sacrificed at the altar of subjective considerations of conscience. (iv) The reactionary economics of charkha was unpalatable to the Marxist, M.N. Roy. (v) Roy also criticized the vacillation of Gandhism. He did not like Gandhiji seeking interviews with the Viceroy. Hence, he said that Gandhism was not revolutionism but ‘weak and watery’ reformism.

Roy was of the opinion, that Gandhi never tried or intended to develop a comprehensive social philosophy. His personal life was guided by the prevalent Hindu Vedanta philosophy, which places before the individual the ideal of Moksha.

2. Bhagwan, Vishnoo, Indian Political Thinkers, Atlaram & Sons, Delhi, 1976, P. 92.
or Nirvana, that is freedom not in this world but from this world, freedom of the soul from the body and from the cycle of births and deaths. The only comment which is necessary on this aspect of Gandhi’s philosophy is that it is unreal and unscientific, and almost all the Hindus, who accept it with great reverence, act contrary to it during the entire span of their lives. Gandhi was one of the few persons, who tried to practise what he preached, and is rightly respected on that account.

There was, however, a clear inconsistency in Gandhi’s personal philosophy and his social outlook. Personally, he believed in abstinence and self-denial, because he accepted the view, that bodily pleasures were the cause of the soul’s enslavement. Yet, socially he strove to remove the poverty of the people, so that their bodily wants may be supplied. The inconsistency is endemic to the philosophy itself.

Gandhi’s great merit was to insist, that politics must not be divorced from morality. Truth and non-violence were the moral principles, which he introduced in the Indian Nationalist Movement. He was, however, not a rationalist, and the national freedom for which he strove did not have, clearly and unequivocally, the positive content of individual freedom. His morality was based on his religious faith, and those in the nationalist movement, who had no active faith in religion paid only a conciliatory service to his moral principles. After Gandhi’s death, his followers belonging to one political party or another have been ruling over India, and to say the least they have not distinguished themselves by their personal or collective moral behaviour. A minority of Gandhians remained outside party politics and decided to serve the country by working among the people, on Gandhian principles. Most of them
were persons of moral worth and by far the greatest of them, Jayaprakash Narayan, was a magnetic personality with a spotless moral character. He had a passion for the positive ideal of freedom, a passion which he had acquired before he joined the Gandhian fold. He stands midway between Gandhism and Radical Humanism.

Gandhi contributed to the Indian Nationalist Movement a new method of struggle called *civil disobedience* or passive resistance. Adoption of this method was suitable to contend with the struggle against British Imperialism, the oppressiveness of which was limited by the fact, that it emanated from a liberal democratic State in Great Britain. India’s national independence was the result, not so much of Gandhi’s civil disobedience, as of the economic and political changes which occurred in the world and in Great Britain itself during the anti-fascist World War. The ineffectiveness of civil disobedience against a ruthless and unprincipled authoritarian rule was demonstrated during the Emergency, which was enforced in India, in 1975, by Indira Gandhi the then Prime Minister. Civil disobedience remains nevertheless a useful method of demonstrating one’s non-conformism to any unfair act of the establishment.

One of the abiding contributions of Gandhism to Indian politics is its insistence on the necessity of political and economic decentralization. It is a common feature of both Gandhism and Radical Humanism.

Gandhi advised the capitalists, besides the owners of property, that they shall regard themselves as the trustees of the people. He was against the abolition of landlordism and the nationalization of industry. However, the doctrine of trusteeship did not have much impact on the property owners and has a very limited practical value.
It has become fashionable with some intellectuals in India to pick up a few positive features of Gandhism, such as his preference for political and economic decentralization, omit the numerous teachings of Gandhi, which are no longer tenable, and proclaim Gandhism as an ultra-modern philosophy. Such a misinterpretation serves no useful purpose. At least Gandhism, which regarded truth as the highest value, should be truthfully interpreted. Gandhi had an antipathy for modern science, modern civilization, modern industry, modern medicine. He did not encourage the modern tradition of secularism and rationalism. He idealized simple rustic life with its bullock-cart economy. He was an intensely religious man, with active faith in a personal deity. His morality was dictated by his inner voice, which he regarded as the voice of God. A modern philosophy must be based on individual freedom, rationalism and secularism, none of which went well with Gandhism.

Instead of either accepting or rejecting Gandhism as a whole, it is better to appreciate and adopt what is positive and enduring in Gandhi’s teachings—his insistence on morality in private and public life, on the adoption of pure means to achieve a good end, on the indomitable courage, which is essential in the persistent pursuit of a higher ideal.

Roy’s hostility to Gandhism continued unabated, it was in fact intensified; he went to the length of equating Gandhism with Fascism. While in prison, Roy wrote a book on Fascism analysing its philosophy, profession and practice, where in he pointed out, that Fascism was not simply a socio-political phenomenon, but had a deep-rooted philosophical foundation. “If
Fascism is a socio-political reaction”, Roy wrote. “its ideological foundation must have been laid by philosophical reaction. The roots of the philosophy of Fascism were traced by him to the spiritualist view of life. He observed, that the philosophy of Fascist dictatorship results directly from the modern schools of mysticism and spiritualism, which represent reaction against the scientific view of life. Religion and the cults of mysticism and spiritualism associated with it are, he thought, always useful to maintain a social order, based on the exploitation of man by man. Religion is based upon faith, and faith, Roy explained, placed a premium on ignorance, which makes the masses easy victims of exploitation. In its fight against feudal society and monarchical absolutism, the bourgeoisie used the revolutionary weapon of the materialist philosophy, but once in possession of power it discarded this weapon and championed the spiritualistic view of life, in order to perpetuate the social system, based upon the exploitation of the many. Fascism, according to Roy, was the logical outcome of this reactionary, philosophical tendency.

Indian philosophy, because of its spiritual character, was more akin in Roy’s analysis to Fascism. He called Indian philosophy as inherently Fascist. The Indian ancestry of Fascism, according to Roy, could be traced through Schopenhauer whose disciple, Nietzsche, was the father of the philosophy of Fascism. Schopenhauer found consolation in the philosophy of the Upanishads-a philosophy which in Roy’s words prevented the Indian people from facing the realities of life with the courage to change them. The roots of the Fascist thought were traced by Roy even to the divine philosophy of The Gita. The philosophy


3. Ibid., P. 32.
4. Ibid., P. 41.
of Gandhism is based upon a spiritual view of life and it led Roy to equate with Fascism. He observed: If Gandhism is to be regarded as a body of religio-ethical doctrines, the quintessence of ancient Indian culture, then the world has already experienced its modern political expression. Gandhism as a philosophical tradition has led to Hitlerism. Roy referred to a genealogical kinship between Gandhism and Fascism, both being offsprings of the spiritual view of life. Both are inspired by the revivalist ideal and deny the progressive significance of modern civilization. Roy made a clear distinction between revolutionary nationalism and revivalist nationalism, in India and maintained, that while the former was revolutionary, the latter was reactionary. Revolutionary nationalism, which seeks to overthrow foreign imperialism as the essential precondition of further social progress, was not, he pointed out, antagonistic to socialism, but, on the contrary, its consummation would create conditions necessary for its ultimate establishment. But, revivalist nationalism would lead the country to Fascism because, Fascism was described by Roy as nationalism inspired by the revivalistic ideal. The ideal of class collaboration was another feature common to both Gandhism and Fascism. This ideal, according to Roy, would inevitably lead to violence, because, as he stated, class collaboration means violent suppression of the efforts of the toiling masses to liberate themselves from the system of exploitation. Class collaboration further signifies a stabilization of class domination. This requires violence exercised by the dominating class. Gandhian ideal of class collaboration involves violence. The cult of non-violence is therefore, hypocritical. It supports actual violence. The Gandhian ideal of simple life and the vow of poverty would, Roy thought, keep the masses spell-bound and that would enable the Congress to further the interests of the

nationalist bourgeoisie and loyalist landlords. Roy, therefore, condemned Gandhism as a philosophy of counter-revolution. The assumption of a logical connection between Gandhism and Fascism is determined in large measure by Roy's attitude towards the leadership of the Indian National Congress and the Indian independence movement in general.

The logical relation, which Roy postulated between Fascism and the spiritualist view of life was a dangerous illusion. Spiritualism endows man with a sanctity, of which Fascism is the complete negation. The origin of Fascism may logically be traced to the ideas of Nietzsche, who disowned the spiritualist tradition of Christianity. Even after coming back to India, Roy was able to comprehend neither the moral excellence of Gandhian doctrines nor the political significance of the Gandhian strategy. Class collaboration and non-violence were politically necessary for a united struggle of the Indian people against an alien rule. Judged as a doctrine, Gandhism was more akin to Christian socialism, than to Fascism. Gandhi was the political leader of the Indian masses and therefore, instead of trying to change the mass psychology, he sought to utilise it for realising his objectives. There determined, to a large extent, the pattern of Gandhian politics. Roy was too crude and perhaps a little too logical to comprehend the diverse factors, that accounted for the popularity of Gandhism in India. He ignored the strategical significance of Gandhism and made an over hasty analysis of the Gandhian philosophy. Therefore, all his attempts to undermine the influence of Gandhism in Indian politics failed.