

**KERALA PATTERN AND MORAL
INVERSION**
**A Historical Review of the Communist
Strategy in Light of Polanyian Theory**

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Abstract

To be a dispassionate critic of the society, one has to learn its undercurrents while pruning it with bold criticism. Moral inversion is a theory developed by the Hungarian-British polymath Michael Polanyi (1891-1976), which according to him, is the fusion of skepticism and utopianism. The modern mind, says Polanyi, is suffering from two major diseases consisting of two wrong principles. First is the view that “detached objectivity or explicitness as the ideal of knowledge” and the second, “perfectionism as the ideal in moral and social concerns.” He observes that together these two ideals contribute to moral inversion. In the phenomenon of moral inversion, good is lost due to the unrealistic commitment to the good. Polanyi believes, as a moral philosopher, that a “universal mechanical interpretation of things [...] impairs man’s moral consciousness” and effects an “absolute moral neutrality of science.” Polanyi develops his theory of moral inversion always in reference to communism. This article is an attempt to read the communist strategy in the South Indian state of Kerala in light of the social and political thoughts of Michael Polanyi with the help of the Polanyian tool of moral inversion.

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This is an attempt to analyze the communist strategy of slow transition to communism in the South Indian state of Kerala in light of the social and political thoughts of the Hungarian-British moral philosopher Michael Polanyi (1891-1976). Polanyi was concerned with the political, cultural and moral problems of his time and he developed the concept of moral inversion in reference to communism. I will examine how the strategy of slow transition to communism employs moral inversion in accomplishing the communist strategy in Kerala, which did not hesitate to acknowledge and adopt communism. In four sections, I will deal with the concept of moral inversion, its role in communist strategy, the Hungarian uprising, and the necessity of a moral reversion. This paper also investigates how religion can facilitate moral reversion.

Michael Polanyi and Moral Inversion

Moral inversion is a concept developed by Michael Polanyi which according to him is the fusion of skepticism and utopianism (1951).¹ The modern mind, Polanyi says, is suffering from two major diseases consisting of two wrong principles. First is the view that “detached objectivity or explicitness as the ideal of knowledge” and the second, “perfectionism as the ideal in moral and social concerns.”² He observes that together these two ideals contribute to moral inversion. In the phenomenon of moral inversion good is lost due to the unrealistic commitment to the good. Polanyi believes that a “universal mechanical interpretation of things [...] impairs man’s moral consciousness” and results an “absolute moral neutrality of science.”³ The American philosopher Marjorie Grene comments that

¹Michael Polanyi, “Beyond Nihilism,” in Michael Polanyi, *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, ed. Marjorie Grene, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969, 3-4. It is apt to define the terms skepticism and utopianism at the outset. *Encyclopedia of Religion* says that skepticism is a concept that questions the possibility of certainty in knowledge. Richard H. Popkin, “Skeptics and Skepticism,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 12, ed. Lindsay Jones, New York: Thompson Gale, 2005, 8420-22. Utopianism has got different connotations as it either idealizes “distant or primordial past” or “refers to the future realization of some perfect place and time” or a perfect society. Garry W. Trompf, “Utopia,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 14, ed. Lindsay Jones, New York: Thompson Gale, 2005, 9491-94.

²Harry Prosch, *Michael Polanyi: A Critical Exposition*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1986, 204-5.

³Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, 161.

human beings live in the tension between what they are and what they seek.⁴ During the span between these two points they are prone to the phenomenon of moral inversion. What is being exploited here is the dilemma of the human mind arising from the dynamo-objective coupling, i.e. passion for moral perfection and objectivity of knowledge. In other words, this is a dilemma between ideal action and ideal knowledge.

In his article "Beyond Nihilism," Polanyi comments on moral depravation.

The past two centuries [...] achieved numberless humanitarian reforms and has improved modern society beyond the boldest thoughts of earlier centuries. And I believe that it is this fervour which, in our own lifetime, has outreached itself by its inordinate aspirations and thus heaped on mankind the disasters that have befallen us. I admit that these disasters were accompanied by moral depravation.⁵

In saying this, Polanyi acknowledges that a morally inverted or deprived society yields to the probability of a loss of meaning of life. His main intention is to exorcise from the minds of the people "the twin devils of ideal of knowledge as detached objectivity and the ideal of action as moral perfectionism."⁶ Modern disasters in Europe came out of the combination these two extremities.⁷ Complete skepticism does not, in any way, take both moral authority and transcendent moral obligation into consideration since they provide no scope for moral perfectionism from an immanent point of view. What provides satisfaction to a skeptic's longing for moral perfection is denouncing the morality of the existing society. The fusion of skepticism and moral passion is dangerous to a society as it in results nihilism and violence. This exclusion leads to skeptical fanaticism. Polanyi argues that Lenin and Stalin describe the Communist Party as "seizing, manipulating, and consolidating power."⁸ Marx was remarkably careful in keeping away all moral professions from his manifestos.

Moral inversion has a universal nature in the way Marxism/communism is universal. Marxism identifies morality with the "self-

⁴Marjorie Grene, "Introduction," in *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, ed. Marjorie Grene, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969, x.

⁵Michael Polanyi, "Beyond Nihilism," 3.

⁶Prosch, *Michael Polanyi: A Critical Exposition*, 272.

⁷Drusilla Scott, *Everyman Revived: The Common Sense of Michael Polanyi*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 1985, 6.

⁸Michael Polanyi, *Society, Economics and Philosophy: Selected Papers*, ed. R.T. Allen, New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1997, 98.

fulfillment of the individual or the nation.”⁹ Therefore, morality, which should accompany the evil actions of Marxism, is identified with immanent form of operation so that it could be confined to a specific political force. There is no universality of morality for Marxism until its inevitable conquest of the world, which would lead to the universalization of its regional/immanent morality, is accomplished. Polanyi says that “any moral objection against Marxist action can be brushed aside by pointing its ‘scientific’ correctness.”¹⁰ As a result, the normal moral values are turned upside down, which, for Polanyi, is the phenomenon of moral inversion with which he disagrees. Very often, the passion of Marxism is evil, but its appeal is moral.¹¹ Here, howsoever, the normal moral values are inverted and Polanyi called this process a pseudo-substitution.¹² He puts the culmination of moral inversion as follows: “man masked as a beast turns into a Minotaur.”¹³

Polanyi considered the propagandistic appeal of Marxism as the most interesting case of the moral force of immorality. He believes that the modern mind tortured by moral self-doubt tries to be satisfied with terms containing enough potential to mollify its moral passions. Further, when the modern mind is not satisfied with the thought of the class society – material interests are regarded as mere immanent in moral aspirations – it starts cherishing the ideas of a socialist state – “morality is immanent in the material interests of the proletariat.”¹⁴

The scientific nature of communism, a self-attribution, allows it to make a utilitarian interpretation of morality and give credibility to its inherent totalitarianism. In totalitarianism, there is a radical abandonment of belief in certain fundamental ideals such as truth, justice, reason, and morality. Nevertheless, a Marxist of today is confused between the abandonment of these ideals and his/her moral passion. According to Polanyi, this ambivalent state of mind is an inversion of morality. In yet other way, moral passion operates invisibly in an “openly declared inhumanity” in a morally inverted

⁹Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 232.

¹⁰Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 245.

¹¹A practical example for this ideology could be seen in Hitler and the German youth. Though the original intention of Hitler was immoral, it was understood by the youth as moral. Cf. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 232.

¹²Michael Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty: Reflections and Rejoinders*, London: Routledge, 2002 [1951], 102.

¹³Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 249.

¹⁴Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 243.

society.¹⁵ Notwithstanding, when this moral passion is confined only to the immanent morality, one can adapt to immoralism to quench the same moral passion. When moral passion loses its religious affiliation, it becomes civil and secular, and the proponents are not concerned about the means to it.

A mechanistic conception of the world will cause a mechanistic conception of person. This would further lead to a materialistic view of politics which eventually provides moral sanctity to the objectives of power and wealth.¹⁶ In line with the idea of Polanyi, Yeager points out the two dangers of moral inversion, namely the moral appeal of immorality and vanishing of moral discourse and moral concern.¹⁷ With a proper understanding of Polanyi's moral inversion, Yeager brings forth the dangers hidden under the glitter of skeptical fanaticism. According to him moral inversion is not one thing; rather it is a convergence of a series of dangers capable of doing away with culture and civilization.¹⁸

Nihilism does not deny values; nevertheless, the nature of those values is the matter of discussion. The problem pertaining to nihilism is that it reduces values to certain immediate material interests without any sense of the intrinsically good. When moral skepticism and moral perfectionism are combined together, all explicit expressions of morality are discredited.¹⁹ Those seemingly glorious acts are considered to be the moral expression of the society as long as the regime handles the power to establish it to be so. Here the ruling agent turns out to be totalitarian; once the reign is totalitarian, it enjoys the power of defining what is moral for the society. In Polanyi's view, this will impair the moral motives of the people. This reductive thinking will silence the moral impulse of the people, especially of the students.²⁰

According to Polanyi, scientific assertions have value and are acknowledged due to their capacity to satisfy certain moral passions, resulting in a "dynamo-objective coupling."²¹ The question then is about the existence of Marxism. If Hitler can employ evil actions as

¹⁵Porsch, *Michael Polanyi: A Critical Exposition*, 29.

¹⁶Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 149-50.

¹⁷D.M. Yeager, "Confronting Minotaur: Moral Inversion and Polanyi's Moral Philosophy," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 29, 1 (2002-2003) 32.

¹⁸Yeager, "Confronting Minotaur," 34.

¹⁹Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1983, 58-60.

²⁰Michael Polanyi and Harry Prosch, *Meaning*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975, 23.

²¹Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 247.

moral duty, why can't Marxism be presented as a science guaranteeing the salvation of the proletariat by means of the total destruction of capitalism, hence effecting a dynamo-objective coupling? Whatsoever, when an ism succeeds in portraying evil actions as moral duty, it manipulates the original innate moral impulse of its adherers.

The Kerala Pattern and Moral Inversion

The 'Kerala Pattern' is a strategy of the Communist Party, adapted in 1957, to gradually transform the state as an abode of communism by postponing the total destruction and the inevitable Red Revolution to a more suitable time.²² As a part of it, communists will abide by the federal constitution and will function in a democratic system. In a religious and educated society like Kerala, communists had to patiently wait for the right moment to achieve its ultimate goal. Until this transformation is complete, communism adopts seemingly mild approaches. Basically, the shift from revolution to the parliamentary democracy was with a meticulously pre-planned screenplay for a silent transition to communism which Victor M. Fic called "Kerala Pattern of Peaceful Transition to Communism."²³ E.M.S. Namboothiripad was one of the champions of this move.²⁴ The Communist Party's strategy about the development of a Kerala Pattern was not only confined to the pre-electoral period; rather, even after scoring a historic win in the state in 1957, it continued to affirm that it would stick to the framework of the federal constitution. For instance, M.N. Govindan Nair, the General Secretary of the Kerala faction of the Communist Party of India (CPI), declared in New Delhi on 20 March 1957, immediately after the election result broke out, that the party would not go for a Red Revolution.²⁵

Communism is fundamentally anti-religious. Its two major enemies in Kerala are religions, and the educational institutions belonging to them – two agents advocating a moral reversion, going back to the basic moral principles. One of the means to resist this reversion was to control the education sector in Kerala. Interestingly

²²M.N. Govindan Nair asserted that the line of the party is not violent upsetting of everything, but it wanted to serve the people, working within the limits of the constitution. Cf. Victor M. Fic, *Kerala, Yenan of India: Rise of Communist Power, 1937-1969*, Mumbai: Nachiketa, 1970, 84. For more details, cf. Kiran Maitra, *Marxism in India: From Decline to Debacle*, New Delhi: Roli Books, 2012, 22-3.

²³Fic, *Kerala, Yenan of India*, 82.

²⁴Cf. Fic, *Kerala, Yenan of India*, 82 and E.M.S. Namboothiripad, *Communist Party in Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha, 2009, 496-500.

²⁵Cf. Fic, *Kerala, Yenan of India*, 84.

enough, it was the agenda of the first communist government in Kerala to suppress private educational institutions run by different religious groups, which even continued in the decades followed. A recent example is *The Kerala Professional Colleges or Institutions (Prohibition of Capitation Fee, Regulation of Admission, Fixation of non-exploitative fee and other measures to ensure equity and excellence in Professional Education) Act, 2006*. According to Cyriac Thundiylil, “the purpose of giving such a long title is to get popular applause and to give the impression to the general public that it has the holiest of holy intentions.”²⁶ Adding to that, I would argue that the bracketed clauses in the title of the Act, 2006 are deliberate and pre-meditated. To articulate it in Polanyian language, this is an instance of the communist strategy to, on the one hand, delude the morally inverted society, and on the other, to morally invert the rest.

With the victory in the election the party has seized power, and what remained to be accomplished was the manipulation and consolidation of the seized power. As a preliminary step, the government decided to change the curriculum and textbooks of schools. Interestingly, the committee deputed by the government, namely the “Syllabus Committee,” did not have a Christian representation. While the All Kerala Catholic Congress (AKCC) protested against it, the government came forward with the explanation that the Committee was constituted not based on the caste or community but on merit. AKCC retorted that it was the hidden agenda of the government to mould the students in the communist ideology. Needless to say, it was the strategy of any communist government anywhere in the world to subdue the existing education system, along with other apparatuses of the state, to make it instrumental in imparting communist ideologies. This would in effect invert the innate moral passion in the students by replacing it with immanent moral principles, creating a pseudo morality. Indeed, immanent morality is used here as a screen to delude the so-called young communists.

In the Education Bill of 1957 one could easily read the communist attempt to instrumentalize the government in order to control the education sector so that it could impart and execute its policies for the slow transition to communism. It is here one can make out the relevance of the concept of moral inversion. The first communist government had the idea of taking over the private schools which did not maintain the required standard. Local, district, and state level committees were established to advise the government on

²⁶Cyriac Thundiylil, *The Hidden Agenda*, Mannanam, Kottayam: Sanjos, 2006, 21.

educational matters, including the performance of the private schools. This gave the government an opportunity to appoint party agents in all these committees who would always have the intention of bringing into effect the strategies of the government. However, the fact remained that there was “no legal basis for enforcing governmental orders.”²⁷

In light of all the above mentioned proposals, the government also wanted to stop the custom of using the schools as prayer house.²⁸ In sum, the government aimed at stifling the private management groups through its politically motivated legislation. The government was successful in establishing that the private schools were instrumental for “proselytization or profit,” functioning as “self-rewarding social service.”²⁹ A society with a large sum of morally inverted party adherents could easily be convinced that all the private schools run by religious groups were being used for proselytization, profit, and conducting prayer. In doing so, even though the government did not attack religion publicly and visibly, it prepared the ground for cutting the roots of religious undertakings, which would gradually keep the people away from religion and other moral agents in the society, facilitating the mobilization of those people in favour of the party.

According to Polanyi, a body of scientists always “upholds the authority of science over the lay public.”³⁰ Furthermore, the new generation is given sufficient training to attract it to the scientific profession. But once a trainee becomes an independent scientist, there will be no superior above him/her. The new scientist becomes a part of the body that formed him/her; afterwards, defending the supremacy of science over the lay public. This body becomes one of mutual appreciation defending its authority. As a matter of fact, it resembles the body of the communist leaders. This resemblance facilitates the attribution of a scientific nature to communism. The existing body always searches for new leaders who are subservient or obedient to it. In such a system, the new leaders become part of the already existing body, therefore maintaining the mutual appreciation within the body. The dos and don'ts that this body decides become the ethics of communism. Contrastingly, followers of an ideology

²⁷Georges K. Lieten, “Education, Ideology and Politics in Kerala 1957-59,” *Social Scientist* 6, 2 (1977) 6.

²⁸Benjamin N. Schoenfeld, “Kerala in Crisis,” *Pacific Affairs* 32, 3 (1959) 243 and Hiroshi Sato, “Social Security and Well-being in a Low-income Economy,” *The Developing Economies* 42, 2 (2004) 291.

²⁹Cited in Lieten, “Education, Ideology and Politics in Kerala 1957-59,” 4-5.

³⁰Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 60.

which condemned religion as opium of the people compete to create back door access to the religious leaders, because for electoral gains they need the religious groups, and for political campaigns they need gods, saints, and religious leaders as icons. Here one fails to understand or at least is confused about what kind of religion they repudiate. It is here the moral convictions of the people are advantageously inverted. Polanyi comments: “[L]aymen normally accept the teachings of science not because they share its conception of reality, but because they submit to the authority of science.”³¹

With regard to the Kerala society, however, an expected decline of religion did not happen, and so the only option for the Communist Party was a kind of adaptation. The party conveys the idea that both communism and religion share the same goal. What happens here is the victory of manifest/immanent morality over the transcendent moral values, i.e. the moral passion is inverted. This double standard of communism in Kerala harms the society in manifold ways. In his *The Challenge of Chance: Experiments and Speculations*, English scholar Alister Hardy writes about the significance of religious experience: “I regard religion [...] as a fundamental feature of man’s makeup. If this should be neglected or suppressed by a culture which may be based upon a false materialism, then our civilization may indeed be in danger.”³²

Lessons of the Hungarian Uprising

History provides examples for the breakdown of extremely morally inverted societies; for instance, Hungarian and Polish societies. During the Hungarian and Polish uprisings in 1956, a great number of writers and communist intellectuals rejected the convictions they had been upholding until then. In a meeting of the literary circle in 1956, they demanded freedom to write the truth. Polanyi says:

Speaker after speaker demanded freedom to write the truth; to write about real people, real streets and fields, real sentiments and problems; to report truthfully on current events and on matters of history. In making these demands many speakers were reverting to beliefs they had previously abhorred and even violently suppressed.³³

In Hungary, the reversion was from among the Communist Party members. Literature and art were subservient to the party until the

³¹Michael Polanyi, “The Growth of Science in Society,” in Grene, Marjorie, ed. *Knowing and Being*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969, 73.

³²Alister Hardy and Robert Harvie, *The Challenge of Chance: Experiments and Speculation*, London: Hutchinson, 1973, 15.

³³Polanyi, *Beyond Nihilism*, 31.

intellectual uprising in 1956. When these two institutions realized the situation of the state, they decided to tell the truth, which later overthrew the communist government in Hungary. Polanyi says that the proponents of the Hungarian revolution referred to the ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,³⁴ reminding that they were uncomfortable with the totalitarian approach of Marxism/communism. Surprisingly, even six decades after Hungarian moral reversion, communism in Kerala continues to stick to its old ideologies, neither provoked nor coming out of its comfort zone.

Conflict between moral inversion and moral reversion causes confusion about the truth. Taking the idea of Miklos Gimes, an ex-Stalinist, Polanyi states that such a conflict forces people to believe in two kinds of truth – truth of the party and the objective truth. Believing in the truth of the party makes one “incapable of simply sensing or apprehending truth.”³⁵ Polanyi also refers to communist writers like Paloczi-Horvath who even wrote on the amount of the inner freedom they enjoyed once they rejected communism.³⁶ Hungarian revolutionaries were disappointed with the fact that truth, justice, and morality became subservient to the party. This is the tragic end of every society under totalitarian communist rule and hence the vigilant resistance of the various religious groups in Kerala against the communist intrusion into their fundamental faith principles and constitutional rights and freedom. No society has to surrender truth, justice, art, literature, or the human feeling to the service of the party or to its rule. Polanyi reminds: “moral inversion transforms morality into the service of power.”³⁷

According to Polanyi, a progressive reversion is visible wherever communism was strong in the past. He observes that the superior intelligence surrounding the communists makes the new generation immune against their teachings. The communist struggle in Kerala also is a struggle for survival, especially due to the strong immunization process by the anti-communist agents in the state.

Moral Reversion

According to Polanyi, religion contributes in facilitating moral reversion, but a mere return to the unstable old ideas is

³⁴Cf. Michael Polanyi, “The Message of the Hungarian Revolution,” in *Knowing and Being*, ed. Marjorie Grene, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969, 24-39.

³⁵Michael Polanyi, *Science, Faith, and Society*, Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1964, 18.

³⁶Paloczi-Horvath (1908-73) was a Hungarian communist writer.

³⁷Polanyi, *Society, Economics and Philosophy*, 84.

meaningless. He also observes that we cannot go back to the “hope of Christianity” because it had often been indifferent to social injustice just as “secularized antiquity” had been.³⁸ Moral reversion is possible in its fuller sense when spiritual and social aspects of life are combined. Instead of blindly going back to the old ideas, religion has to incorporate science and reason in this process. When it fails, inverted moral ideas replace morality, exploiting the dilemma arising from the dynamo-objective coupling. Repressed moral passion seeks an outlet since it finds moral perfection unapproachable. Here the presumed objectivity of communism gives it an outlet redirecting it as a passion for immanent morality. Nevertheless, morality without its transcendental dimension is an inverted morality.

Kerala witnessed a simultaneous process of moral inversion and moral reversion by communism and anti-communist groups respectively. From 1957 onwards this inversion-reversion conflict was at its peak. As a traditionally religious society, Kerala does not attempt to differentiate between the concept of truth and the moral values attached to them. What Polanyi observes about Soviet intellectuals is also applicable to the communists of Kerala that “they are demanding merely the right to perceive reality and not to convey any interpretations of it in terms of values believed to be true.”³⁹ This view, in a religious society, as long as it does not go beyond the level of this material world, will have to struggle for its survival. The fear of losing grip over the populace forces Marxists to challenge the legacy of religion, its virtues, and the values it confers through the medium of education. A way out of this religiously and morally structured frame, thus, is to manipulate the education system and curriculum, and shackle the religious groups from imparting education.

Reversion is impossible unless and until there is a granting of basic individual freedom to express oneself. Intellectual uprising indicates this reversion. A society of intellectuals cannot put up with any kind of totalitarianism for long. In Kerala, the uprising of communist intellectuals is comparatively less for two reasons; first, the state works under a federal system and the party has to abide by the Constitution of India,⁴⁰ which blocks its scope for a totalitarian regime. Communism accommodating itself into the democratic set-up gives a different appearance to it giving the impression that no external agent need to act against it. At the same time the communist

³⁸Michael Polanyi, “Beyond Nihilism,” 22.

³⁹Michael Polanyi, “The Message of the Hungarian Revolution,” 26.

⁴⁰Maitra, *Marxism in India*, 238.

dream of a total destruction of every existing system keeps the true moral agents cautious, for this destruction includes religion and its transcendental moral principles.

The second reason for the absence of an uprising of political intellectuals in Kerala is that the political leaders are in a comfort zone which does not essentially require from them a reversion. If at all there are some attempts of reversion, the totalitarian mode of administration inside the party isolate such attempts underscoring the infallibility of the party. The decision of the party to work under the federal Constitution cannot be considered as a part of intellectual uprising or moral reversion.

According to Polanyi, the success of Marxism-Leninism is that it could affix a scientific approach to the process of total destruction, thus declaring it the spokesperson of scientific sociology. Consequently, socialism started to be treated as a science, putting aside the hitherto argument that it is utopian. Furthermore, any criticism on Marxism is considered to be unscientific. Given the mask of science, Marxism presented itself to be objective and realistic just like any other scientific, experimental truth. In fact, the contentment Marxism gave to the society through its utopian dreams became scientific. In other words, socialism is converted from utopia into a scientific discipline.⁴¹ This is the trans-regional mind of every 'true' Marxist. It is here one should opt for reversion in order to escape the inverted Marxist and his act of total destruction.

The ideal way to get out of moral inversion is self-criticism by the so called moral agents rather than the involving of an external agent.⁴² The Hungarian and Polish intellectual uprisings can be an ideal lesson in this self-criticism. Interestingly, as 1956 witnessed a moral reversion in Hungary and Poland, 1957 was a historic moment of the systematic beginning of moral inversion in Kerala. The excessive number of reformation policies of the first communist government of 1957 conveyed the impression that the whole system until then was 'immoral.' But this so called achievement is tentative. I would argue that one of the failures of communist praxis that must be counted here is that it limits its goal to this material world, which provides scope of being evaluated whether it succeeded or not. The way out is to make its goals transcendental. However, if it makes its goals transcendental, it is no more scientific socialism. Therefore, denial of transcendence becomes inevitable for communism. At the

⁴¹Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 244.

⁴²Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 315.

same time, religion does not limit its goal to this material world and consequently, it does not run the risk of an ultimate evaluation in this world.

Scientific Socialism projects violence as the means for the improvement of a society. Polanyi calls it moral inversion since it is a "condition in which high moral purpose operates only as the hidden force of an openly declared inhumanity."⁴³ At the same time, I would argue that the moral passions of Marxism are limited to the immanence, and moral values of Marxism do not have transcendental aspects. Therefore, followers of any religion in a society with Marxism in it are caught between immanence and transcendence. As a result, the morality of the above-mentioned group of people undergoes the phenomenon of inversion; or the utopian dreams moulded the morality to be immanent. This inverted morality was an effective tool in the hands of Marxism in its fight against religions. Unfortunately, true moral principles became the opium of the people and the utopian dreams scientific. This would further lead to moral nihilism and thereafter to nihilistic fanaticism.

As a concluding remark, I would claim that the society of Kerala is still caught up in the dilemma generated by the dynamo-objective coupling. This dilemma will remain an unsolved issue as long as the inversion-reversion process takes place in the society. The innate moral passion of a human person is to be quenched by transcendental moral principles, not with the immanent. Transcendence can never be replaced with immanence, and therefore, every attempt to institute immanent morality superior to transcendental morality is a moral inversion and hence the significance of religious and moral agents in a society. Absence of a meeting point between religion and Marxism cannot but accommodate the risk of an immanent-transcendent clash in the society. In light of the theory of Michael Polanyi, I would conclude that in this inevitable clash between the immanence and transcendence, victory of immanence is moral inversion, and the victory of transcendence is moral reversion. From the cultural and religious background of Kerala I would reiterate the Polanyian view that a universal mechanical interpretation of things will weaken the moral consciousness of the human person, leading him to the state of absolute moral neutrality of science. It would harm any society that traditionally upholds its religious and moral orthodoxy by denouncing the same orthodoxy.

⁴³Polanyi, "Beyond Nihilism," 16.