through the instrumentality of mind. In either case, the role of the mind is indispensable.

NOTES

1. *Buddhi upalabdhijñānamityanararthantaram*, *Nyāya-sūtra*. 1.1.15, trans. M. M. Satish Chandra Vidyabhusana (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1981), 7. *Nyāya-bhāsya*, 3.2.3, trans. Ganganath Jha, *The Nyāya-sūtras of Gautama with the Bhāṣya of Vātsyāyana and the Vārṭika of Uddyotakara*, Vol. III (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1984), 1269.
2. *Nyāya-sūtra*. 1.1.15 & 3.2.1-55, trans. Vidyabhusana, 7. & 105–27.
3. *Nyāya-bhāṣya*. 3.2.19, trans. Jha, 1332.
4. "Mind" is a translation for the Sanskrit term *manas*, which is regarded as inner sense in classical Indian tradition.
5. "Soul" is a synonym for "self."
6. *Nyāya-vārṭika*. 3.2.39. Ibid., 1370.
7. *Ichcha dveṣa prayatna sukha duhkha jñānani ātmanolingam iti*. *Nyāya-sūtra*. 1.1.10, trans. Vidyabhusana, 6.
8. *Nyāya-vārṭika*. 1.1.10, trans. Jha, 220.
9. *Ātmaśarīrendriyārthabuddhimanah pravṛttidoṣapretyabhāvaphala duhkhapavargāstu prameyam*. *Nyāya-sūtra*. 1.1.9, trans. Vidyabhusana, 5.
10. It is interesting to note that in *Nyāya-sūtras* 3.1.54-55, we find only five sense-organs listed on the basis of their corresponding objects. Mind, which is considered an organ of internal perception in *sūtra* 3.1.16, is not mentioned along with these sense-organs. However, Gangesopadhyaya, in his *Tattvacintamani*, enumerates six senses: the five external and the one internal. S. C. Vidyabhusana, *History of Indian Logic* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1978), 411.
11. *Nyāya-bhāṣya*. 3.1.54, trans. Jha, 1232.
12. *Nyāya-sūtra*. 1.1.9, trans. Vidyabhusana, 5.
13. *Jñānāyaugapadyat ekam manah*. *Nyāya-sūtras*. 3.2.56. Ibid., 127.
14. *Alātchakradarśanavat tadupalabdhirāśusañcārat*. *Nyāya-sūtras*. 3.2.58. Ibid., 128.
15. *Nyāya-bhāṣya*. 3.2.56, trans. Jha, 1396.
16. *manograham sukham duhkhamiccha dveṣo matih kṛtih*, Viswanatha Nyaypancanana, *Bhāsapariccheda* 57, & *Sākṣātkare sukhādīnam karaṇam manocchate*, Ibid., 85. Trans. Swami Madhavananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1977), 85 & 175. *Sukhādyupalabdhisādhanamindriyam manah tacca pratyātmāniyatatvātanantam paramāṇurūpam nityam ca*. Annambhatta, *Tarkasamgraha*, Section II. 9, trans. Swami Virupakshananada (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1994), 52.
17. *Nyāya-bhāṣya*. 3.2.59, trans. Jha, 1399.
18. *Aitareya Upaniṣad*. III.i.2, trans. Swami Gambhirananda, *Eight Upaniṣads*, Vol. II (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1992), 63.
19. *Nantah śarīravṛttitvānmanasah*, *Nyāya-sūtras*. 3.2.26, trans. Vidyabhusana, 114.
20. *Nyāya-vārṭika*. 3.2.26, trans. Jha, 1344.
21. We do not find explicit reference to the distinction of *nirvikalpaka* and *savikalpa* states of perception in *Nyāya-sūtras*, *Nyāya-bhāsya*, and *Nyāya-vārṭika*. Vācaspatimiśra, in his *Nyāya-vārṭika tātparyatīka*, interprets the words *avyapadaśya* and *vyavasāyatmakam* present in the *Nyāya-sūtra* definition of perception to mean *nirvikalpaka* and *savikalpaka*, respectively. Later Naiyāyikas, following Vācaspati, distinguished between *nirvikalpaka* and *savikalpaka* as two stages of the same perceptual process. *Indriyārthsannikarṣajanyamjñānam pratyakṣam. Taddvividham nirvikalpam savikalpam cheti. Tatra niṣprakārakam jñānam nirvikalpakam yathedamkincit saprakārakam jñānam savikalpakam yathā ditthoyam brāhmaṇoyam syāmoyam pācakoyamiti*. Annambhatta, *Tarkasamgraha*. Section IV, 32, transl. Swami Virupakshananada (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1994), 79.
22. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (with the commentary of Sankaracarya), I.v.3, trans. Swami Madhavananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1988), 147.
23. Ibid., 148.

Lost in Translation? The Upaniṣadic Story about "Da" and Interpretational Issues in Analytic Philosophy

Prasanta S. Bandyopadhyay
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

R. Venkata Raghavan
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

Don Wallace Freeman Dcruz
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

OVERVIEW

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, one of the principal *Upaniṣads*, we find a venerable and famous story where the god *Prajāpati* separately instructs three groups of people (gods, humans, and demons) simply by uttering the syllable "Da." What is remarkable about this passage is the way this single syllable is interpreted in different ways, *dattā*, *dāmyatā* and *dayadhvam*, by the three groups, with each interpretation considered correct by the speaker, *Prajāpati*. This story, which was largely known only to Indian readers of the *Upaniṣads*, became a feature of the European imagination of India in 1922 when it was referenced in the section "What the Thunder said" in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*.[1]

In this paper, our concern is not with ethics but theories of meaning and interpretation: How can all divergent interpretations of a single expression be correct, and, indeed, endorsed by the speaker? As an exercise in cross-cultural philosophical reflection, we will consider some of the leading modern theories of meaning—those of Grice, Quine, and Davidson—in order to see if the *Upaniṣadic* story receives a natural home in any of them. The structure of our paper will be as follows. We will first narrate the story from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (section 1). We will then discuss Paul Grice's (1957) account of meaning, followed by Quine's (1960), which challenges the former account. In this connection, we will also address Donald Davidson's work, which, in turn, contrary to Quine, pleads for the possibility of "radical interpretation" (Davidson, 1984) (section 2). Then, we will compare the views of Grice, Quine, and Davidson with the *Upaniṣadic* story to see whether the story can be analyzed in terms of any of their accounts (section 3). Finally, we conclude that the story is best understood through Grice's theory of meaning rather than Quine's or Davidson's.

1. THE UPANISHADIC STORY

Prajāpati is one of the creator figures in the Vedic literature. The story in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is about *Prajāpati* and his three children—gods, human beings, and demons.[2] After completing their study under him as vedic students, it was time to say a respectful goodbye to their father.

Each posed a question to *Prajāpati*. Gods asked him, "The Venerable Lord, please instruct us." *Prajāpati* replied by uttering the syllable, "Da," and asked, "Have you understood me?" "Da" is not a word in any language, including Sanskrit (in which the story was written). Gods replied, "Yes Sir, we did. You told us to practice restraint (*dāmyatā*)." *Prajāpati* replied, "Yes, you have understood me perfectly well." The gods are said to be naturally self-indulgent and so *Prajāpati* instructs them to practice restraint.[3] Then it was the turn of the humans. They asked, "The Venerable Lord, please instruct us." *Prajāpati* replied by uttering the same syllable, "Da," and asked, "Have you understood me?" Humans replied, "Yes, Sir, we have understood you. You asked us to practice charity (*dattā*)." *Prajāpati* replied, "Yes, you have understood me perfectly well." Men are naturally avaricious and so they are instructed to distribute their wealth to the best of their ability.[4] Demons repeated the same question to their spiritual father. *Prajāpati* replied to them by uttering the same syllable, "Da," and asked, "Have you understood me?" Demons replied, "Yes, Sir, we have understood you. You asked us to practice compassion (*dayadhvam*)." *Prajāpati* replied, "Yes, you have understood me perfectly well." Since the demons are by nature cruel and prone to inflict injury on others, they are instructed to be compassionate and kind to all.[5] What we notice in this story is a general theme of how word-play and fanciful etymology is a larger part of *Upaniṣadic* literature.

2. MEANING, TRANSLATION, AND RADICAL INTERPRETATION IN ANALYTIC TRADITION

The role of meaning in its different shades, along with other issues, dominated ordinary language philosophy, an influential movement in the middle of twentieth century. To develop his version of ordinary language philosophy, Grice begins by distinguishing what he calls "natural meanings" (as in "those spots mean measles") from what he calls "non-natural meaning" (as "Those three rings on the bell mean that the bus is full"). Since we are concerned with "non-natural meaning," we will begin with his definition of non-natural meaning: "A meant something by x" is roughly the same as "A uttered x with the intention of inducing a belief by means of the recognition of this intention."[6] Here, "A" is a variable ranging over speakers and "x" is a variable ranging over utterances. For him, non-natural meanings expressed through sentences do not involve a contradiction when those sentences are denied (for example, "Those three rings on the bell mean that the bus is full, but the bus isn't full" is not self-contradictory), whereas natural meanings expressed through sentences do (for example, "Those spots mean measles, but he hasn't and got measles" is self-contradictory). He contends that "speaker's meaning" (what a speaker intends to communicate) is more fundamental than sentence meaning. Sentences mean what they do because of what speakers intend to communicate with the help of them rather than what speakers mean in some non-intentional account of sentence meaning.

One could, however, raise an objection that all interpretations or utterances in this category are just subjective and any interpretation is as good as any other. But, it would be much more radical for someone to deny fixed meanings of words in ordinary natural language when used in a perfectly ordinary and literal way. However, this is what Quine is trying to do. Quine sets out his argument by first assuming the possibility of a "radical translation" situation in which neither speaker knows a word of the other's language. As idealized field linguists, we are interested in understanding what native speakers' utterances mean. Suppose the native speakers utter, "gavagai." We observe the speakers, hear what they utter and observe conditions under which they utter a word or sentence, watch what they are looking at or pointing out when they utter and the features of their surroundings when they make such utterances. Armed with such information, let's assume we make a hypothesis that "gavagai" means "rabbit". This hypothesis, according to Quine, is an analytic hypothesis because "gavagai," according to that hypothesis, is, by definition, equivalent to "rabbit." We do not know whether the hypothesis is correct given the evidence we have.

Nonetheless, it does not deter us from further investigation. Like empirical scientists, we could explore whether the hypothesis about the native's language is true and, consequently, ask the speakers themselves about it by recording their assent and dissent to and from it. Hoping to receive a confirmation from the speakers about the correctness of our hypothesis, we ask them, "Does 'gavagai' mean 'rabbit'?" This will take us further away from any empirical evidence with which we have embarked on our journey on translation in the first-place. In the same way, another group of translators having the same evidence as we have might be tempted to translate "gavagai" as "undetached rabbit part" and would wish to adopt the same empirical procedure as ours to investigate whether their hypothesis about them is correct. Based on this thought experiment, Quine concludes that radical translation is not possible, as meaning is indeterminate. It is not possible to know whether the translation of "gavagai" as "rabbit" or "undetached rabbit part" is the correct analytic hypothesis.[7]

Quine thinks that the "translation manual" which each translator puts together on the basis of (verbal) behavior in a particular (sensory) environment is under-determined by the totality of the behavioral/environmental evidence we are able to gather, i.e., each of us might be wrong about what the other "means" when he/she utters particular sounds. This is a corollary of, but is also intended to provide additional support for, Quine's more sweeping thesis that all hypotheses/theories are under-determined by the evidence for them.

Davidson, picking up on an argument of Quine's, argued that the possibility of "different translation manuals" isn't coherent; it presupposes the possibility that we could discover that the person whose language we are translating has a very different set of beliefs about the world (including beliefs concerning what there is) when in fact the only way in which we can make sense of what the other person is saying is to attribute to him/her many of our own beliefs. To say that another person has a different set of beliefs, hence, on every occasion, "means" something different from what we think he/she means, is (a) incapable of being confirmed by empirical evidence and (b) tantamount to admitting that we cannot make sense of his/her behavior. So we can "radically translate," i.e., understand another in

a situation of "radical translation," but only if we assume a "principle of charity," i.e., attribute to the other person many of our own basic beliefs about the world and how they operate.

The most important of these beliefs so far as "radical translation" is concerned involves "rationality." To make sense of the other person's behavior, we must begin to construe that person's behavior as rational (in our meaning of the concept). This comes to saying that if they desire X and believe that doing Y will bring about X, then, other things being equal, they will do Y. For Davidson, speech is (for the most part, and in contrast to Quine) thoroughly intentional. Unless we can construe the other's (verbal) behavior as intentional, i.e., "rational" (which just means that beliefs and desires fit together in the right way), we can't begin to understand (interpret) it.

In traditional vocabulary, rationality is an *a priori* (and hence normative) concept; it is presupposed by all successful communication. Davidson begins with what he takes to be an unquestionable fact—that we do (but not always) understand each other (in the base case, we understand ourselves when we speak, although, again, not always). He then asks what are the (*a priori*) conditions of successful communication? The general answer is "application of the Principle of Charity," viz., attribution of many of our beliefs to the other person. The preliminary answer is "attribution of *our* concept of rationality to the other."

3. A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TRANSLATIONAL ISSUES IN TWO TRADITIONS

The conventions of a natural language establish relatively fixed meanings for words—the meanings one can find in a dictionary. But the interpretation of *Prajāpati*'s "da" is not governed by such conventions. The problem of interpreting *Prajāpati*'s "da" is that of interpreting a clue or hint as it is not actually an existing word in any existing language with a fixed, regular use. "Da" has meaning on each of the occasions on which it is used, but in response to different requests it is readily interpreted differently assuming a background of the discussion in the Vedic studies that have taken place. Metaphor provides another example of such meanings. For starters, Grice provides a better tool in analyzing the situation. Grice's account of non-natural meaning, in which the speaker's intention is given more importance than the sentence meaning, plays a pivotal role in understanding what *Prajāpati* says in each context to representatives of the three groups. One could even adopt Grice's criterion to identify whether an expression conveys a non-natural meaning in the case of *Prajāpati*'s utterance of "da." In one context, "da" means "practice restraint." However, denying that it is the case ("da" means "practice restraint," but they are not practicing restrain) does not entail flat-out contradiction. So, Grice's theory of non-natural meaning is readily adaptable to this case in which the speaker's intention is the glue that connects each set of hearers to the speaker, *Prajāpati*.

Consider Quine's account. One plausible way to understand translations in the *Upaniṣadic* context and the indeterminacy thesis is to compare the gavagai example with the *Upaniṣadic* story. "Gavagai" means "rabbit" for a group of translators. It also means "undetached rabbit-part" for another group of translators, and there are infinite ways "gavagai" could be translated with infinitely many analytic hypotheses, at least according to Quine. In a similar vein, one could argue that "da" could be interpreted in infinitely many ways. Each group, with their distinctive background knowledge about themselves and *Prajāpati*, helps propose, in a Quinean sense, the analytic hypothesis about *Prajāpati*'s intention. Like the gavagai example, it seems that there is no fact of the matter regarding the correct translation of "da" in the *Upaniṣadic* context.

However, there are seemingly far more differences between the *Upaniṣadic* story and Quine's indeterminacy of translation than their alleged similarity. For Quine's radical translation, the translator assumes nothing about the speaker's language and utterances except her assent and dissent. In contrast, in the *Upaniṣadic* example, *Prajāpati*, gods, humans, and demons belong to the same linguistic community. In the case of Quine, the translator posits her analytic hypothesis about the meaning of the speaker's utterances and intends to examine whether her hypothesis is correct by asking the speaker whether her translation is correct. As we already know by now, this investigation further exacerbates complexities for radical translation. Our way of contrasting the Quine's account with the *Upaniṣadic* story, however, tells a different tale. When gods, human beings, or demons ask *Prajāpati* whether "da" means "x," depending on who the speakers are, *Prajāpati* replies, "Yes, you have understood what 'da' meant." However, the complication that *Prajāpati*'s seemingly unequivocal responses generate is that we don't know whether he really meant anything or nothing, or all of them together, for the meaning of "da."

In Davidson's radical translation, like Quine's, speakers and hearers do not speak the same language, and the hearers are interested in translating what the speakers say in a specific situation under specific conditions. There is no such Davidsonian radical translation occurring in the *Upaniṣadic* story as there is no problem of understanding each other's language via the principle of charity. All four in the story speak the same language. This, however, might not close the door of seeking a connection between the story and Davidson's account. One might contend that even within particular linguistic communities, we must employ the principle of charity. On this basis, if we continue to apply Davidson's framework onto the *Upaniṣadic* world, then we need to consider whether the conditions under which the speakers utter "da" are the same conditions under which, for example, the hearer replies "*dayadhvam*," and whether the converse is also the case. Here, for the sake of discussion, we assume that "da" is a one-word sentence and so is its "semantic correlate" "*dayadhvam*." In one sense, truth-conditions for both sentences are the same. The same is also true for the rest for the translations of "da" into two other one-worded sentences. Although all four—*Prajāpati*, gods, human beings, and demons—belong to the same linguistic community, the principle

of charity need not be trivially true since even within the same linguistic community we do misunderstand each other from time to time. But the possibility of identifying such misunderstanding rests on our assumption that we understand each other the majority of the time. It is indeed correct that, in the story, each translation is different from the other. For example, "da" is interpreted as "practice restraint" and also as "practice generosity." But we can disambiguate the response (which is the crux of Davidson's concern) in each case by noting that it is directed to gods, humans, and demons, whose respective modes of behavior require different correctives. One needs to remind oneself that the issue is not whether the three groups along with *Prajāpati* belong to the same linguistic community. This is why the *Upaniṣadic* story does not fit in the Davidsonian framework. The single most important issue to remember is that unlike "gavagai," "da" is not even a word in any language.

So far, we have investigated whether western theories of meaning can shed light on these iconic *Upaniṣadic* passages. Our findings are five-fold: First, like Grice's account of non-linguistic meaning, *Prajāpati's* story about "da" exploits the idea of the speaker's meaning where the intention of the speaker plays the most significant role. Hence, Grice's theory is readily adaptable to the *Upaniṣadic* story. Second, unlike the *Upaniṣadic* story, the conventions of natural language presuppose relatively fixed meanings with which both Quine and Davidson are operating, although Quine contests whether we could ever read the speaker's intention correctly. Third, unlike Quine, the *Upaniṣadic* story presupposes speakers and hearers as belonging to the same linguistic community. However, the problem of a comparison between Quine and the story lies in the fact that "da" is not a word in any language. Fourth, contrary to Quine, in the case of this story, there is a way to check whether the hearers have in fact understood *Prajāpati*. A pertinent question could be, "How does *Prajāpati* know that his students have understood him"? The only way to know this is to see whether they answer what he wants them to say. This is not necessarily the *only* way to know whether his students answer the question correctly because it might require some reflection on our part to realize that the students have in fact provided a correct response to the question. For example, if we say, "Name one famous author who was born in Missouri," some might reply, "Maya Angelou." We might realize that this is a correct response only after some reflection because we might have mistakenly thought that Mark Twain was the only correct answer. For Davidson, "understanding the other" is always problematic, even when "the other" is the speaker herself. We have to interpret even our own utterances to make sense of them. In this respect, it is possible to map the *Upaniṣadic* story to the context of radical interpretation. Fifth, based on this consideration, if we are motivated to endorse Davidsonian radical interpretation to be at work in the *Upaniṣadic* story, because the truth-conditions for the one-word sentence "Da" are the same as the two-worded sentence "practice charity," then we would be forced to endorse radical interpretation relativized to a specific linguistic community, where "da" is disambiguated in different ways by their characteristic modes of behavior.

So, if we think that Davidson's account might be of help in unlocking the issues regarding the possibility of radical translation in the *Upaniṣadic* story, then we would be tempted to overlook the other significant difference between the two. Davidson assumes a convention in natural language where words have relatively fixed meanings—meanings one could find in a dictionary. However, in the *Upaniṣadic* story, "da" is not a word in any existing language because of which we have to abandon the assumption that words in natural languages have fixed meanings. In this respect, as we have already argued, Grice's theory of non-natural meaning is a better tool to understand the *Upaniṣadic* story.

CONCLUSION

Our cross-cultural exploration into the philosophical works of Western and Eastern traditions by analyzing whether well-known Western theories of meaning could shed light on the *Upaniṣadic* story have revealed that they help understand each other. Our findings are not always straightforward as the story and theories used to interpret the story involve different shades of complexity. We discussed the *Upaniṣadic* story about "da," and how that word has been translated differently by the three sets of children of *Prajāpati*. We also discussed Grice, Quine, and Davidson's take on translation by drawing an analogy between the gavagai example and the story in question. We pointed out that there are prospects and problems for this sort of comparative study. Grice's theory of non-natural meaning was seen to be the most useful account when trying to situate the *Upaniṣadic* story in the tradition of analytic philosophy. We argued further that if we care to find a resemblance between the gavagai example and the *Upaniṣadic* story, then we need to be circumspect about the convention that word meanings of a language are relatively fixed. This convention is either assumed or contested depending on whether we deal with Davidson or Quine, respectively. If we grant that the *Upaniṣadic* story reads more like a parable, Quine would be unsure whether we have got the meaning of the parable right. It is possible, for all we know, that we have mistaken it. Davidson, however, begins with the assumption that we have it right and then looks for the conditions that must obtain for this to be possible. Davidson concedes that this assumption is often (but not too often) mistaken, but then our identifying a mistake depends on successfully translating the rest of the parable (e.g., we have to assume that "gods," "humans," and "demons" mean the same thing as the *Upaniṣadic* story that they do for us who hear/read them). If they don't, the word "da" could not be disambiguated in the way that we do, and the whole point of the parable would consequently be lost.

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NOTES

1. See Eliot and North, *The Waste Land: Authoritative Text, Context, Criticism*, for the critical edition of *The Waste Land*.

2. Some translations of the Upanisadic passages are due to us.
3. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads*, 289–91.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. H. P. Grice, "Meaning," 384.
7. Hacking, *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?*, 146.

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Philosophy and Anticolonialism

J. Barton Scott
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The theme of "Indian Philosophy and Culture" begs an important question: What is the relationship between "philosophy" and "culture," anyway? One stock answer would deny connection: culture is located in historical and geographical particulars; philosophy is what pushes past those particulars toward timeless, universal truths.

Whether or not anybody would actually endorse an unqualified version of that claim, I don't know. But there is a way in which the very phrase "Indian Philosophy" rhetorically presumes it: by identifying its referent as specifically "Indian," it argues for Indian philosophy's inclusion in the philosophical canon, while also simultaneously marking it as different from philosophy per se. Indian philosophy, it suggests, is shaped by Indian culture to an extent that U.S. or British philosophy is not. The rhetorical move at play here will be very familiar to readers of postcolonial theory: by preserving a marker of national difference, the category "Indian philosophy" enacts an argument for India's parity with metropolitan structures of academic production while also and at the same time reinforcing the barriers separating India from full inclusion in those structures. To make itself visible, Indian philosophy has to flag its Indian-ness, thus allowing it only qualified inclusion in the ostensibly universal realm of pure thought.

I am not competent to comment on how such markers of national difference function in academic philosophy departments. Instead, as a scholar with interests in postcolonial theory, cultural studies, and the history of religion in modern India, I want to dwell on an adjacent question. In what ways has the category "philosophy" played a role in marking Indian cultural specificity since the late nineteenth century? In this short essay, I consider this question in general terms by outlining the history of Orientalist and anticolonial uses of Indian philosophy during the long nineteenth century. As cultural critic Ashis Nandy pointed out many years ago, M. K. Gandhi's public image was a carefully cultivated appropriation of colonial stereotypes about the "mystic" Indian. In laying claim to the ideologically laden trope of the "spiritual East," Gandhi also inverted and challenged this trope.[1] My aim here is to elaborate on this now-classic argument by considering related nineteenth- and twentieth-century figures. I am particularly interested in how the apparent "religiosity" of Indian thought served to trouble its status as "philosophy."

ANTICOLONIAL METAPHYSICS

By the turn of the twentieth century, philosophy had (however surprisingly) become a principal idiom of nationalist politics. Indian revolutionaries tried to revive key ideas from the six classical systems of thought schematized by Sanskritic tradition. They also read widely in contemporary Western philosophy, reinterpreting these texts for their own ends. Whether in Lala Har Dayal's adaptation of Spencer, Brajendranath Seal's invocations of Hegel, or Muhammad Iqbal's turns Bergson, what literary critic Leela Gandhi has dubbed "anticolonial metaphysics" was the order of the day.[2]

To understand why this was the case, we need to step back in time to an earlier moment in the history of British colonialism in the subcontinent. In the early nineteenth century, there were two competing schools of thought about how the British should rule its colony. On the one hand were Orientalists like William Jones, who celebrated classical Indian languages and cultures and advocated for their importance to world history. On the other were the Anglicizers, who (in the now-infamous words of Thomas Macaulay) thought that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia."[3]

If English education is what ultimately allowed Indian elites ready access to Western philosophy, it was Orientalism that made philosophy pertinent to empire. Orientalist art had long abstracted "the East" from history to render it the seemingly timeless object of Western contemplation. This was especially true of the trope of "mystic India." The subcontinent, it was said, was philosophical to a fault, its denizens lost in a mist of airily metaphysical speculation about the fundamental unreality of the phenomenal world.[4] It was perhaps fitting, then, that this Orientalist stereotype should endear India to the Germans—it being, in Marx's formulation, precisely Germany's historical backwardness that made it philosophically great ("We are the philosophical contemporaries of the present day without being its historical contemporaries," he wrote).[5] German Romantics were early and avid advocates for Sanskrit literature. Goethe praised Kalidasa's *Shakuntala and the Ring of Recollection* in the highest terms, and at least one tortured young poetess decided to end her life in a way that she understood to be modeled on the figure of the "suttee."[6] The Germans' enthusiasm eventually spread to other