century who developed the term 'Hinduism' under the pressure of the new explanatory category of 'world religions' were influenced by these earlier philosophers and doxographers, primarily Vedantins, who had their own reasons for arguing the unity of Indian philosophical traditions.[17]

Vijnanabhikshu's writings on Samkhya, Yoga, and Vedanta suggest that, in harmony with Patanjali, he understood yoga to be both a philosophical system and a practice of self-transformation. As such, yoga was amenable to adaptations and interpretations. His integration involved some innovative philosophical arguments concerning the relationship between difference and non-difference, between parts and whole, and so on. He believed that Bhedabheda Vedanta was superior because it was best able to reconcile all the schools consistently with the Upanishads.

From Vijnanabhikshu to Vivekananda

The foregoing overview of Vijnanabhikshu shows that Vivekananda's project was in many ways a continuation of what the medieval Hindu doxographers were already doing. Vivekananda wanted to harmonize the major strands of yoga. Toward that end, he treated separately each of the traditional four expressions of yoga that are also explained in the Bhagavad-Gita—raja, bhakti, karma, and jnana—but kept them on an equal plane, as four options that can be mixed and matched by an individual rather than seeing them in an absolute hierarchy. He felt that yoga was compatible with Vedanta. The former he saw as a practical technique that confirmed spiritual liberation (or self-realization recorded by the rishis in the Veda) through personal experience (anubhava); the latter he saw as the standard of reference for self-realization in line with Vedic testimony (sruti-pramana).

Vijnanabhikshu had contributed to the emergence of a proto-Hinduism to which Vivekananda became a worthy heir. In the same manner, Vivekananda established common ground between yoga and Vedanta. He regarded the practices of the Vedanta, Samkhya, and Yoga schools to be different but reconciled as complementary paths. While yoga is the most direct of those paths, the practices of the Vedanta and Samkhya schools are also means to the same end. He regarded the goal of all these systems to be identical: it is the reuniting of the individual self with Brahman, in its natural state of non-separation.[18]

Vivekananda's challenge was also to show that this complementarity model was superior to models that emphasized conflict and contradiction. He showed great philosophical and interpretive ingenuity, even to those who might not agree with all his conclusions.[19] The intellectual position of Bhedabheda, which is a suitable foundation for his Practical Vedanta, is not as well known today as Advaita Vedanta.

Although Vivekananda was a passionate advocate of a Vedanta-Yoga unity, 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 others was generally to borrow English terminology as a way to present his own ideas more persuasively because of the influence of colonial and Orientalist polemics.[20]

The colonial disruption

What I have shown thus far in this chapter is that long before the colonial influence in India, there were new kinds of thinkers (such as Vijnanabhikshu) who were comparing various Hindu schools and integrating them in novel ways to develop unified Hindu thought. I shall now show how the continuity of the Hindu tradition and the dynamic equilibrium among Indian thinkers were severely disrupted by colonial interventions.

Underlying this disruption were several factors. A great deal of colonial understanding of India was shaped by the European need to use India as raw material to formulate arguments for their *internal* intra-European debates. Some of these debates concerned the problem of pantheism, the pagan assumption of the complete immanence of divinity in the world of nature—which was seen as a major threat to Christian monotheism. There was a strong desire to prove that 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.)

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) Cattanar's *Manimekalai* (sixth century): based on pramanas. Schools are Lokayata, Buddhism, Samkhya, Nyaya, Vaisesika, and Mimamsa. 2) Buddhist Bhaviveka's *Madhyamakahrdayakarika* (sixth century): covers Hinayana, Yogachara, Samkhya, Vaisesika, 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, Vaisesika 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 Jainas. Nyaya, Vaisesika, Mimamsa belong to *arambhavada* (atomistic theory) while Samkhya, Yoga and theistic schools belong to *parinamavada*. Vedanta espouses *vivartavada*. Note that Vijnanabhuksu 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 smriti 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 pos-tmodern nihilism; it does not permit outlying exceptions to negate the overwhelming salience of characteristic features in either civilization, Indian or Western.