

medieval consolidators of contemporary Hinduism as analogous to European doxographers. A doxography is a compilation of multiple systems of thought which are examined for their interrelationships, and sometimes new classifications are proposed. It is like a survey of various philosophies from a particular point of view that is looking for relationships across various systems. Often the bias of the doxographer is expressed by the set of schools that he includes and the ones he excludes, and the criteria by which he ranks them.<sup>12</sup>

Nicholson goes into great detail to show that the writings and classifications by rival Indian schools changed during the medieval period, with many cross-borrowings and new alliances.<sup>13</sup> He argues that this Indian genre, akin to European doxography, served as the means to cross-fertilize among traditions, thereby making each tradition more accessible to others.

The scholar Vijnanabhikshu is a good example to illustrate that there was continuity in Hinduism prior to colonialism. He and his sixteenth-century contemporaries were precursors to an evolving pre-colonial Hinduism that culminated in Vivekananda's movement. This was not a break from the past, nor was it based on imported ideas. It brought many streams together in a creative manner.

Vijnanabhikshu claimed that there are two paths to final liberation. The first, the path of knowledge (jnana) offered by Samkhya and Vedanta can lead to enlightenment, but the follower will have to endure continued embodiment during the state of jivanmukti (living in a liberated state).<sup>14</sup> However, the second, the path of yoga as the Vishnu Purana suggests, brings immediate liberation, destroying prarabdha (past life) acts and bypassing jivanmukti altogether.<sup>15</sup> Yoga in this discussion includes many spiritual practices, including meditation. This makes yoga the 'fast track' to complete liberation. (Note that Vijnanabhikshu was not following Patanjali's Yogasutras in every respect.)

Therefore, he advocated yoga as practice, but at the same time he did not discard Vedanta's method of inquiry into the nature of Brahman, nor Samkhya's technique of discrimination between purusha (being, self) and prakriti (nature, matter). He could mix and match all three systems and did not see them in contradiction. He believed that

the terms, 'purusha' and 'jivatman', although from different traditional texts, are synonyms, as are 'kaivalya' and 'moksha'. They were merely meant to serve different kinds of persons.

Vijnanabhikshu explains how all systems culminate into yoga at the highest level: 'Just as all the rivers, beginning with the Ganges, exist as parts of the ocean, so too the philosophical systems, beginning with the Samkhya, exist entirely as parts of this Yoga system.'<sup>16</sup> He treats various Hindu systems as parts of the greater whole which is yoga. His ideas were later elaborated by others such as Swami Vivekananda who continued the work of clarifying, updating and expanding Hinduism by building on past ideas.

Vijnanabhikshu did not found a new school but merely compiled, organized and classified other schools, and showed approximate equivalences and correspondences among them. His writings were influential in understanding Hinduism both in the West and in India. European Indologists such as T.H. Colebrooke (1765-1837), A.E. Gough (1845-1915), Paul Deussen (1845-1919), and Richard Garbe (1857-1927) were looking for a system of classification to understand Hindu thought in a manner they could deal with. Vijnanabhikshu, along with other medieval Indian compilers of traditional systems, became a good source for them.

However, given the power of colonial Indology, these Westerners assumed they had become the intellectual inheritors of Vijnanabhikshu's thought. As is often the case when Westerners digest Indian ideas, these colonial Indologists positioned themselves as the originators of the ideas; in actuality they had picked up these ideas from Indian thinkers such as Vijnanabhikshu. Nicholson's view is that the medieval scholars such as Vijnanabhikshu became the pathway for Western Indology. Nicholson writes how a new kind of unified view of Hinduism emerged:

Between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries CE, certain thinkers began to treat as a single whole the diverse philosophical teachings of the Upanishads, epics, Puranas, and the schools known retrospectively as the 'six systems' (darsana) of mainstream Hindu philosophy. The Indian and European thinkers in the nineteenth

evidence instead suggests that a Hindu religion theologically and devotionally grounded in texts such as the Bhagavad-Gita, the Puranas, and philosophical commentaries on the six darsanas, gradually acquired a much sharper self-conscious identity through the rivalry between Muslims and Hindus in the period between 1200 and 1500, and was firmly established long before 1800.' (Lorenzen, 2005, p. 53.)

12 This method of writing is common among historians of ancient civilizations, especially when they deal with works that have become extinct, and hence there is a need to fill in the blanks with some degree of invention. For example, Plato's book on Socrates gives the only information available today on an earlier philosopher called Anaxagoras. The same is true of the Charvakas in India: very little of their own work survives and it is only through third-party critiques that we can reconstruct what the Charvakas were thinking. In a sense, most of the known ancient history of the world is of this kind, because little is based on direct accounts written at the time.

13 Examples of Indian doxographies named by Nicholson include the following: 1) Cattana's *Manimekalai* (sixth century): based on pramanas. Schools are Lokayata, Buddhism, Samkhya, Nyaya, Vaishesika, and Mimamsa. 2) Buddhist Bhaviveka's *Madhyamakahrdayakarika* (sixth century): covers Hinayana, Yogachara, Samkhya, Vaishesika, Vedanta and Mimamsa. 3) Jain philosopher Haribhadra's *Saddarsanasamuccaya* (eighth century): based on the deity each accepts and the means to moksha. Six schools are Buddhism, Nyaya, Samkhya, Jain, Vaishesika and Mimamsa. 4) Madhava's *Sarvadarsanasamgraha* (fourteenth century): most influential because of its depth. Treats sixteen schools with Advaita as the highest. Bhedabheda was omitted from this treatise. 5) Madhusudana Sarasvati *Prasthanabheda* (sixteenth century): organized around eighteen vidyas or prasthanas. Divides vidyas into four Vedas, six Vedangas, four upangas and four upavedas. Then fits Samkhya, Yoga, Vedanta and Mimamsa under these categories. Nastikas have their own six sources—four Buddhist sects, Carvakas and Digambar Jains. Nyaya, Vaishesika, Mimamsa belong to *airambhavada* (atomistic theory) while Samkhya, Yoga and theistic schools belong to *parinamavada*. Vedanta espouses *vivartavada*. Note that Vijñānabhikṣu did not write a doxography though he was motivated by similar concerns.

14 As suggested by BS 4.1.15 and Ch. Up. 6.14.2

15 Vishnu Purana, 6.7.35

16 Rukmani, 1981, p. 20.

17 Nicholson, 2010, p. 2.

18 Nicholson 2010, pp. 122-123.

19 Although Vivekananda was a passionate advocate of a Vedanta-Yoga philosophy and spirituality, he was not averse to drawing on elements of Western philosophy and metaphysics that were popular at his time. His predilection for Herbert Spencer and other Europeans of the time was to borrow English terminology in order to present his own philosophy more persuasively. He did so because his own philosophical tradition had been savaged by colonial and Orientalist polemics. (Nicholson 2010, pp. 65, 78)

20 Nicholson 2010, p. 65, 78.

21 The stakes were high, as the theories proposed resulted in assigning an internal hierarchy among Germans, English, French and other Europeans. Sanskrit and its civilization became a pawn in this game of identity politics among Europeans.

22 Herling, 2006, gives a good account of this debate as it related to the German understanding of the Bhagavad-Gita.

23 For various reasons, many modern commentators assume Samkhya was always atheistic. Some find that God is superfluous in the system. Others want Samkhya to function as an analogue to Darwin's theory of evolution, a rigorous school which was not other-worldly. Yet others such as Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya are Marxist historians who want to show a thriving atheistic tradition.

24 Larson, 1995, pp. 142-2, p. 58.

25 It is important to note that *sruti* is often trumped by *smṛiti* if the context so demands. For example, women's property rights and marriage age changed against the *sruti*, as per A.S. Altekar, 'The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization'. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1995, pp. 353-4.

26 Krishna 1991, p. 14.

27 Nicholson, 2010, p. 13.

28 Nicholson, 2010, p. 18.

29 Nicholson, 2010, p. 163.

30 Studies that avoid using the categories of 'dharma' or the 'West' (accusing them of being essentialist) invariably fall into this trap, crippling any further efforts to understand the intended objects of their gaze, and ultimately reinforcing the status quo of Western domination. My work steers clear of the infinitely regressive trap of post-modern nihilism; it does not permit outlying exceptions to negate the overwhelming salience of characteristic features in either civilization, Indian or Western.

- 32 Pennington, 2005, p. 179.
- 33 Pennington, 2005, p. 100.
- 34 Pennington, 2005, p. 140.
- 35 Pennington, 2005, p. 170.
- 36 Pennington, 2005, p. 169.
- 37 Smith, 1998, p. 330.
- 38 van der Veer, 1993, p. 40.
- 39 van der Veer, 1993, p. 40.
- 40 van der Veer, 1993, pp. 25-26.
- 41 van der Veer, 2001, p. 11.
- 42 van der Veer, 1993, p. 41.
- 43 van der Veer, 1993, pp. 42-43.
- 44 See the interview at: YouTube [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXhInNUVZ6U>, Minutes 9:44-21:24].
- 45 See the interview at: YouTube [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXhInNUVZ6U>, Minutes 9:44-21:24].
- 46 Lele, Jayant, 1993, p. 58.
- 47 Pirbhai, 2012.
- 48 Jaffrelot, 2007. Indian media give such voices considerable importance, as illustrated in his recent op-ed pontificating what India's policy ought to be on AfPak: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/on-kabul-take-a-wider-view/1160153/>
- 49 Jaffrelot, 2007. He writes: 'This ideology [of Hindu Nationalism] assumed that India's national identity was summarized by Hinduism, the dominant creed which, according to the British census, represented about 70 per cent of the population. Indian culture was to be defined as Hindu culture, and the minorities were to be assimilated by their paying allegiance to the symbols and mainstays of the majority as those of the nation.'
- 50 Nanda, 2005.
- 51 Nanda, 2005.
- 52 <http://www.firstpost.com/india/there-were-no-hindus-in-go-a-before-portuguese-landed-church-thinker-953727.html>
- 53 White, 2009. William Pinch of Wesleyan College and Frederick Smith of the University of Iowa are among the many scholars of Hinduism who have endorsed and promoted his works.
- 54 Basu, 2002, p. 172.
- 55 Basu, 2002, p. 69.

56 Morales (n.d.). He uses harsh language to denounce what he sees as neo-Hinduism: 'Seeing traditional Hinduism through the eyes of their British masters, a pandemic wave of 19<sup>th</sup> century Anglicized Hindu intellectuals saw it as their solemn duty to "Westernize" and "modernize" traditional Hinduism to make it more palatable to their new European overlords ... Neo-Hinduism was an artificial religious construct used as a paradigmatic juxtaposition to the legitimate traditional Hinduism that had been the religion and culture of the people for thousands of years. Neo-Hinduism was used as an effective weapon to replace authentic Hinduism with a British invented version designed to make a subjugated people easier to manage and control.' See his 'A devastating critique of Neo-Hinduism', Dharmacentral.com, Aug. 25, 2010. Posted at: <http://www.dharmacentral.com/forum/content.php?126-Critique-of-Neo-Hinduism> Also see his "The death of traditional Hinduism", posted at: <http://Hinduism.about.com/od/history/a/neoHinduism.htm>

- 57 Hatcher, 1999.
- 58 Sharma, 2000.
- 59 Sharma, 2000.
- 60 Hatcher, 1999
- 61 For example, Shankara's Brahmasutra 1.3.38 and 1.1.30.
- 62 Smith, 1998, p. 324.
- 63 Smith, 1998, p. 324.
- 64 Smith, 1998, pp. 325-6.
- 65 Smith, 1998, pp. 325-6.
- 66 Smith, 1998, pp. 325-6.
- 67 Smith, 1995, p. 330.
- 68 Smith, 1995, p. 331.
- 69 Smith 1995, p. 333.
- 70 Neusner 1983. p. 235.
- 71 Gupta, 1974, pp. 28-29.
- 72 Sweetman, 2003, p. 229.

## 8: Historical Continuity and Colonial Disruption

- 1 Nicholson, 2010, p. 179: "Believer" and "infidel", though tempting, are also too fraught with Western connotations of right theological opinion (and

the latter too closely associated with medieval struggles between Christians and Muslims). The terms "affirmer" and "denier" are better, since these are neutral with regard to the question of right opinion versus right practice. An affirmer (astika) might be one who "affirms the value of ritual" (Medhatithi), one who "affirms the existence of virtue and vice" (Manibhadra), one who "affirms the existence of another world after death" (the grammarians), or one who "affirms the Vedas as the source of ultimate truth" (Vijnanabhikshu Madhava, etc.). The typical translations for the terms astika and nastika, "orthodox" and "heterodox", succeed to a certain extent in expressing the Sanskrit terms in question.'

2 Manusmriti 2.11.

3 Nicholson, 2010, p. 173: "The words astika and nastika are derived from Panini's rule *Astadhyayi* 4.4.60. Panini simply provides the derivation of the two words (along with a third, *daistika*) without suggesting what exactly is being accepted by the astika or rejected by the nastika. The first substantive definition of the two words in the Paninian tradition comes in the *Kasikavrtti*, a commentary by the seventh-century authors Jayaditya and Vamana. They write, "The astika is the one who believes that 'there exists another world: The opposite of him is the nastika'".'

4 Estimates for the period when he lived vary from fifth to eighth century CE.

5 Nicholson, 2010, p. 175.

6 Nicholson, 2010, pp. 3, 5, 25.

7 Nicholson, 2010, writes that 'the sixteenth-century doxographer Madhusudana Sarasvati, argues that since all of the sages who founded the astika philosophical systems were omniscient, it follows that they all must have shared the same beliefs. The diversity of opinions expressed among these systems is only for the sake of its hearers, who are at different stages of understanding. ... According to Madhusudana, the sages taught these various systems in order to keep people from a false attraction to the views of nastikas such as the Buddhists and Jainas.' (p. 9)

8 Rukmani, 1981, argues that Vijnanabhikshu was influenced by the Navya-Naiyayika thinker, Raghunatha Śiromani.

9 Nicholson, 2010, p. 179.

10 Another example of how astika got contested and redefined was the debate between Mrtyunjay Vidyalkar, a highly respected Calcutta based Hindu scholar of the early 1800s, and Ram Mohan Roy. The debate occurred

in 1817. Whereas Ram Mohan became famous as a result of his Western patronage, Vidyalkar has not been studied enough. He wrote pamphlets claiming that Hinduism was neither amorphous nor did it manifest in response to Westerners. His 'Vedanta Chandrika' (Moonlight of the Vedanta) was directly aimed at Ram Mohan's view of Vedanta. Many of these ideas were later adopted by Vivekananda. He defended the variety of Hindu institutions, ideas and practices over its long history. He referred to Ram Mohan's camp as 'intoxicated moderns' for recklessly transforming Hinduism into a 'marketplace theology'. He saw no contradiction between the Puranas and Vedanta, defended the worship of images, and emphasized the importance of Sanskrit. Initially, it was this approach to Vedanta that was translated as 'neo-Vedanta', but later on, the Christian missionaries appropriated that term, and gave it a whole new meaning, i.e., to signify a fabrication. (Kopf, 1969, pp. 204-6.)

11 One may ask why this consolidation into modern Hinduism took place in the medieval period. Some scholars have theorized that the arrival of Islam might have led to a coalescing of various Hindu streams into closer unities than before. It has been surmised that the attempts by Akbar and then Dara Shikoh to synthesize Hinduism and Islam into one hybrid might have been seen threatening Hindu digestion into a subset of Islam. This threat could have been a factor in this trend to bring many nastika outsiders into the tent as astika insiders. Regardless of the causes for this, there is ample evidence to suggest that multiple movements began to organize diverse Hindu schools into a common framework or organizing principle. Each of these rival approaches had its own idea of the metaphysical system in which it was at the highest point in the hierarchy, with the rest located in lower positions in terms of validity and importance, but the point here is that highly expansive unities were being constructed. Another scholar espousing this thesis of the development of an 'insider' sense of Hinduism as a response to Islam is David Lorenzen. He notes that between 1200 and 1500, the Hindu rivalry with Muslims created a new self-consciousness of a unified Hindu identity. Lorenzen draws his evidence from medieval literature, including the poetry of Eknath, Anantadas, Kabir and Vidyapati, and argues that the difference between Hinduism and Islam was emphasized in their writings. This emphasis showed the growth of an implicit notion of Hindu selfhood that differed from Islam. For instance, many bhakti poets contrasted Hindu ideas that God exists in all things, living and not living, with Islam's insistence on banning this as idolatry. Lorenzen concludes: "The

evidence instead suggests that a Hindu religion theologically and devotionally grounded in texts such as the Bhagavad-Gita, the Puranas, and philosophical commentaries on the six darsanas, gradually acquired a much sharper self-conscious identity through the rivalry between Muslims and Hindus in the period between 1200 and 1500, and was firmly established long before 1800.' (Lorenzen, 2005, p. 53.)

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