PART - IV

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF COMPARISON
CHAPTER VII

PROBLEMS OF COMPARISON

(a) Introduction

In chapters 4, 5 and 6 we discussed the differing treatment given to metaphysical, ethical and religious issues in the perspectives of India and the modern West. These illustrations were meant to concretize, clarify and support our preliminary formulation of these perspectives which we had already discussed in rather general terms in chapters 2 and 3. This has enabled us to formulate the Indian perspective as one which involves a clear and consistent awareness of the totality, an awareness of the relationship of the different elements which constitute this totality; the modern Western perspective, on the other hand, could be described in terms of its tendency to isolate the parts or elements of the whole for purposes of careful analysis and possible final synthesis.

Our analysis of the issues involved cannot, of course, claim the wealth of detail, nor the delineation of the perspectives the degree of precision, that one would like to have. At the same time, more precision and more detail than there is at present, may not be required for the purpose for which we are distinguishing between the perspectives in question. That purpose being to show how some rethinking is called for.
In the area of comparisons between Indian thought and modern Western thought, the understanding of their basic perspectives that we have now arrived at might be regarded as adequate for this.

Moreover, this understanding is based on the analysis of specific issues; hence, it cannot be regarded as being too general. Not only there is this specificity about this understanding, our conclusions are never really too strong; but they are strong enough in the sense of having implications which are quite significant. Thus, for instance, we do not try to prove either that Indian philosophy is as rational as modern Western Philosophy, or that the latter is theory bereft of practice. Having drawn attention to the relationship of elements that constitute the whole in the two situations, enough is said to indicate how this has important conceptual and methodological implications for comparative studies between India and the West.

In the present chapter we examine these very implications with the hope of finding one's way through the mass of literature that goes today in the name of comparative philosophy. And the suggestion is put forward that perhaps the main problem in this relatively new area of investigation is the difficulty to understand the real difference between the perspectives of India and the modern West.
Section (b) which follows makes a final attempt to fulfill the task of delineating the two perspectives. Herein we discuss these perspectives, first with reference to the interrelationship between the three areas, viz., metaphysics, ethics and philosophy of religion, from which the illustrations have been drawn, and then with reference to some possible descriptions of these perspectives. This brings out their 'irreconcilability' as well as their character as possible 'alternatives'.

Section (c) is devoted to a discussion of the problems of comparison. First we see here what the difference in the perspectives of India and the modern West implies for their comparison and how probably one of the basic problems in this field is the absence of a clear awareness of this difference. This brief discussion closes with a note on how the difficulty of viewing each philosophy in its own perspective is compounded by some practical problems.

Section (d) gives a summary account of the views of some of the representative writers in the field of East-West comparison. Aimed as it is at providing a background for further discussion, this account is not meant to be exhaustive; it is at once selective and sketchy.

Section (e) analyses, in the background thus provided
and in some detail, the general characteristics and limitations of the present attempts to compare Indian thought with modern Western thought.

(b) The Perspectives Being Compared

In this section we take a closer look at the two perspectives that we have so far been trying to delineate and illustrate, so that, with greater clarity and definiteness about them, we may approach the problems which plague the field of East-West comparisons. For this purpose we adopt certain steps which are different in kind from those adopted so far; here we first examine the relationship between the areas of philosophy from which illustrations have already been drawn to clarify the nature of these perspectives; this is followed up with a brief analysis of some possible descriptions of these perspectives.

(i) Metaphysics, Ethics, Philosophy of Religion: Their Interrelationship:

One could perhaps try and further illustrate the difference between the two perspectives in question, with issues from aesthetics, philosophy of logic, philosophy of language, etc. It will thus be interesting to consider whether there is in the history of Indian aesthetics something corres-
ponding to what Sri Aurobindo calls "the attractive but
dangerous phase of art for art's sake which makes poetry
a mere hedonistic indulgence and dilettantism of the intelli-
gence," and if it is there, in what way such a view of art
could be accommodated by the Indian perspective.

Similarly, one might consider whether Bhartrhari
faces the same kind of problems as faced by Wittgenstein in
understanding the relationship between thought, word and deed;
or consider whether the relationship between the various
sources of knowledge such as perception and inference is the
same or different in Indian logic and Western logic. However,
instead of attempting to multiply illustrations, one might as
well take a look at the three illustrations already attempted
with a view to discover their interrelationship. This will
help add a further dimension to our analysis of the perspec-
tives in question.

What, then, is the relationship between the metaphy-
sical, ethical and religious issues that we have considered?
Is the relationship between metaphysics, ethics and philosophy
of religion understood in the same way in the Indian and modern
Western approaches? Here it is possible only to indicate
what this relationship is like, not really to elaborate it.

While dealing with the metaphysical issue of mind-body
relationship, Descartes states that to understand the union of
soul and body we must proceed neither from the notion of extension nor from that of thought, but from life itself; however, the full implications of this, he does not seem to consider. Thus, the ethical and religious dimensions are not thought necessary to be taken into account when the 'pure' metaphysical question of mind – body relationship is discussed. Though he does bring in God, this is done, supposedly, only to the extent that it is rationally admissible, thereby practically severing the issue from the religious and ethical aspects which are certainly not limited to the rational understanding of God or to the belief in Him. The "life" that Descartes himself mentions as the starting point for a fruitful inquiry into the metaphysical issue in question, cannot exist without the support of theory, and therefore the two, that is, life and thought, need to be related to each other; and, moreover, the different areas of theory must support and supplement one another.

If we might describe metaphysics as the theory of self/God, then it has to be related to theory of dharma (morality) and to theory of mokṣa (spirituality). As has already been argued, it is difficult to imagine how a theory of self, such as the one in Samkhya, can be isolated from a theory of dharma and a theory of mokṣa; but when metaphysics is more a theory of God, not only this theory tends to be severed from
the aspects of Life and Experiences, it also tends to be isolated from other theories such as theory of dharma and theory of moksa.

Kant, for instance, though he is aware of the need to relate morality and religion, attempts to understand morality in itself and tries to free it of belief in God which stands, in this case too, for religion.

On the other hand, the Samkhya analyses the mind, the body and their relationship in the context of man's pursuit of the highest goal described here as Prakriti-Purusa-Viveka. This way of trying to theoretically explain mind, body, etc., in the process of explaining man's nature and goals, naturally involves connecting the metaphysical, the ethical, and the religious dimensions of man; for, it is in man's life that these may be found to have attained their concrete synthesis.

In the Indian context, the metaphysical, ethical and religious issues are so closely interrelated that a consideration of any one of them necessarily involves 'straying' into the other areas. This fact, instead of its being taken as a characteristic feature and thereby an indication of the holistic nature of this perspective, has often been pointed at as an example of the 'confusions' that are typical of Indian thought.
The Indian understanding of metaphysics, ethics, and philosophy of religion could perhaps be formulated by saying that, metaphysics is, as already pointed out, the theory of self which naturally involves ethics, which is the theory of dharma, and philosophy of religion which is the theory of mokșa. The self is not established except in relation to the (possible) attainment of the goals of dharma and mokșa, and these are not understood except in their interrelationship and in their relationship with the goals of artha and kāma. In other words, the self is understood in terms of the possibility of its realization of the ultimate goal, that is self-realization or God-realization, and this goal itself may be understood in a positive and comprehensive manner.

This understanding of the interrelationship between different kinds of issues, metaphysical, ethical, religious, etc., would imply that it is on account of this relationship that either of these is what it is supposed to be. This in its turn implies that metaphysical theories, for instance, may be regarded as theories in the proper sense of the term because they exist in a large context where they connect themselves with theories on the ethical and religious aspects. Even though some of the great thinkers of the modern West, such as Kant, for instance, may have treated all these issues together, it remains to be brought out how there exists an
organic relationship between them in their treatment of these issues.

Though we say that there is this intimate relationship between metaphysics and ethics, it should not be forgotten that this relationship is itself very flexible. Thus the Indian understanding of these issues does not support the notion that the ethics of a system follows from its metaphysics. In fact, the different philosophical systems in India have more or less the same ethics associated with them. This requires some elaboration.

It is useful here to recall what was said in chapter II about the 'religious' character of the Indian philosophical systems. They are not merely systems of abstract doctrines. Not only Buddhism and Jainism, but also Samkhya, including Yoga, and Vedanta are as much religions as they are philosophies, in so far as their ultimate concern is to understand and attain the highest goal open to human beings. This may be said, in a significant sense, of the Nyaya as well. Therefore, in trying to understand these systems, it is not necessary or even useful to begin with a clear-cut distinction between philosophy and religion as there exists in the modern West.

Now, in what sense can we say that the ethics or the theory of the code is the same for the various systems? It may be thought that "What is common to the philosophical systems
in India is not belief in God, but an almost universal belief in a moral order." But it is not merely a question of "belief" in a moral order; it implies also a certain "understanding" of what constitutes morality. It is rather a theory of morality that is common to these systems. At the same time, a theory of morality presupposes a theory of self, and therefore, it would be more appropriate to view these systems as variations of the theory of self. This, in turn, explains how the ethics could be the same for different philosophies. It is the same, because the different philosophies are united by a single theme, viz., the self, which they approach and elaborate in so many different ways.

Thus, the emphasis might differ here and there, and of course there will be differences in the details, but in essence the ethics of the various philosophico-religious systems is the same. This ethic may be said to consist in the understanding as to how to discipline oneself in relation to others in the society while disciplining oneself in relation to one-self and to God, so that this discipline is at once moral and religious/spiritual. The moral is what it is because it is also religious; and vice-versa. And, of course, all this is to be understood in the context of the pursuit of artha and kāma, of wealth, power and pleasure.
Viewed in this background, the different metaphysical systems may be said to provide the necessary intellectual/theoretical support to the understanding and attainment of a total discipline. The Samkhya does it in one way and with reference to a certain aspect of reality, the Advaita in another way, and so on. It is also possible, then, to view the Yoga as not merely an appendix to the Samkhya system; it may rather be viewed as the common adjunct to all the systems, that is, in so far as this system is the fullest and most detailed expression of the said ethical and religious discipline.

Similarly, rituals are not the exclusive concern of the system of Mimamsa; rather, it is through this system that a support is found, in terms mainly of the performance of rituals, to the self-same discipline the concern for which pervades the whole of Indian thought.

One might in the same way regard the Nyaya as another kind of support to this understanding of discipline, reasoning being the aspect with reference to which the pursuit of perfection is discussed here. One might also bring out this understanding of discipline, thereby facilitating its attainment, with reference to things as varied as grammar, medicine, music, dance and sex.

This view accords well with understanding, stated
and to some extent argued in the second chapter, that the systems of Indian thought do not necessarily comprise qualitatively different metaphysical systems, though each has some metaphysics of its own.

In so far as each system has some metaphysics of its own, we might say that they are different metaphysics with essentially the same ethics. But, in so far as these metaphysics are of the same kind, all of them serving the same function, namely that of intellectually supporting with their theories of self the same understanding of total discipline or perfection, one might say that these are but different formulations of the same world view, alternative formulations within the same basic framework.

Thus, these metaphysics may differ from system to system, but their is the same in so far as there is always, or almost always, a theory of the self, the self being the principle in terms of which the ethico-religious discipline can be understood and realized. And the ethics is one and the same in so far as it is basically a question of yama, nivama, etc., a programme so chalked out as to lead to the ultimate goal, viz., self-realization/God-realization.

The metaphysics can be really different, in the
sense of their being different frameworks, only when the goal is either *artha* alone, or *kāma* alone, or *dharma* alone, or a combination of any two or three of these without the *mokṣa*-dimension, the dimension of internal discipline. Though it is not impossible to trace this kind of metaphysics also in the Indian context, such a metaphysics might rather be said to serve as a foil rather than enter into the texture of philosophical understanding in India.

And, the ethics can be really different when the moral goal is understood in isolation from the other goals. This kind of ethics, it has already been argued, may be regarded/alien to the tone and tenor of Indian thought.

In brief, in India, the metaphysics of a school of philosophy is essentially its theory of the self; it contains the principle in terms of which a focus can be providing a man's life. And its ethics complements this by providing a theory of the discipline which should help in the attainment of this focus which is a unity of thought, word and deed, often termed in India 'self-realization', realization of one's true nature.

Though we may extend this understanding to the philosophies and religions where God is the central element of their metaphysics/creed, and where therefore the ultimate
goal of the discipline involved is understood as God-realization, this involves certain difficulties. For, as soon as God becomes the centre, the accent shifts from this discipline which is both spiritual and moral and which of course, requires a theory to support it, to theory itself, with the result that this theory is viewed and evaluated in isolation from other related aspects. Hence the effort to derive the ethics from the metaphysics of a system; and hence, also, the effort to base religion on morality or morality on religion.

(ii) The Two Perspectives : Some Descriptions:

It is pertinent to ask here whether the two perspectives that we have been trying to delineate are real alternatives or whether they are opposed to each other in such a way that only one of them can be a valid perspective and therefore we do not really have a choice in the matter. This issue may be considered with reference to a few possible descriptions of the two perspectives some of which we have already made use of during our analysis.

First, let us take the "Indian-Western" distinction. This, it may be noted at the very outset, is not intended as a geographical distinction. For, the West is, one might venture to remark, too much with the Indians, and therefore,
India is both itself and the West at the same time. (Perhaps, it is neither!) Moreover, we have specified the Western perspective further as "Modern-Western", and this adds a temporal dimension to this apparently geographical distinction. It is not really a temporal distinction either.

This takes us to the "traditional-modern" distinction as a possible description of the perspectives under consideration here. Tradition and modernity have been understood in contrast to each other in ever so many ways. It is thought fit here to describe the classical Indian thought and its perspective as traditional, not so much in the temporal sense of the term as in terms of the logical characteristics it signifies. These characteristics are, of course, hard to spell out; and, yet, one might say, as A.K. Saran for instance does, that the traditional Indian understanding takes into account the "internal relationship" of such elements as action, contemplation, etc., so that an analysis of these elements "leads on to the question 'Who am I?' that is, to autology (which) must be carefully distinguished from the scientific/anthropological question 'What is man?'".

The modern 'scientific' approach differs from this traditional approach, though tradition today co-exists here with modernity. This difference may be expressed thus: According to the modern scientific understanding, science in
in the sense of pursuit of objective knowledge, is the framework in which spirituality might exist; according to the traditional understanding, science in some of its forms may exist in the framework of spirituality, but spirituality cannot in any meaningful sense exist in the framework of science in whatever sense it might be taken. In other words, in this latter perspective, there is no objective truth independent of the truth of living, and no logic independent of the logic of human personality.

In so far as we are concerned with neither the temporal nor the geographical dimensions of the Indian and modern Western perspectives, it might be useful to examine the possibility of distinguishing between them in terms of the "holistic-piecemeal" distinction. This is bound to create problems, but the problems could perhaps be overcome.

The Indian perspective might be described as 'holistic' for this reason: herein the consideration of the parts or elements implies the consideration of the whole, that is, of the relation of the parts within the whole and of the parts to the whole, the 'whole' being truly represented by the realized person or the perfected soul.

And the modern Western approach might be described as 'piecemeal' in as much as the attempt therein is to analyse
parts in considerable isolation from the whole and without much regard for the relation between the parts within the whole.

In one case, philosophy, in the sense of a coherent theoretical system constructed out of rational arguments and ideas, exists in the framework of a structure of interrelated goals in order to explain these goals which are largely intuited, and to assist in their realization in concrete life. This is, in general, true of the Indian approach. And, therefore, when one discusses philosophy in this context one cannot ignore the connections that theoretical explanations have with direct knowledge or intuition on the one hand and concrete life on the other. Thus, it need not be considered mere looseness of conception if in this context the borderline between these are somewhat blurred. Distinctions are made but not emphasised to the point of its affecting the unity of the whole. Thus, for instance, there is the distinction between anubhava, vicāra, and ācāra; but the vicāra does not exist, and it is not viewed, independent of ācāra and anubhava.

While this creates the impression that vicāra or thought is not rational enough, it could be that the function that theory is supposed to perform is not affected but really assisted in this approach. To visualize and examine this possibility, one needs to take special care lest an alien
framework hinders us from establishing a direct contact with this framework of Indian thought.

In the case of the modern West, it is in a different way that philosophy is related to the goals which are, in this case also, as much intuited as they are reasoned out. Here the relationship is such that one seeks to consider and, if possible, establish these goals, individually and supposedly on purely rational grounds. As a result there is something like a divorce between reason and intuition, as also between theory and life. And, though one is left apparently with the same goals as in the former case, they may not really be same in that they are not understood in the same interrelationship. All this is implied by the description of this approach as piecemeal.

Thus in the holistic approach as delineated here, philosophy is understood as a rational enterprise of course, but as organically related to intuition and concrete life; and the goals are also understood here in their interrelationship.

On the other hand, the piecemeal approach permits the emphasis now on reason and now on intuition, now on theory and now on life, so much so that when the emphasis is on one element, the connections of this element to the other elements and to the whole are often forgotten. In
this approach, each goal is also treated more or less in isolation from the others, so much so that now the goal is morality and now spirituality. This leaves open the possibility that, with the best efforts to theoretically relate them, they remain discrete and unconnected, with the result that neither of these goals is really the same as what it is in the other perspective where these goals are understood in their essential interrelationship.

In short, philosophy in the sense of a theoretical and rational construct exists in one case in a larger framework of a whole with all its interrelated parts, and in the other case it exists almost as an autonomous entity, seeking to establish bonds with the other dimensions of the whole which are usually represented by religion, mysticism, etc.

This holistic-piecemeal distinction, with its adulatory sense of the one term and the pejorative sense of the other, suggests that the two perspectives are not only opposed to each other, but they are not really alternatives. This description, in other words, seems to be heavily loaded in favour of the Indian perspective, whereas actually we have only tried to look into the difference between the two perspectives and not yet a considered their relative merits and demerits. Therefore, it appears that this description of the
two perspectives in terms of the holistic-piecemeal distinction is not quite appropriate; at least not yet.

However, this suggestion as to the validity or relative superiority of any one of the perspectives will have to be viewed in the background of another significant fact. That is, the actual instances or concretizations of these perspectives, viz., the Indian and modern Western philosophies themselves, are only approximations and as such they do not become fully valid or acceptable just because the perspective that we have abstracted from them seems valid or acceptable.

If we understand the actual instances as approximations and not as realities which conform fully to the patterns we have described, then the problem of favouring the one as against the other out of prejudice, ignorance, et., does not seem to be a real problem. And yet, though both the Indian and modern Western philosophies have their merits and demerits, it seems that, as is suggested by our analysis so far, the merits of the one are more significant than those of the other and that the demerits of the one are of less consequence than those of the other. This suggestion seems inescapable.

If our understanding of the two perspectives has some plausibility about it, then one ought to make a distinction between the direction of thought and its details. And,
once this distinction is made, it would follow that problems in the matter of direction are much more serious than problems in matters of detail. It is therefore, essentially with this implication that one might use such terms as 'holistic' and 'piecemeal' to describe the approaches respectively of India and the modern West.

This, however, remains a matter of suggestion yet. For, the two perspectives are considered here merely as alternatives. For the purpose of this thesis, which is to look into the problems and prospects of comparison between Indian thought and modern Western Thought, it is sufficient if these perspectives can be clearly distinguished from each other.

In so far as comparative studies may also contribute to correcting a perspective if it is inadequate, it is not at all necessary that there is a prior determination of the validity or otherwise of a particular perspective for comparisons in the proper manner and in the proper framework.

(c) The Problems of Comparison

Tempting as it is to argue that the two perspectives that have been outlined here are irreconcilable and therefore only one of them can be the true perspective, we do not here push the argument along this line. Instead, we say only the
minimum that needs to be said here, and it is that the two perspectives are basically different, and that they are alternatives in this sense of the term. This itself has far-reaching implications for comparative studies.

Thus, in this section, we first examine the implications of our understanding of the perspectives and their differences. This leads to the identification of the confusion of perspectives as the basic problem in East-West comparisons. A brief note on the practical side of the problem complements this discussion.

(i) Implications for Comparative Studies:

We might as well state first what the premises are for what we want to say further. They are, first, the two perspectives or frameworks of Indian thought and modern Western thought are essentially different; secondly, the framework is different from what goes into it, and the former determines the latter in a significant way. To explain this briefly: the framework is not merely the sumtotal of its contents; rather it is the framework which determines the real import and the essential role of the elements contained in it.

Thus, there may be an element which is common to both
the frameworks. But, under the assumption that the two frameworks are significantly different from each other, what appears to be the same element is not necessarily the same. For, the role played by this element in the first framework can be significantly different from the role played by it in the context of the second framework. To take a rather crude example, the different roles played by the wearing of pants and shirt in the Indian and Western contexts: while in the Western context it means that one remains a part and parcel of the society with which he gets merged, in the Indian situation it means that one isolates oneself from the society, or one stands apart, one way or another.

From these two premises it follows that, considered by itself, a point of similarity or of difference between India and the modern West, means very little for an understanding of these two in comparison. That is, if the framework is different from what goes into it, and if the latter is to be understood in the context of the former, then, when two frameworks such as the Indian and modern-Western are under consideration, one needs to be very cautious about nothing the similarities and differences between them and making inferences from these observations. For, what appear as similarities need not be really that; and the same applies to the differences as well.
For example, let us take 'reason'. It does not mean much if we note either that there is reason in both the Indian and modern Western philosophies, or that, though it is present in both the cases, it is there in different degrees. For, reason could be there in both, and yet the role assigned to it could be significantly different.

Similarly, if it is noted that reason in the Indian context is a handmaid of faith or of 'authority', it is because one forgets that, the unrestrained play of reason, on the other hand, may not make a philosophy truly rational when the perspective is not alright. It thus remains an open question that needs to be examined in greater depth and detail.

As a matter of fact, it has often been said that Indian thought is religious suggesting thereby that it is not as rational as it should be. It has also been remarked, often enough, that Indian thought is no less rational than its Western counterpart. But there has hardly been an attempt to look into the role assigned to reason in these contexts in relation to the explanation, justification and realization of what are conceived as the goals of human life. Hence the need to explore this and similar issues from the angle suggested here, and to base comparison of philosophies on a better understanding of these.
But the very possibility of adopting this new orientation, depends on our first becoming clear about the perspectives of India and the modern West. As long as there is confusion in this respect, it might be futile to expect comparative studies to make a breakthrough in the direction of a better understanding of oneself and of others.

(ii) Confusion of Perspectives, the Basic Problem:

Let us note, in the first instance, that there has hardly been any attempt to distinguish between the framework in which a system of thought operates and the particular system itself. Thus, Kant's views on ethics, or Descartes' views on mind-body relationship, are often discussed as purely metaphysical or ethical issues; that is, they are discussed in isolation from the totality of their views, this totality being not limited to their 'pure' philosophical writings. Rather, seeing Descartes' ideas in the wider context of his views in general, expressed in various contexts and by various means including his letters, would mean both an awareness of the distinction between his thought taken by itself and the framework of this thought, and an attempt to relate the two. Whether theory is related to other dimensions of life, and if so, how, will become clear only in this way. One looks for the framework when one is aware of its significance.
Similarly, while dealing with the Indian philosophies and their doctrines, it should be possible for one to consider the issue in the background of the understanding, rather peculiar to these philosophies, of the relationship between the various dimensions of an issue and between the issues themselves. But the fact remains that there is precious little work done in this manner, and this reflects the absence of an awareness of the perspective to which a particular system or doctrine belongs.

If there is a failure to distinguish between a particular system of philosophy and the perspective to which the system belongs, it vitiates the attempt to compare systems of philosophy from two different perspectives. Moreover, in so far as the understanding of its basic perspective is necessary for a proper understanding of the system itself, comparisons between systems of the same perspective will also be vitiated by one's ignorance of this perspective.

One may not be aware of the perspective of one's own philosophical and religious doctrines and yet one normally tends to view another system which one studies by placing it in that very perspective. Thus, for example, a westerner who looks at the Samkhya or the Advaita is likely to place it in the perspective of his own thought thereby almost precluding a proper understanding of these. However, a direct and
detailed knowledge of the non-theoretical aspects of his own philosophies helps the Westerner, although in an indirect way, to place his own theory in the larger context of the individual and social life in the West.

On the other hand, an Indian is doubly incapacitated in the matter of viewing philosophical systems in their proper perspective. For one thing, he does not have much direct knowledge of the non-theoretical aspects of the Western systems; for another, his Western type of education is not conducive to his using his imagination to visualize the basic pattern of his own philosophies.

Now, if one imposes one's own framework, even if unconsciously, on an alien thought, as a westerner studying Indian thought normally does, or, as it is the case with most Indians, one simply remains ignorant of one's own perspective and its difference from the modern Western approach, the net result from comparisons between these philosophies would be that one neither understands the new system one is approaching, nor enriches one's understanding of one's own philosophy with which the new one is compared.

The "problem of standards" which some have identified as 'the' problem of comparison, becomes real because of this difference in perspective between the philosophies compared
and our ignorance of it; otherwise this problem would be much less malignant and by far manageable.

Other problems such as the problem of vastness and variety of the philosophies compared, problems of language, of different conceptions and categories, of different methods and goals of comparative studies, can all be regarded as springing from this basic problem of the confusion of perspectives, or else they could be seen as relatively insignificant.

Thus, for example, the problem of linguistic/terminological and cultural differences is essentially one of the difference in the perspective involved. If there is really no such difference, then the problem of translating the word dārsāna, for instance, as 'philosophy' should not be a serious one. Differences in the details of its connotation are bound to be there, and yet it need not affect the purpose of such translation. On the other hand, if theoretical philosophy is understood in one case in a certain relationship with the ultimate goal as also with Experience and Life, and if it is not understood in this relationship in the other case, then, even when the terms used for this appear to be parallel, the purpose of translation is not served by using one of these terms of the other.

The problem in this case is, then, not that we do not have a term in English which corresponds to dārsāna; rather,
it is that in the context in which the term 'philosophy' is used, it is understood in near-isolation from both the ultimate goal and the aspects of Experience and Life, while in the context in which the term 'darśana' is used, theoretical philosophy is understood as intimately and organically related to these. Thus the problem of terminology is real because there is the difference in perspectives coupled with a lack of awareness of this difference.

What about the problem of differences in categories? Once a concept or an issue is seen in its relationship with the rest of the system, and the system itself is seen in relation to the relevant non-theoretical aspects, it need not be a serious problem that the categories do not correspond. In other words, if a category is not seen in isolation from its perspective, then there is no real problem, whereas the absence of an awareness of the perspectives can compound an otherwise minor irrigation transforming it into a major hurdle in the comparison of philosophies. It is in this sense, then, that one might say the basic problem of comparison is the unclarity about the frameworks and their essential difference.

This problem is only compounded by the common impression that truth, when it is objective, is universal, and that therefore one may consider it as being independent of the culture and of the relationship the issue in question
has with other issues. But this impression itself draws its sustenance from a certain view of thought/theory which isolates it from direct knowledge or Experience on the one hand and from concrete life on the other.

Without going further into how the other problems of comparison could be traced to the basic problem of confusion of perspectives, or how they become truly problematic when compounded by this confusion, we shall now look at another side of the problem, viz., its practical dimension.

(iii) The Practical side of the Problem:

The theoretical problems which bedevil comparative studies as a whole cannot be understood and tackled properly unless the practical side of the problem is also attended to. Thus, though it goes a long way towards the emergence of a proper framework for comparative studies if only we identify the perspectives that are compared and contrasted, this identification itself is a very tall order in the absence, for instance, of texts which bring out clearly the structure of thought underlying the classics in a tradition. Solutions to the theoretical and practical dimensions of the problem should, indeed, strengthen and supplement each other.

The non-availability of texts which present the structure of thought in such a way that one can go into it
fully without having to go from one author who has interpreted it in one way to another who has interpreted it differently, – this is indeed a serious problem. Whatever the interpretation, it is important that we get at the structure of thought, at the internal and external relations that a particular thought exhibits.

But, as is obvious, this requirement can be and will be met only to the extent that there is an awareness of the importance of the relationship of its elements and of the relationship between thought or theory on the one hand and the non-theoretical dimensions on the other.

The proper study of classics has a definite role to play in one's becoming aware of one's own perspective. The structure of thought underlying a classic is important precisely because this is directly linked to the perspective to which it belongs. The classics of Indian thought, for instance, manifest a definite understanding of their perspective.

The differences among the classics with regard to their specific views do not necessarily point to their difference in perspective. Rather, they go to confirm their awareness of a common framework. Thus, for example, the Samkhya and Advaita texts operate within the same framework
in spite of their almost opposite viewpoints in the theoretical aspect. What differentiates them is, one might say, not the understanding of the relationship of elements, but the particular way in which the elements are conceived and the way in which their relationship is formulated.

To put it briefly, their framework is the same in so far as the elements of Experience, Thought and Life are seen, in both cases, in their interrelationship, and in so far as the elements of thought are also seen in their relationship among themselves and in relation to the ultimate goal which the Experience-Thought-Life complex purports to justify.

Now, if the classics involve a definite understanding of the perspective in which they exist, it is possible to view from a new angle the traditional Indian attitude to them which is one of devotion. This 'devotion' does not allow one to easily get away from this perspective, even if one might not fully understand these texts. Limitations of understanding will be present with regard to both the details and the substance of theory; and yet, to the extent that the theory is understood, to that extent the perspective itself would have been understood. And, therefore, clinging to a text is, in a significant sense, clinging to its perspective. And, in so far as there is a minimum awareness of this perspective,
possible distortions in life and thought need not become unmanageable; if the basic perspective is brought to bear upon these distortions, they can be set right without much difficulty.

As far as distortions in life are concerned, there are, even in contemporary times, the realized persons, and there is a philosophy which accords a significant place to these persons, so that these distortions may be corrected with reference to their life if not also by their guidance. In so far as there is a definite interplay between life and thought, each of these must be assumed to influence and fashion the other in a significant way. Hence, the theoretical understanding of the texts can also be rescued from their distortions, that is, if we understand them in the light of the best lives that have been fashioned with the help of these. Moreover, if distortions of theory are not distortions of its fundamental perspective, then setting them right must be a relatively simple task.

The standard Indian practice of writing commentaries can also be understood better from the point of view which is adopted here. This practice implies that something is held authoritative and sacred. It is often supposed that what is held as authoritative is only the particular views expressed in the text in question. Now, it is useful to consider whether it is the views themselves or the basic
perspective concretized in a particular way, which is regarded as authoritative. Here, 'perspective' refers to the particular understanding of the relationship between the parts and the whole which is clearly present only to the Rasis who can see the totality and not be the lesser authors who see it in bits and pieces as it were. But, in so far as these lesser authors adhere to the structure of thought present in the original works, the total perspective is itself kept in tact, and this in turn saves the lesser works from being mere groping.

There is really no reason to suppose that sacredness and authority was attributed primarily to the theoretical views themselves and not to their underlying perspective. The very fact that such diverse views as that of the different vedantic schools could be based on the same texts which are variously interpreted and commenced upon, shows that authority and sacredness are to be attributed at least as much to the basic perspective of a text as to the specific views expressed therein.

Whoever defined classics as works which every one wants to read but no one actually reads, and however much this 'definition' helps explain certain aspects of the problem involved, this certainly does not tell what happens, or does not happen, when one actually tries to read then. Unless
there are proper elucidations which bring out the structure of thought in the classics, it would be a case of missing the wood for the trees, that is, if and when one really gets to these texts.

Viewed thus, apathy towards the traditional mode of studying the texts cannot be the sole reason for the prevailing confusion about their basic perspective; in the changed circumstances of today there is the need to explicitly state the logic of their framework which might have been taken for granted when these were composed. Hence the importance of the proper elucidations of the classics which bring out their perspective clearly.

Relevant here is Northrop's observation that if one understands the basic theses of the traditional Oriental classics he can experience the East without going there. Rather than the "basic thesis" it is, we might say, the basic framework or perspective that enables one to 'experience' the East. We might as well add that even for a person in the Orient it is necessary to understand its classics in this way for him to understand its spirit.

At the same time it may be pointed out here that Northrop's understanding of "the fundamental problem of correctly and safely merging the East with the West" is different from ours. According to him, it is precisely "the task of
But we have already argued that the two perspectives could be different in a different way. His understanding of the conflicts between the different systems of Western thought as originating from an "emphasis on the theoretic component in knowledge", is in fact deceptively similar to our position that these 'conflicts' are due to isolating the theoretical aspect from the total complex.

(d) Some Attempts at Comparison

Our analysis of the problems of comparison has suggested that the basic problem is one of confusion of perspectives. One ought to examine now in some detail the existing framework of comparison to verify this. But a discussion on the framework of comparison has got to be with reference to actual instances of comparison; therefore, in the interest of clarity and concreteness, we here try to outline some of the 'representative' attempts at comparison with very brief remarks on the kind of views that have been held on East-West differences.

To be sure, what follows is not a summary account of the comparative studies that have taken place till now. It is merely a sample, selected almost at random; the purpose of this sample being merely to give a concrete content to a
possible understanding of the framework of comparative studies today, it is not thought necessary here to make this account either exhaustive or even extensive.

Albert Schweitzer who ventured to work out a whole philosophy of civilization deserves to be mentioned first. In this work 'The Philosophy of Civilization' (Parts I & II) he analysed the factors making for the decay and restoration of a civilization. As A.J. Bahm points out, his analysis of the issues in terms of the "will to live" led him to the conclusion that our will to live is expressed not only as volition but also as life-affirmation which begets reverence for life and attempts to understand life and the world.\(^8\)

Further, he concluded that Westerners are inclined to assume such life-affirmation and world-affirmation as more or less self evident; but they are, he felt, too optimistically satisfied with rationalised explanations which lack appreciation of the elemental will to live. Also, he described as too-pessimistic the Hindu world-view which according to him, is based on world- and life-negation.\(^9\) He further identified Chinese thought as coming closest to an adequate world philosophy, though he felt that all the three civilizations lack something essential to such a philosophy.

Paul Masson-Oursel, who regarded comparative philosophy as a kind of phenomenology, was one of the first to
discuss problems concerning its methodology. He put forward a thesis about the differences between civilization with reference to their views on the nature of order. Thus he held that this order presents itself in Greece as a participation of ideas, in China as hierarchy of values, in India as a classification of realities.\textsuperscript{10}

If Schweitzer's analysis is in terms of the affirmation and denial of life and the world, and Masson-Oursel's in terms of the different views of the nature of order, F.S.C. Northrop approaches the issue of East-West differences with the basic distinction between intuition and intellect. He interprets human experience as having two ultimate and irreducible concepts, the aesthetic or immediately apprehended (intuited) and hence certain, which is stressed in the Orient, and the theoretic or hypothetically constructed (postulated) and hence uncertain, which is stressed in the West. The two opposite and seemingly contradictory components stressed differently by East and West, are supposed by Northrop to actually complement each other: both concepts by intuition and concepts of postulation may contribute harmoniously to an enriched emerging world culture.\textsuperscript{11} Commenting on Northrop's work "the meeting of East and West", P.T. Raju writes that it is a work devoted to pointing out that the East is epistemologically intuitive and the West
intellectual, and that the future of man lies in integrating intuition and intellect. 12

Then there is C.A. Moore who describes the Indian mind as comprehensive. According to him, the intimacy of philosophy and life is fundamental to the whole Indian point of view. 13 He does not think that the "deep spirituality" which is so dominant in India, both in thought and in life, is so otherworldly, or escapist, or pessimistic, or negative that it finds violation of the spiritual in the abundant life. And he goes on to describe the Indian perspective as synthetic. 14 According to him, the only characterization that can be applied to Western Philosophy as a whole is that it is determinate in its concepts of the real, 15 while the East is unanimous in its view that all philosophy is ultimately for practical purposes. 16

K.H. Potter contents that the typical orientation of Indian thought is towards freedom (moksha). According to him, this orientation is not peculiarly Indian, but it is typical of Indian thought, and Indian philosophy is to be understood in a context which is dominated by this orientation. And he thinks that "speculation becomes relevant in India because of man's doubts that freedom is possible of attainment;" according to him, it is relevant in Indian thought as the "antidote to lack of faith in the availability of freedom."
for man." And, he feels, Indian philosophy "elevates freedom to a supereminent position above rational morality," which, he thinks, makes it unpalatable to the mainstream of Western thinkers.

In Comparative Religion, Ninian Smart, who does not fully agree with the sharp distinction between reason and faith, does however hold that theology ought to be dogmatic as "the ultimate and heartrending task of philosophy is to show its own bankruptcy as a source of metaphysical truth." Similarly, he notes that we may have been deceived partly by modern developments in philosophy into thinking that religious doctrines are meaningless, feels that, though tentative, these doctrines must be there to support our experiences of truth which is not only personal but also 'given', as well as note that "an'inner logic' helps us to see things hang together in one cluster of doctrines." At the same time, he conspicuously leaves out the dimensions of conduct and life in the whole 'Dialogue' of World Religions.

Franklin Edgerton would say that all Hindu philosophy has a practical aim. "It seeks the truth but not the truth for its own sake. It is truth as a means of human salvation that is the object... All Hindu Philosophy is religious in basis."
And, in Comparative mysticism, there is R. Otto who says that Sankara's mysticism is not a mystical form of justification and sanctification as Eckhart's is through and through; he goes to the extent of saying that this is so because it springs not from the soil of Palestine, but from the soil of India, thereby giving ample evidence to his limitations in the matter of understanding Sankara or anybody else who does not fit into the framework with which he is familiar.  

On the Indian side, P.T. Raju deserves special mention as the one to have contributed to the field of comparative studies, systematically as well as seriously. He throws all the three traditions, Western, Indian and Chinese, into one perspective, the perspective that develops from the point of view of man as a conscious being with two directions, the inward and the outward. According to him, Western philosophy is primarily rationalistic and intellectualistic, and overwhelmingly scientific and outward-looking; on the other hand, the main contribution, according to him, of the Indian tradition is explication of the inwardness of man, of the freedom of his spirit.  

He feels that the Chinese tradition which is primarily humanistic, is neither extremely inward nor extremely outward.  

Of course, there are the historians of Indian philosophy who have also attempted, each in his own way, to present
S. Radhakrishnan is of the opinion that the modern Western civilization takes its stand exclusively on "humanist elements" like active reason, power, aggression and progress, which therefore makes for a brilliant display but are short-lived; on the contrary the Chinese and Hindu civilizations are based on truly "religious" forces such as endurance, suffering, passive resistance, understanding and tolerance, which explains their strange vitality and staying power; but he believes that the Eastern civilizations are "by no means self-sufficient... what they have gained in insight they seem to have lost in power; and they require to be rejuvenated." And he says: "If modern civilization which is so brilliant and heroic, becomes also tolerant and human, a little more understanding and a little less self-seeking, it will be the greatest achievement in history;" and he laments: "so much goodness and constructive endeavour is lost to the world by our partial philosophies of life."²⁶

Further, Radhakrishnan believes that the East and West are "fertilizing each other"; hence his suggestion: "May we not strive for a philosophy which will combine the best of European humanism and Asiatic religion, a philosophy profounder and more living than either, endowed with greater spiritual and ethical force, which will conquer the hearts of men and compel people to acknowledge its sway?"²⁷
Radhakrishnan's protracted and painstaking analysis of the Western religious tradition into its three components—the Graeco-Roman (rational), the Jewish (the Semitic ideas of exclusiveness and particularism, dogmatism and monotheism) and the Indian (mystic)—tends to suggest that (Indian) mysticism helps to avoid "the extremes of 'religious' dogmatism and the 'rational' rejection of religion itself," and to establish a "religion which is both scientific and humanistic."\(^{28}\)

According to S.N. Dasgupta, who mentions the Karma theory, the doctrine of Mukti (moksha) and the doctrine of soul as the fundamental points of agreement among the Indian systems of philosophy, "the fundamental fact" from which India's philosophy may be logically deduced, is "a sincere 'religious' craving after some ideal blessedness and quiet of self-realization."\(^{29}\) According to him, the pessimistic attitude towards the world, which is shared by all religious systems but which finds its strongest utterance in Samkhya, Yoga and Buddhism, "loses all its terror as it closes in absolute optimistic confidence in one's own self and the ultimate destiny and goal of emancipation;" and contends that though there were many differences among the various systems, yet their goal of life, their attitude towards the world and the means for the attainment of the goal (sadhana) being fundamentally the same, there was a "unique unity" in the practical sadhana of almost all the Indian systems.\(^{30}\)
M. Hiriyanna remarks that in India "religion is blended with philosophy", of course not in the sense of dogma or superstition but in the sense of devotion to worthier living." For, the aim of philosophy is not merely to gratify theoretical curiosity, however disinterested that curiosity may be; it is also to "live the right kind of life, consciously adjusting one's conduct to one's intellectual traditions." 31

Hiriyanna also refers to the Karma doctrine and the ideal of moksa as some of the important points of agreement among the various schools of Indian Philosophy. While dealing with the latter point he mentions the purusarthas, dharma, artha, kama and moksa, but adds that philosophy is concerned mainly with dharma and moksa. Describing Indian philosophy, therefore, as essentially a criticism of values, he goes on to say that its "final aim is to determine what the ultimate value is, and to point out how it can be realized." Rejecting the common view that the Indian systems are "gospels of woe" as entirely wrong, he argues that the Indians have "faith in the ultimate goodness and rationality of the world." As an indication of this he refers to the belief that ignorance or error will be superseded in the end by "truth for which the human mind has a natural partiality." 32

Agehananda Bharati deserves mention as he introduces
śabda pramāṇa in order to distinguish between Indian and Western philosophies. Thus, for instance, he says: "Indian philosophy is theology, not philosophy, because it is connected with mysticism through śabda pramāṇa; the notion of sabda indicates lack of intelligence." He does, of course, refer to some limitations of Western philosophy as well. His criticism of Western philosophy from the aesthetic point of view is one such instance. This is similar to Schweitzer's criticism of the West from the mystical point of view.33

A cut above all these is A.K.Coomaraswamy who endeavours to show that Hinduism and Buddhism have a common framework which may be called 'Indian' and which he identifies as autology or the science of the self.34 Also, he argues that there is a significant contrast, in this very respect, between the Hindu and the Semitic approaches.35 At the same time, he would deny in Hinduism "the existence of anything unique and peculiar to itself, apart from the local colouring and social adaptations that must be expected" because what is known is conditioned by the mode of the knower.36

Of course, there is M.K.Gandhi who in his own way tries to present the Hindu thought in such a manner that its strength is not obliterated and its contrast with modern Western tendencies are brought into sharp relief. Basically, it is his approach that we have tried to adopt in the present study on the problems and prospects of East-West comparison.
(e) An Analysis of the Attempted Comparisons

The above sketch of the attempts at comparison should suffice to give content to a plausible delineation of the framework of comparison as it exists today. This delineation shall, however, be attempted only in the next chapter. In this final section of the present chapter, we shall have a closer look at attempts of comparison illustrated in the preceding section, so as to discern some of their general features and their common tendencies.

It may be noted at the very outset that there is a general agreement among comparative philosophers that the East and the West differ from each other and that this difference needs to be taken note of; the difference however, is conceived by them variously.

For example, it is world-affirmation and world-negation for Schweitzer; but it is a difference between intuition and intellect in Northrop. If the difference is one of theory and practice for Moore, for Potter it is one of orientation to freedom and the absence of this orientation. P.T.P.Raju sees this difference in terms of the distinction between man's inwardness and outwardness, while Radhakrishnan understands it in terms of humanist-religious distinction.
Dasgupta and Hiriyanna would understand the Indian mind with reference to its religiosity, though they are themselves not quite comfortable with this way of putting it. Agehananda Bharati would go to the extent of saying that Indian thought is characterized by a lack of intelligence while the aesthetic dimension is lacking in the West.

There is at the same time, an overwhelming desire on the part of these philosophers to somehow relate the two world-views which they clearly distinguish from each other.

Thus it is that a number of them are avowedly working for a 'synthesis' of the two kinds of philosophies. Schweitzer, for instance, would say that, though Chinese philosophy comes closest to an adequate world-philosophy, all the three civilizations, Chinese, Indian and Western, lack something essential to such a philosophy. Northrop supposes that the two seemingly contradictory components, stressed differently by East and West, are actually complementary to each other in the emergence of an enriched and harmonious world-culture; and P.T.Raju hopes that comparative philosophy will lead to a "System which will be inclusive of both the Eastern and Western outlooks." Similarly, Radhakrishnan believes that the East and the West are "fertilizing each other", that a philosophy "profounder and more powerful than either" can emerge.
It is, thus, a constant theme of the comparative philosophers that "neither the Orient nor the Occident is philosophically self-sufficient, each lacking the total perspective characteristic of philosophy." \(^{39}\)

There are also some who do not share this view whole-heartedly. Zaehner, for instance, would rather say that the basic principles of Eastern and Western philosophies are irreconcilable, that the two are "talking at cross-purposes." \(^{40}\) Here one finds a recognition of the serious difficulty of comparing and putting together India and the West.

Also, there have been attempts, as in Paul Masson-Oursel, to reduce comparative philosophy to a phenomenology which studies phenomena as they appear in different cultural areas. According to this view, comparative philosophy is to show the special relation of the philosopher to his milieu. Thus it would show that what Socrates is to his milieu, Confucius is to his and Buddha to his. As P.T. Reju points out, this reduces comparative philosophy to a descriptive, positivistic study. \(^{41}\) Also, as compared to Zaehner's position, this view seems to swing to the other extreme; it views the differences as merely external to thought itself.

Obviously, when they talk about Indian thought,
most comparative philosophers have in mind the 'systems' of Indian philosophy. But it is often forgotten that isolating these treatises on salvation (mokṣaśāstra) from the so-called secular treatises such as Arthaśāstra, Kāmaśāstra, Nātyaśāstra, etc., would mean that we distort the science of salvation itself, and it becomes a cause of ruin, intellectually, morally and spiritually. It is in this context that we should see the distortions in our understanding of Indian thought. Our analysis of the ultimate goal in its relationship with the other goals was meant, indeed, to counter the effect of this isolation of the science of salvation from the 'secular sciences.'

The many practical difficulties of getting across the cultural barriers are not diminished but transformed into an almost unsurmountable problem by this kind of isolation of the parts from the whole. We have therefore, emphasized the need to see an element of a philosophy in its organic relationship with its total context. And we have argued that what distinguishes the Indian approach from the Western is not the presence or absence of a particular elements or aspects, but a dogged consistency with which the relationship between the elements of a whole is taken into account while analysing any particular issue. The comparative philosophers we have mentioned, on the other hand, do
not seem to explore this possibility, except for a passing glimpse of it now and then.

Such a glimpse is there, for instance, in Radhakrishnan who says it is only natural that intuition, which is roughly the same as what we have termed Experience, (theoretical) philosophy, which corresponds to what we called Thought, and ethics which comes closest to what we have termed life, should in different conditions sometimes attain similar results. There seems to be here a recognition of the elements which in their interrelationship give rise to sometimes similar and sometimes different results. But, as this interrelationship is not taken seriously or analysed properly, this is not much more than a passing glimpse.

Similarly, Radhakrishnan does not take this relationship of the elements into account in his analysis of what he describes as "the supreme spiritual ideal" which he affirms has "dominated the Indian religious landscape for over forty centuries." Though he laments the present crisis which he attributes to a lapse from the "organic wholeness of life", he does not seem to base this on a consideration of the interrelationship of the various dimensions of this "wholeness" which he appears to have identified.

Another instance of such a glimpse is Radhakrishnan's saying that the "dialectic of religious advance through
tradition, logic and life helps the conservation of Hinduism by providing scope for change." Here we have the aspects of Experience, Thought and Life, and their flexible relationship, which we have found very important for a proper understanding and appreciation of Indian thought. One wishes that Radhakrishnan had made the nature of this 'dialectic' more explicit.

The closest he comes to explaining this dialectic is when he says: "The three prasthānas or divisions of the Vedanta, the Upanishads, the Brahmasutra and the Bhagavadgita, answer roughly to the three stages of faith, knowledge and discipline. The Upanisads embody the experiences of the sages. Logic and discipline are present in them, though they are not the chief characteristics of the Upanisads. The Bhagavadgita is primarily a yogāśāstra giving us the chief means by which we can attain a truly religious life. They form together the absolute standard for the Hindu Religion." Overlooking for the moment the question whether this standard could really be absolute, we might see here a close correspondence with what we have said, in the second chapter, while discussing how an Indian Philosophical system could be interpreted so as to bring out its basic perspective.
But Radhakrishnan does not draw the inevitable conclusion that we have drawn from this, the conclusion that what is typical of Indian thought as a whole is the ever-present awareness of the flexible relationship of the elements of Experience, Thought and Life, and the total commitment to the principle behind it. We have formulated this principle in terms of the relationship between the whole and the parts. Not only we have drawn this rather bold conclusion, we have also tried to support it with illustrations from various fields of philosophy.

Thus, Radhakrishnan does not seem to see the implications of viewing theoretical philosophy in the context of Experience or direct knowledge on the one hand and concrete life or conduct on the other.

P.T. Raju agrees whole-heartedly with Radhakrishnan; and he adds that the thought of India has tended to give "one-sided importance to the spiritual viewpoint." But he does not really examine whether this 'spiritual' viewpoint could have been such as to have taken into account the 'material' aspect. He would therefore say that Indian philosophy should "incorporate elements from Western Philosophy" in order to make up for its "one-sided preoccupation with the realm of spirit."
Radhakrishnan's analysis of the Indian approach to the religious problem also shows his somewhat vague awareness of the unique character of Indian thought and the more or less casual attention be pays to it. Thus he analyses the Indian approach with reference to the first four aphorisms of the Brahmasutra: scriptural teaching, rational understanding and the way of assimilating the truth seen/heard and reflected on to our being, are considered in the first three aphorisms, and the reconciliation of authority, logic and life suggested in the fourth aphorism.48

Thus Radhakrishnan shows an awareness of the relevant aspects and their interrelationship; yet he does not seem to draw the logical conclusions from this for East-West comparisons. For, in the same context he says, for instance, that the differences between the East and West are "related to external, temporary social conditions and are alterable with them."49 Our analysis of the two perspectives has however, suggested that the difference between the East and the West is of a different kind altogether.

Radhakrishnan's contention that "Hinduism is wholly free from the strange obsession of some faiths that the acceptance of a particular religious metaphysic is necessary for salvation,"50 seems to imply what we have said with
reference to the flexibility of creed in its relationship to cult and code in Hinduism. But when he says, further that Hinduism is more a way of life than a form of thought, it becomes clear that his understanding of the relationship between Experience, Thought and Life, or between creed, code and cult, is not the same as ours.

To say that Hinduism is more a way of life than a form of thought, is to suggest that faith or metaphysics is less important than practice in Hinduism, and this casts its shadow on his earlier statement about Hinduism being free from a certain obsession. It would appear that Hinduism does not insist on a particular faith because faith is less important and it is conduct that matters. The understanding that we have presented does not suggest anything like this. Rather it suggests a certain way of regarding faith and metaphysics as important and indispensable, consistently with an appreciation of the flexibility that Hinduism exhibits in matters of faith and metaphysics.

The same kind of problem is present in K.K. Devaraja who takes note of the Christian "insistence on dogma" and contrasts it with the Hindu recognition of "plurality of paths leading to an identical goal", a recognition which enables Hinduism to "harbour within its bosom a plurality of
faiths or systems of belief." We have tried to understand this 'insistence on dogma' in terms of the isolation of the elements of the whole, so that insistence on 'good deeds', which sometimes replaces the insistence on dogma, may be said to involve the same error; also, regarding the notion of 'plurality of faiths', we have tried to understand it in terms of the identity of the roles played by the different 'faiths' in relation to the other relevant aspects. Thus, in our analysis of the issue, we have tried to go beyond the circular explanation of the plurality of faiths in terms of plurality of paths and vice versa.

Devaraja's contention that only "such rational creeds as Buddhism and Hinduism have a future," seems to reduce the issue to the question of rationality of particular religions. Our analysis has, however, suggested that it is not a question of rationality or irrationality as such, that it is rather a question of the kind of rationality involved. And the framework of comparison ought to be such as to bring out how the two rationalities are different on account of the difference in the way in which reason is related to the other relevant factors.

Speaking about the Westerner's bias against revealed authority, M.Hiriyanna gives two reasons for it: "a misapprehension of the role assigned to revealed testimony" and, "the
fear that the recognition of revelation will lead to the
dethronement of reason which is a great pet of the Western
philosophy. 53

Here we have, as it were, the beginnings of an ade­
quate explanation of the essential nature of Indian philoso­
phy. If properly pursued, that is, if examined with reference
to the role assigned to reason and revelation in the Indian
context, the question regarding the relationship between
these two has the potency to take us to the realization of
what is possibly typical of Indian thought; what is truly
indicative of its typical nature, is the specific understan­
ding of the relation between reason and revealed authority
and the consistency with which this relation is taken into
account whenever reason is employed for the examination of
some particular issue. But, as in the case of Radhakrishnan,
in case of Hiriyanna also, the seeds of a possibly adequate
description of the nature of Indian philosophy remain as
seeds only; the analysis is not pursued far enough.

And, as with Hiriyanna's 'analysis' of the relationship
between reason and revelation, so also with his examination
of the relationship between Experience, Thought and Life as
factors constitutive of the ultimate goal of life. Let us
briefly consider his views in this regard.
According to Hiriyanna, the aim of mokṣa is not merely acquisition of knowledge or mere self discipline, but a certain immediate experience resulting from both. Knowledge here refers to the thought aspect, self discipline to the life aspect. He says: "It is this experience, typified in jīvanmukta, or the resulting attitude towards life in the world that should be understood when we say that mokṣa is the common end of all Indian Philosophy."54

We should not overlook here the fact that Hiriyanna takes Experience more as the result of Thought and Life then as an ingredient of mokṣa just as Thought and Life are its ingredients. This view of the Experience aspect is discernible even when the jīvanmukta is referred to; for, he is not seen in terms of the integration of Experience, Thought and Life. The aspect of Thought or theoretical knowledge suffers in this kind of analysis. And this only helps to perpetuate the impression that Indian philosophy is not hard thought.

The position we have taken in this regard is that Experience, Thought and Life may be regarded at once as constitutive of the goal and as means of its justification. And we have argued that either of these, whether considered as a constituent of the goal or as a means of its justification and attainment, is that particular aspect inasmuch
as the other aspects are there to play their respective roles. That is, while Hiriyanna emphasises a certain aspect of the complex reality as embodied in the *jivanmuktta*, we would want to emphasise the kind of relationship that exists between the various aspects thereby precluding an overemphasis on any one of these aspects; such emphasis may be alright at the individual level where allowance has to be made for individual variations.

We have dealt with Radhakrishnan, Raju and Hiriyanna at some length mainly because the thesis being developed here seems to closely resemble what these philosophers have themselves said on certain occasions. The similarity of our views with some of their statements notwithstanding, the position we have adopted and the arguments we have adduced for it are essentially different from those of these philosophers.

In short, for a proper appraisal of Indian Thought, it is necessary that we base it on an examination of such key issues as the nature of the ultimate goal and the relationship of theoretical philosophy with this goal, the relationship between theory, direct knowledge and conduct, between different theoretical systems, etc. In the absence of a proper examination of these and similar issues, generalisations about
this thought can only add to the misty atmosphere that already exists, thus widening the gulf between the mentalities of East and West to no purpose.

The extent of vagueness of the issues involved may be guessed from the very vagueness of the terms with which the generalizations are made. Such words and phrases as spirituality and other-worldliness, intuition and inwardness, humanism and religiosity, could of course be useful; these terms, however, will acquire a different and possibly a less disquieting sense, if only they are used in the context of an analysis of the relevant issues.

Moreover, as we have argued in the second chapter, it is quite possible that the relationships between reason and intuition, between morality and religion, etc. are conceived differently in the two situations; and, if this is so, it is also possible that the 'same' concepts would have significantly different senses in the two contexts. For example, if reason is related to intuition in the two contexts in two different ways, then it does not make much sense to say either that both philosophies are rational, or that one is rational and the other is not. Hence, it is not merely that notions such as 'spirituality', when they are not properly explained, create an atmosphere which is not conducive to clarity on the nature of Indian thought rather they put as on the wrong scent.
It may not be regarded as lingering too long on this issue if we take here a closer look at one instance of the use of the term 'spirituality' in this connection.

Thus, Radhakrishnan uses the term 'spirituality' to characterize the essence of Indian thought. He also brings in the notions of idealism, intuition, and interest in the subjective; but the key word is spirituality. And what is spirituality? Radhakrishnan does explain this.

In the first place, he means by the use of this term that Indian Philosophy is "not removed from life". He explains this by pointing out that the philosophy of the Upanisads, the Gita, etc., is "very near to popular belief and understanding." He supports this further by pointing out that philosophers aimed at total reformation of the country.

Secondly, he means that "the problems of religion stimulate the philosophic spirit;" for example, God and His nature, moksa or the ultimate goal of man, the relation between man and God, were some of the important topics in Indian Philosophy. But these religious forms have not, according to him, hampered philosophical discussions. Rather, he believes that this association between philosophy and religion has made religion in India less dogmatic.
Thirdly, it is suggested that the Indian mind is aware of the intimate relation between theory and practice, or between doctrine and life. As a result, philosophy does become a way of life, an approach to spiritual realization. This argument that, in India, philosophy is a way of life, and the first argument that Indian philosophy is not removed from life, are indeed variations on the same theme. But Radhakrishnan does not go into the nature of this "intimate" relation between theory and practice, between doctrine and life.

Now, can thought be a way of life? To say that Indian philosophy is a way of life, could suggest that it is not hard theory, that is, unless it is shown what the connections are between thought and life. Another problem is regarding the effect of philosophy on religion. To think that the association between philosophy and religion makes religion in India less dogmatic, is to suppose that philosophy is necessarily less dogmatic than religion. This way of looking at the Indian context in terms of the 'association' of philosophy and religion is precisely what we have argued here to be the result of a confusion of perspectives.

When this, explanation proceeds from the 'spiritual' to the 'religious', and then to the 'practical', one gets
the uneasy feeling that one is operating on the surface without getting to the essence of this thought.

One of Radhakrishnan's aims has been, as he has himself stated it, "to explain the Indian views within the focus of Western thought." This explains, partly at least why, in spite of his deep erudition in both Eastern and Western thought, he did not get much beyond the level of generalities in the issue of East-West Contrast.

The fact that one has set for oneself the goal of presenting the Indian views within the focus of Western thought, indicates that one does not so much suspect there to be any significant or basic difference between the two perspectives one is dealing with. The difference between the two, as he conceived it, is mostly one of emphasis. Therefore, he would say, for instance, that it is "the emphasis on the goal of spiritual life that bound together worshippers of many different types and saved the Hindus from spiritual snobbery." The title of one of his works, viz., 'Eastern Religions and Western Thought', indicates that Radhakrishnan has, indeed taken seriously the possibility of differentiating between the Indian and the Western on the basis of their "emphasis"
respectively on spirituality and rationality. P.T. Raju refers to this quite approvingly: he believes that this title is "significant in so far as the thought of the East has, in general, tended to give one-sided importance to the spiritual viewpoint."61

Some of the relevant questions in this connection are:

Is not God, eminently a topic of discussion for the modern Western Philosophers? Is there not a serious concern about the religious goal even among these? And, as for the practical concern, is it not invariably present in the Western context, even though it may be subdued in certain philosophies? Is it not both unnecessary and unrealistic to understand the difference between the East and the West in terms of the emphasis on one or the other of the aspects taken in isolation?

Would it not be nearer truth to suppose that philosophy and religion, reason and faith, theory and practice, were always present and related to each other in the West as in the East, but in significantly different ways? Could we not express this difference by saying that the Indian philosopher begins with the unity of these and then tries to understand the elements in the background of this unity of the whole, while the modern Western Philosopher tries to arrive at this unity and the relationship of the elements by first considering
these elements in isolation from one another as well as from the totality of which these are elements?

If the answer to these questions could be in the affirmative, then we do not have to deny rationality to the East or spirituality to the West; we do not also have to think in terms of their quantitative distribution or their varying emphasis in the two contexts. Instead, as has been tried in this exploratory study, we may have to first work out the manner in which each aspect of these two philosophies is related to the other aspects in the same context, and then proceed to place the two kinds of philosophies side by side. In other words, we have to have the ground prepared for whole-to-whole comparison.

This takes us to the question of the framework of comparison as it exists today and as it can possibly be formulated for better comparisons; and this is what we are concerned with in the following chapter.
NOTES AND REFERENCES: CHAPTER 7
(References are to the editions mentioned in the Bibliography)


4. Raju, P.T., Lectures on Comparative Philosophy, Poona, p. 52, and Bahm, A.J., Comparative Philosophy, p. 25.


6. Ibid. p. 436

7. Ibid. p. 437

8. Bahm, A.J., Comparative Philosophy, p. 14

9. The Philosophy of Civilization (Part II: Civilization & Ethics), 1929; pp. ix, x)


11. Bahm, A.J., Comparative Philosophy, pp. 15,16

12. Lectures on Comp. Phil., p.8

14. Ibid. pp. 9, 14


16. Philosophy East and West, Princeton University, 1944; p. 266


18. Ibid. p. 3


20. Ibid. pp. 11, 12 and 13 respectively.

21. Ibid., pp. 140 and 138 respectively

22. Bhagavad Gita, Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago, 1925; p. 6

23. Ibid.


25. Ibid. pp. 10 and 164


27. Ibid. p. 259

28. Ibid.


30. Ibid. pp. 75, 77

32. Ibid., pp. 50, 51


36. Coomaraswamy, A.K., *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 4

37. Raju, P.T., *Lectures on Comparative Philosophy*, p. 7

38. Radhakrishnan, S. *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 259.


41. Raju, P.T., *Lectures on Comp. Phil.*, p. 8

42. *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 259

43. Ibid. p. 35


45. Ibid. p. 18


47. Ibid. p. 58

49. Ibid., p. 173

50. *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 28


52. Ibid., p. 119


54. Ibid. pp. 20, 21


56. Ibid. p. 25

57. Ibid. p. 26

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid. pp. 9, 10

60. *East. Rel. & Westn. Thought*, p. 322

61. Raju, P.T., "Metaphysical Theories ..." in *Indian Mind* p. 59