

HISTORY OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY: ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING OF THE CLASSICAL THROUGH THE COLONIAL

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Classical Indian Philosophy is characterized with astonishing conceptions—such as being ‘damaged, stunted and defaced’,¹ ‘gone into backwaters’,² ‘captured by the West’³ ‘blanketed by the West’,⁴ ‘frozen and mummified’,⁵ and ‘structurally altered’⁶—in the contemporary period. There is a need to explicate the presuppositions and background of these conceptions to have a better understanding of the classical Indian philosophy. These ‘contemporary conceptions of the classical’ presuppose that there is a body of knowledge called Indian philosophy that is available as a monolithic structure to be understood, interpreted and commented in its entirety. This monolith is characterized by certain essential characteristics such as spirituality, pessimism, mystical and intuitive nature, soteriological and otherworldly, static and unprogressive character, etc., which depicted an epistemic distinction between India and the West. Roots of the analysis of the ‘contemporary conceptions of the classical’ would take us not to the classical period which is far away, but to the recent past i.e., colonial period. It is the recent past that shapes the present conceptions of the remote past. This paper attempts to investigate the recent past to explicate the background for the ‘contemporary conceptions of the classical’.

History of Indian Philosophy, in general, means the way the philosophical thought in India originated, took different directions and developed into a heterogeneous system of thought. Given that history writing in India, through the Western categories, is developed during the modern period, and that the initial attempts of writing histories of India are by Western scholars, there is a need to understand how we are told to see/visualize our own past and philosophy. Modern historical interest in Indian philosophy began with the Orientalist interest in the Indian past. Situating itself broadly

in the debates on Orientalist and Nationalist notions of history of India, the present paper argues that Indian philosophy, as we understand it today, is a colonial construct. After making some remarks on the development of historical writing of India, I would briefly look at the limitation of a foreign language in comprehending and presenting the Indian philosophical tradition by the early colonialists. Readings on the two histories of Indian philosophy, one by Max Muller representing Orientalists and the other by Radhakrishnan representing Nationalist historians, are presented to show the dialectics between these two in producing the monolith called Indian Philosophy.

I

The history of Indian Philosophy extends at least for about 2500 years. This lengthy period of history has witnessed the growth of a rich variety of philosophical thought presented in incalculable number of works written by innumerable number of scholars. This vastness of the period and the literature exhibits the depth and richness which further complicates the attempts to draw a comprehensive picture of the history of Indian philosophy. Notwithstanding the limitations, there were attempts at recording the previous philosophical thought with varied motives and views. In the classical period, there were works such as *Saddarsana Samucchaya*, *Sarvadarsana Sangraha*, *Sarvamata Sangraha*, *Sarva Siddhanta Sangraha* and *Sarva Darsana Sangraha*, which have recorded the philosophical thought of their previous and contemporary times with the motive of pointing out the inadequacies of their earlier thought and propagating their own in a more robust way. In the modern period, there were attempts by scholars like Max Muller,⁷ Zimmer,⁸ S. Radhakrishnan,⁹ Surendranath Dasgupta¹⁰ etc., in recording the history of Indian Philosophy with the intention to bring a comprehensive understanding of the philosophical thought of India. Each of the attempts though tried to provide a better understanding of Indian Philosophy, have endowed with their own limitations. The limitations are the outcome of the historical context of the then India. These limitations have not only influenced but also structured the future course of discussions on Indian philosophy. In order to understand the influence of these limitations we need to look into the historiography of India itself i.e., how and why histories of India and Indian philosophy are written and rewritten.

Let me here prepare the context in which I would like to place the modern histories of Indian Philosophy that I shall bring into discussion a little later. I take the support of the illustration of different phases of writing and rewriting of Indian history in general provided by Neeladri Bhattacharya¹¹ that would work as a useful platform for discussion on writing history of Indian Philosophy.

II

While discussing the practice of writing and rewriting of the India's past, Neeladri Bhattacharya illustrates various phases that existed in the modern period. Let me summarize some of these phases that are useful for the present work which are most eloquently dealt by Bhattacharya. 'History in India', points out Bhattacharya, 'began its modern career implicated in projects of colonial knowledge.'¹² This legacy of colonial knowledge was embedded in 'the sources that were collected and stored and the institutions of research that were built up'. There were successive phases of Orientalist, Liberalist and Nationalist notions of the past that abetted in rethinking and rewriting the history of India. Whereas Orientalist ideas structured historical representations of Indian past by glorifying the classical age, Liberals restructured it in the light of modern liberal notions. While criticizing the Liberal histories, Nationalists borrowed the Orientalist notions of India's past. Let me briefly discuss these three phases as it forms the context of our discussion on the development of history-writing of Indian Philosophy.

Orientalists like William Jones, H.T. Colebrook and Max Muller, inspired by the romanticism and classicism of the time, discovered the greatness of the glorious past of India embodied in its language, laws, institutions and religious texts. There was a decline of the glory which resulted in the degenerated present before the British rule. Orientalists while assigning themselves the task of rediscovering the glory played the role of 'codifiers and translators' in discovering the ancient texts and ascribing their 'true' meaning. 'As researches into ancient texts and projects of translation proliferated, and institutions and journals for Asiatic researches were set up', states Bhattacharya, 'modern history in its colonial form began to take shape.'¹³ Oriental histories were questioned by Liberals from within the fold of imperial thought. Liberals condemned the same past of India that was glorified by the Orientalists. Liberal histories idealized the principles of modern West such as 'Individualism, Freedom and Democracy' and demarcated the other societies strictly on the

basis of the presence and absence of these liberal values. As a result of this, Liberals like James Mill could only see shades of darkness where Orientalists have seen a succession of golden ages in India's past. The dynamism of historical time of the modern West was contrasted with the static time of the Orient by the liberals. Liberals propagated that the civilizing power of the West is the only solution to problems of India.

Nationalist histories, points out Bhattacharya, developed in opposition to imperial and communal frames. In criticizing Liberal histories, Nationalists borrowed the founding notions of Orientalists—'the idea of classical golden ages and the corollary myth of a subsequent civilizational decline'. Thus, nationalist histories were caught up in the same trap—which they intended to transcend. Bhattacharya eloquently brought out this when he says:

Assumptions and terms naturalized by earlier discourses become part of accepted commonsense and shape the nature of subsequent reasoning. And when new arguments are framed in terms of these old assumptions, their truth is reinscribed, their taken for granted status is reaffirmed.¹⁴

The attempts of nationalist histories in returning to the ancient past to constitute a sense of self have only reinscribed and reaffirmed the earlier assumptions of Orientalists and Liberals. As pointed out by Bhattacharya, 'in looking at the past and present, they operated with Western modernist ideas of what constituted progress, and what was to be criticized as primitive, backward and irrational.'¹⁵

This is the general historical background of history-writing in which we find different phases of writing and rewriting of India's past develop. Initial attempts of Orientalists were criticized and modified by Liberals that were further rejected by the Nationalists, but only to accept the initial frameworks developed by the Orientalists.

My attempt here is to locate the development of histories of Indian Philosophy within this Orientalist-Liberal-Nationalist framework. This is the way in which the histories of Indian Philosophy are initially written which in a way determined and structured the whole conception of it. In other words, this background—Orientalist-Liberal Utilitarian-Nationalist patterns of history-writing—has structured how Indian Philosophy was written about, how trends and interests in research have changed and how and why people have come to comprehend Indian Philosophy in the way it is now read understood and taught in academic institutions.

By saying that Indian Philosophy, as we understand it now, is an

outcome of the dialectics of Orientalist-Liberal utilitarian-Nationalist discourses, I do not mean that it is an imposed one. Rather it is a negotiated and moderated one. It is a product of continuous contestations and negotiations—but all this, within the framework developed in the early colonial depictions. It would be an interesting study to take up, if one investigates whether one is going far from the Indian Philosophy itself as a result of these negotiations. However, such an investigation should not intend to discover the original or essential or pure Indian Philosophy, rather should attempt to see the possibility of looking for alternative ways of doing Indian Philosophy outside the framework of the Orientalist-Nationalist construction of Indian philosophy.

This whole exercise of writing history of Indian Philosophy is to find whether there is Indian philosophy in the Western sense of the term and construct whatever exists in those terms. It would be interesting to note when and how the term philosophy, in the Western sense of the term, is applied to Indian thought by the non-Indians. Most of the depictions of traveller-historians of India did not make note of philosophical thought in India, even if they did, it was termed as a religious one. India has been projected as a wealthy and a mystic religious country in the pre-colonial times. This impression was carried forward with some modifications by the Orientalists and Indologists. Along with the material wealth, there was found a literary wealth. But the term Indian Philosophy is used either as a mere label or as another term for the mythology or religious mysticism of India in the early colonial period. Even Sir William Jones (1746-1794), who is responsible for the establishment of the Asiatic Society of India (1784) after getting fascinated by the rich Sanskrit literature, though written about the history and culture of Hindus, did not mention the term philosophy in relation to India anywhere in his writings. It is H.T. Colebrook, in his 'On the Philosophy of Hindus',¹⁶ who has written about the six philosophical systems of India referring to Nyaya-Vaisesika, Samkhya-Yoga and Purva-Uttara Mimamsa (Uttara Mimamsa is also known as Vedanta). His purpose, in his own words, is not to exhibit a contrasted view of the tenets of different philosophical schools, but to present a summary of the doctrines of each set.¹⁷ By his time, the *Sarvadarsana sangraha* of Madhava Acharya is translated and the philosophy of six systems is available for the Orientalists.¹⁸ The label Indian Philosophy might be getting strengthened during the time of Colebrook. In the writings of Max Muller the skeleton and label of Indian philosophy completely strengthened with flesh and blood provided

by the Colonialist and Eurocentric structuring. This would be elaborated a little later.

For the time being let us explicate the language limitations involved in the Orientalist constructions of Indian philosophy. Language has played a very crucial role in the colonial construction of Indian philosophy. Understanding and interpreting a knowledge system existent in one language through another language structured with another knowledge system always poses a problem. The problem accentuates when the interpreting language is loaded with an ideology as it happened in the Indian context.

The problem of language of the colonialists is not just an issue of terminological equivalences between Sanskrit and English, though it is also a big barrier in carrying the cultural load of the terms and concepts. It is, rather, also the ideology with which the language operates, which allows the interpretative language to construct Indian philosophy to suit their prejudices and idiosyncrasies.

Significant outcomes on the way to construct the Indian Philosophy that have played a pivotal role are philology and comparative studies. These two helped the Orientalists to look for not only the similarities in words and thought, but also in positing and further developing the theories of origin of languages and philosophy. These theories situated the origins of language and thought outside India through the propagation of the theory of Aryan invasion.

To understand the features of the ideology of colonialism let us look at the depiction of Indian Philosophy as constructed by a very significant Indologist, Max Muller. Significance of his place in the history of Indian Philosophy lies not just in his translations of the ancient Indian Sanskrit literature, but also in ideological construction of Indian Philosophy with certain characteristic features.

III

Max Muller: The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

After his first contributions to the study of Indian Philosophy as early as in 1852 published in German, Max Muller had written *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* in 1899. The gap between these two periods is filled by publication of the translation of *Rigveda* and the *Sacred Books of the East*.

It is in the depictions of Max Muller that we see a clearly

formulated set of Eurocentric traits which tried to construct the Indian Philosophy in a formidable way. It is in his writings that we see the terms, Indian Philosophy, National philosophy along with Hindu philosophy and qualifying it as a universal philosophy. In these depictions, there exists an underlying ideology of constructing a national philosophy or universal philosophy which can be thrust upon the people of India. There is a difference between this National philosophy and the Nationalist thought developed in the subsequent period. In a country where there exists a complex diversity and plurality of not just cultures and languages but also philosophical positions, construction of a National philosophy which can be accepted by all the people is attempted by him. Max Muller explicates his objective in publishing the results of his studies on Indian Philosophy to be 'not so much to restate the mere tenets of each system, so deliberately and so clearly put forward by the reputed authors of the principal philosophies of India, as to give a more comprehensive account of the philosophical activity of the Indian nation from the earliest times, and to show how intimately not only their religion, but their philosophy also, was connected with the national character of the inhabitants of India...'.¹⁹ By attempting to provide a comprehensive account of philosophical activity of India which extends for about 3000 years before him and attributing national character, Max Muller has sowed the seeds of European conceptions of nation and nationality with regard to India.

The categorization of six *astika* systems of Indian Philosophy was initially mentioned in the Sanskrit literature in the works such as *Saddarsana Samucchaya*, *Sarvadarsana Sangraha*, *Sarvamata Sangraha*, *Sarva Siddhanta Sangraha* and *Sarva Darsana Sangraha*. However, with regard to 'what are the six systems and what is the meaning of *astika*', almost all of these works differed substantially which was discussed by the author elsewhere.²⁰

While attempting to give a comprehensive account of Indian Philosophy, Max Muller points out a defect (not limitation) of his work. He skillfully attributes the defect of his work to the whole of Indian philosophical tradition. The defect pointed out is lack of chronological framework, though chronology is not the only way of looking at the history.²¹ This led to the later conception of 'existence of past but lack of history' in regard to the Indian tradition.

In his construction of National philosophy of India, Max Muller intentionally leaves out certain particularities and lays excessive stress on certain other specificities which have resulted in stereotype depictions of later colonial scholars. He claimed appreciation for

omitting whatever is 'less important' and 'not calculated to appeal to European sympathies' in the history of Indian Philosophy when he says, 'if I can claim any thanks, it is for having endeavored to omit whatever seemed to me less important and not calculated to appeal to European sympathies'. This intentional omission of the so-called 'less important' and 'non-appealing aspects to European sympathies' is guided by an ideological agenda.

Max Muller is popularly understood to be one who has glorified the ancient India specifically philosophical literature embedded in Sanskrit literature with much appreciation and admiration. But if his statements are read with a closer examination then his ideological agenda can easily be traceable. His reading of Indian philosophy is a 'sympathetic' one, as he himself claims. One can wonder how appreciation and admiration can go along with sympathetic reading. Sympathetic reading presupposes a certain kind of pre-conceived hierarchical structure. This sympathy is consolidated with the following depiction of the ancient India which gave birth to the philosophical knowledge. He says:

It was only in a country like India, with all its physical advantages and disadvantages that such a rich development of philosophical thought as we can watch in the six systems of philosophy, could have taken place. In ancient India there could hardly have been a very severe struggle for life. The necessities of life were abundantly provided by nature... What was there to do for those who, in order to escape from the heat of the tropical sun, had taken their abode in the shades of groves or in the caves of mountain valleys, except to meditate on the world in which they found themselves placed, they did not know how or why? There was hardly any political life in ancient India...and in consequence neither political strife nor municipal ambition. Neither art nor science existed as yet, to call forth the energies of this highly gifted race. ...Literary ambition could hardly exist during a period when even the art of writing was not yet known.²²

The rich development of philosophical thought was facilitated by abundant availability of necessities of life and lack of struggle for life. As a result political life, political strife, art, science, literary ambition, public applause, private gain—all the modern Western categories are found absent in the ancient Indian life.

Appreciation is always qualified by pointing out some lacunae by Max Muller in his writings. For instance, he says, 'however imperfect the style in which their (Indian) theories have been clothed may appear from a literary point of view, it seems to me the very perfection for the treatment of philosophy.'²³ Yet in another

place, he says '...it cannot be denied that the Sacred Books of the East' to publish which he has spent much of his life time, 'are full of rubbish.'²⁴ But he further adds 'that should not prevent us from appreciating what is really valuable in them.' This dichotomous representation- imperfection and perfection; rubbish and valuable - shows a kind of ambivalence in the mind of Max Muller. It could also be the case that he is only defending his own interest in the project or he is attempting to sell the import of his life work to his home audience.

The depiction of the idealistic thought of Vedantic philosophy, especially the Sankara Advaita Vedanta, as the culmination of all Indian philosophical thought which has continued to dominate the Western understanding of Indian Philosophy for centuries is sowed by the Max Muller. He considered the Vedanta philosophy to be 'a system in which human speculation seems to have reached its very acme' and written specifically on this system with lot of appreciation and admiration.

In this way, Max Muller has sowed the seeds of constructing a comprehensive account of history of Indian Philosophy with national character, while glorifying as well as pointing out the lacunae signified by the Western categories of understanding. As a representative of Orientalism, he endorsed the view that there is a decline of past glory of India into degenerated present, assigned himself the task of rediscovering glory and played the role of codifier and translator of ascribing the true meaning to the ancient texts. Thus, Max Muller makes the first attempt to write the history of Indian Philosophy in the modern period with clear-cut orientalist perspective and conviction.

The Liberals who took charge of colonial thinking later disagreed with the Orientalists in condemning the Indian past. The liberals like James Mill and Thomas Macaulay could see the shades of darkness where the Orientals have seen succession of golden ages in the Indian past. Structured by racial, climatic and evolutionary theories, historical explanations of liberals focused on the innate inferiority of Indians and their culture.

As stated earlier, nationalist histories rejected the Liberal's interpretations of Indian history. One of the prominent writers of history of Indian Philosophy from the Nationalist perspective is Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Now let us look at the history of Indian Philosophy written by Radhakrishnan to see how the Orientalist depictions of Indian philosophy were countered without being able to transcend the imperialist framework.

IV

Radhakrishnan: On Indian Philosophy

Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy* written in two volumes (first one published in 1923 and the second one in 1927) appeared in print nearly 25 years after the work of Max Muller. The gap between these two works consolidated the Orientalist conceptions of Indian philosophy. This consolidation was contested by Nationalist historiographers. At least two scholars were prominent among the Nationalist historians of Indian philosophy at that time; one is S.N. Dasgupta (who has written five-volume history of Indian philosophy published during 1922-1955) and the other is S. Radhakrishnan. Without going into the details of the differences among the two scholars' approaches, let us focus on Radhakrishnan's contribution to the Nationalist histories and, thus, his participation in the Orientalist-Nationalist discourse.

Radhakrishnan straight away in his preface to *Indian Philosophy* criticizes the earlier existent colonial notions of Indian thought by stating: 'Ignorance of the subject of Indian thought is profound. To the modern mind Indian philosophy means two or more "silly" notions about *maya*, or the delusiveness of the world, karma, or belief in fate, and *tyaga*, or the ascetic desire to be rid of the flesh.'²⁵ 'Even these simple notions,' he further adds, 'it is said, are wrapped up in barbarous nomenclature and chaotic clouds of vapour and verbiage, looked upon by the "natives" as wonders of the intellect.'²⁶ He condemned the earlier notions propagated by the colonialist framework which dismissed the whole of Indian culture and philosophy as 'pantheism' 'worthless scholasticism' 'a mere play upon words', and 'at all events nothing similar to Plato or Aristotle or even Plotinus or Bacon.'²⁷

After criticizing the existent notions, Radhakrishnan goes on to explicate the glory of Indian thought by stating: 'There is hardly any height of spiritual insight or rational philosophy attained in the world that has not its parallel in the vast stretch that lies between the early Vedic seers and the modern Naiyayikas.'²⁸ In saying this he was obviously getting into a dialogue with his contemporary colonialists and asking them to study Indian thought 'in a true scientific frame of mind, without disrespect for the past or contempt for the alien', which may prompt one towards a 'sympathetic reading' adopted by the Orientalists.

Being aware of the fact that Indian philosophy as rendered in English is a colonial construct, Radhakrishnan finds a strange

alienness to it. According to him, '[t]he special nomenclature of Indian Philosophy which cannot be easily rendered into English accounts for the apparent strangeness of the intellectual landscape.'²⁹ He smells the strangeness of the intellectual landscape though it is of Indian philosophy, since it is developed in English.

Thus, Radhakrishnan is aware that the Indian Philosophy rendered in English is a colonial construct and has attempted to enter into a dialogue with colonialists to disprove their 'silly notions' and, thus, to project a system of philosophy of India in tune with the Nationalist ideological demands of his time.

While saying that he is not attempting to write a history of philosophy, Radhakrishnan intentionally discusses the characteristics that should be there to a historian of philosophy in general and Indian philosophy in particular. In his opinion a philological or linguistic or historical approach adopted by the early Colonialists to the history of philosophy is unprofitable. A linguist or philologist will regard the views of ancient Indian thinkers as 'fossils lying scattered throughout the upheaval and faulty strata of the history of philosophy.'³⁰; and would dismiss 'any interpretation which makes them alive and significant as far-fetched and untrue.'³¹ History, according to Radhakrishnan, is more than just a collection of facts and the accumulation of evidence. The historian, he says, should be a critic and an interpreter and not a mere mechanical 'ragpicker'. 'He must', points out Radhakrishnan, 'pay great attention to the logic of ideas, draw inferences, suggest explanations, and formulate theories which would introduce some order into the shapeless mass of unrelated facts.'³² The historian should, in fact be a philosopher, 'who uses his scholarship as an instrument to wrest from words the thoughts that underlie them', and should realize 'the value of the ancient Indian theories which attempted to grapple with the perennial problems of life and treat them not as fossils but as species which are remarkably persistent.'³³

These views of Radhakrishnan on historians of philosophy implicitly criticize the colonialist histories of Indian philosophy, since most of them have used either philological or linguistic approach, or have condemned Indian Philosophy for lack of historicity. It should be noted that none of the colonial historians of Indian philosophy are philosophers, but were either philologists or historians.

Though the nationalist prerogatives instigated Radhakrishnan to reject the imperialist notions, his understanding of history is a clear example of how he is still entangled to the colonialist

framework. He accepts the Eurocentric conception of the notion of history as linear and joins hands with colonialists in arguing for the lack of historicity in India. According to him, '[i]n the absence of accurate chronology, it is a misnomer to call anything a history.'³⁴ As against the native notion of cyclic notion of time, Radhakrishnan opted to adopt the linear notion to denounce any attempts to call his work a history of philosophy. In contrast, Surendranath Dasgupta (1922) who calls his work *A History of Indian Philosophy*, the first volume published one year before the work of Radhakrishnan, does not give any importance to chronological placement of the various philosophical systems and their philosophers. 'I have never considered it desirable that the philosophical interest should be subordinated to the chronological' states Dasgupta. Without getting into the debate on the necessity of chronological data for the construction of Indian philosophy, it is sufficient for us, from the above, to note that Radhakrishnan has accepted the Western conception of history and tried to look for it in Indian tradition.

Radhakrishnan accepts the essentialities of the 'India and the West' conception that was naturalized by the colonialists and constructs his Indian philosophy within that framework. He explicitly states that his aim is not to narrate Indian views alone and to explain them, but particularly to bring them within the focus of Western traditions of thought.³⁵ While attempting to address the West in explicating the depth of the Indian thought, Radhakrishnan has a tough task of bringing Indian Philosophy within the focus of Western thought. In other words, his attempt is more to bring the Indian thought within the West's focus than to explicate Indian thought as existent in the classical period. In doing so, the Indian thought that he was dealing with is the one developed by the Orientalists. Being within the colonial framework he tried to contest and thus negotiate with the Orientalist conceptions. On his way, he has even carried forward certain Orientalist conceptions such as—culmination of Indian philosophy in Advaita, essentially spiritual nature of Indian philosophy, a-historicity, and soteriological orientation of all systems of Indian philosophy.

Radhakrishnan is also aware of the charges against Indian philosophy in terms of pessimism, dogmatism and indifference to ethics and upprogressiveness.³⁶ These are the imperialist charges forged on the Indian thought to prove its inferiority to the West. The development of human thought in general, depends upon the dialectics of pessimism and optimism, dogmatism and openness to change. In these dialectics sometimes pessimism or dogmatism

would be dominant and at other times optimism or openness. Branding a particular tradition by ascribing any one of the alternatives is to unrecognize the growth of its development. By branding this way, the imperialists, not only attempted to demean the growth of rich Indian tradition, but also kept the Indian thinkers in defense in criticizing, and rejecting this branding. It is also politically motivated, as it has started the discussion on Indian thought by drawing imperialist framework. Charges such as pessimism, dogmatism, indifference to ethics and non-progressiveness were levied, so that the subsequent discussions would be centered only on them either in contesting or rejecting or modifying. Radhakrishnan, while criticizing and rejecting these views, has only become a part of their politics.

Though Radhakrishnan has written the history of Indian Philosophy in opposition to the imperialist framework, he remained tied to the framework which he sought to transcend. The assumptions and terms invented and imposed by Max Muller and others became part of the accepted common sense and shaped his nature of reasoning. By arguing within the frames of the colonial assumptions, he inscribed their truth and reaffirmed their taken-for-granted status. The Orientalist notions of India's past—the idea of classical golden ages and the corollary myth of a subsequent civilisational decline—were also accepted by Radhakrishnan, and in looking at past and present he operated with Western modernist ideas of what constituted progress, and what was to be criticized as primitive, backward and irrational.

Conclusion

To conclude, the paper attempted to study how Indian Philosophy is written about and why a body of writing called Indian Philosophy has taken the shape that it has. Indian Philosophy is largely comprehended as a monolith and is declared damaged, stunted and defaced; gone into backwaters; frozen and mummified; captured, blanketed and structurally altered by the recent philosophers. It is argued that investigations into these declarations would lead us to a larger canvass of the phenomenon of writing histories initiated by the colonial scholars. I argued that the construction of Indian philosophy as a monolith is a product of negotiation between Orientalism and Nationalism with the mediation of liberal utilitarianism. How the seeds of the monolith are sowed by Max Muller which were negotiated and taken forward

after modification by Radhakrishnan comes out of the readings of the histories of the two scholars. It is argued that the history of Indian Philosophy which is presently available to us is a colonial construct. To be precise, it is a construct of the orientalist such as Max Muller which was later negotiated, modified and reconstructed by the dialectic of Nationalists such as Radhakrishnan.

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NOTES

1. 'The Indian brain' according to Aurobindo 'is still in potentially what it was; but it is being damaged, stunted and defaced. The greatness of its innate possibilities is hidden by the greatness of its surface deterioration': Sri Aurobindo, 'The Brain of India', *Karmayogin* (October-November, 1909).
2. In his conclusion to the second volume of *Indian Philosophy* (first published in 1927) Radhakrishnan remarks: 'During the recent past, India was comfortably moored in a backwater outside full current of contemporary thought': Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II [1927] (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 721.
3. Kalidas Bhattacharya says, 'The picture altered with the Britishers consolidating their hold on this country. They somehow captured the Indian mind, primarily through science (and technology) and, secondarily through three human values—equality, fraternity and love. The Indian mind—at least the mind of the mainstream that was Hindu—being thus captured': Kalidas Bhattacharya, (1982): 'Traditional Indian Philosophy as Modern Thinkers view it' in S.S. Pappu Ramarao and R. Puligandla (eds.), *Indian Philosophy: Past and Future* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1982), p. 172.
4. Michael Dummett says that the massive impact of Western culture upon the East has been all the more crushing because political hegemony accompanied the cultural imperialism. As a result, he says, indigenous traditions have been not killed, but blanketed. By blanketing, I mean that the tradition did not die; it was and still is, preserved... It was being handed down, without alteration, but not being added to; the creativity had gone. See Michael Dummett, 'Motilal's Mission: A Memorial Address', *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1996), pp. 14-15.
5. Daya Krishna while expounding three myths about Indian Philosophy points out the 'dead, mummified picture of Indian Philosophy' and argues that this false picture is to be removed and the living concerns of ancient thought are to be brought to life. See Daya Krishna, *Indian Philosophy: A Counter Perspective*, revised and enlarged ed. [1991] (Delhi: Sai Satguru Publications, 2006), p. 36.
6. Raghuramaraju in his 'Debates in Indian Philosophy' while pointing out the insufficiency of the 'use of lucid metaphors such as "mere surface deterioration", "dead and mummified", "captured", and "blanketed"' to capture the picture of Indian thought subsequent to colonialism, argues that it is in fact 'structurally altered.' A. Raghuramaraju, *Debates in Indian Philosophy: Classical, Colonial and Contemporary* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 102.

7. Max F. Muller, *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* [1899] (New Delhi: Associate Publishing House, 1984).
8. H. Zimmer, *Philosophies of India* (London: Routledge, 1951).
9. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I [1923] & Vol. II [1927] (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008).
10. Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vols. I-V [1922-1955] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
11. The discussion that Neeladri Bhattacharya developed in the essay 'The Problem' was very useful to me in situating my discussion on Indian Philosophy in the context of modern historiography of India. See Neeladri Bhattacharya, 'The Problem', framing essay of *Rewriting History: A Symposium on ways of Representing Our Shared Past, Seminar*, No. 522 (February 2003), pp. 12-18.
12. Bhattacharya, 'The Problem', p. 12.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Henry Thomas Colebrooke, 'On the Philosophy of the Hindus', Part I, *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1824), pp. 19-43.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
18. E.B. Cowell, one of the translators of *Sarva-Darsana-Samgraha* (the other being A.E. Gough) in his preface to the work mentions that the work was originally published in the *Bibliotheca Indica* in the year 1858. He further informs the readers that the work has been used by Wilson in his 'Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus' (first published in the *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. XVI, Calcutta, 1828). From the above statements of Cowell we can infer that probably *Sarvadarsana Sangraha* might have got translated even before Colebrooke's work came out and European presentations of Indian Philosophy might have got their early source in this work. Even the translation of Cowell and Gough was first 'published at intervals in the *Benaras Pandit* between 1874 and 1879': Madhava ĩchĩrya, *The Sarva-darũana, Or, Review of the Different Systems of Hindu Philosophy*, trans. E.B. Cowell and A.E. Gough (London: Trhubner, 1882), p. 2.
19. Muller, *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p. vii.
20. My article discusses the inadequacy of *astica-nastica* distinction as well as Six-Three distinction of schools in the light of the original Sanskritic sources. See Balaganapathi Devarakonda, 'Limitations and Alternatives: Understanding Indian Philosophy', *Calicut University Research Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (August 2009), pp. 47-58.
21. looking at the history. One cannot judge the Philosophical histories of others on this basis. Surendranath Dasgupta and D.P. Chattopadhyaya and many other scholars have pointed out alternative ways of looking at the histories of philosophy, especially Indian Philosophy.
22. Muller, *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, pp. vi-vii.
23. *Ibid.*, p. x.
24. Max Muller says, 'I am no promiscuous admirer of everything that comes from the East. I have again and again expressed my regret that the Sacred Books of the East contain so much of what must seem to us mere rubbish, but that should not prevent us from appreciating what is really valuable in them.' Elsewhere he states, 'It cannot be denied that the Sacred Books of the East are full of rubbish': Max F. Muller, *Vedanta Philosophy* [1904] (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1985), p. 113. He also remarks, 'I know I have often been blamed for calling rubbish what

to the Indian mind seemed to contain profound wisdom, and to deserve the highest respect': Muller, *Vedanta Philosophy*, p. 112.

25. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 7.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., pp. 7-8.
28. Ibid., p. 8.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., p. 671.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., p. 672.
33. Ibid., p. 671.
34. Ibid., p. 8.
35. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 10.
36. Ibid., p. 54.