



"Philosophy begins with a sense of awe and wonder and curiosity about the world around us and our place within it. It's a desire to move from perplexity to clarity. So philosophers try to get clear about the concepts we use. Concepts like truth, reason, knowledge, obligation, responsibility, ethnicity, gender, democracy and value."

**Jonardon Ganeri**

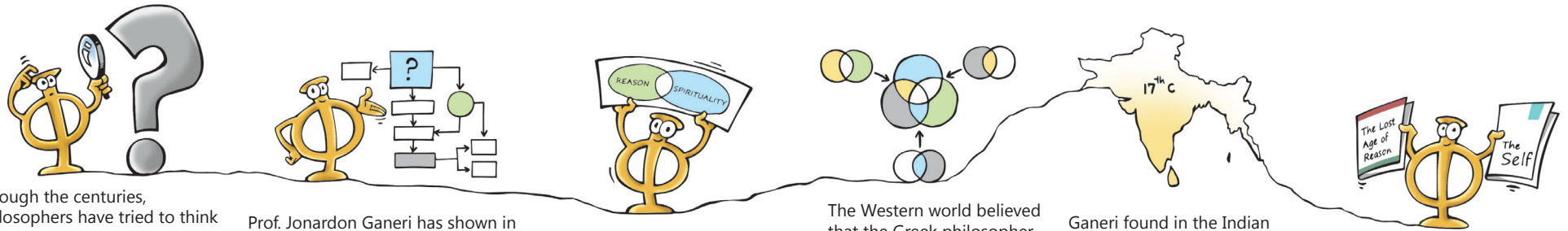
Global Network Professor of Philosophy, New York University, New York and Visiting Professor, Department of Philosophy, King's College London

- M.A. in Mathematics from University of Cambridge
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Prof. Ganeri brings to the study of Indian Philosophy both an acute form of rigor derived from his training first in Mathematics and then in Analytic Philosophy, and a tremendous range of work, spanning the fields of logic, the semantics of natural language, epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of psychology, ethics, and in recent years, even political philosophy.



Seeking the self, happiness and other riddles



Through the centuries, philosophers have tried to think about the big questions such as who are we and why are we here? How do we live the good life? What constitutes good and bad? What is happiness? Philosophy, then, is the study of what makes us human and what determines our position in the world. It helps us understand the deep patterns that bind us to the world around us and to each other. For a very long time, it was believed that these were questions to which only Western philosophers sought answers.

Prof. Jonardon Ganeri has shown in his work that these are questions that have preoccupied civilizations around the world. Ganeri was trained in the analytical tradition of philosophy. This is a movement in philosophy that began in the 20th century in Britain and America. Analytical philosophers approach questions and problems through a careful analysis of concepts. They try to be as precise and careful in their arguments and bring as much clarity as possible into their thinking when formulating problems and structuring solutions to those problems. In his writings, Ganeri has explored a wide range of subjects such as the philosophy of language, philosophy of logic, philosophy of mind and the nature of global early modernity.

It was believed for a long time that Western philosophy dealt with reason and the Indian traditions dealt exclusively with spirituality. Ganeri's work shows that European traditions of philosophy connect with other traditions of philosophy around the world and that the ideas of 'self' and what the 'self' constitutes preoccupied Indian philosophers as much as it did the Western ones.

The Western world believed that the Greek philosopher Aristotle was the inventor of reason and logic. In particular he invented a model of argument called syllogism that uses logical reasoning to arrive at conclusions. This model dominated European philosophy until the 19th century. But Ganeri says that what's ignored was that India had its own independent tradition of logic.

Ganeri found in the Indian texts patterns of inference and reasoning. Several different groups in India had been exploring similar topics through the centuries. They made great advances and reached very high levels of sophistication as to what constitutes a good argument especially in the 16th and 17th centuries. This went against commonly held European perceptions of the golden age of Indian advancements having ended with the ancients.

In his book *The Lost Age of Reason: Philosophy in Early Modern India*, Ganeri explores the intellectual landscape of 17th century India and shows the sophistication of the ideas that were in play at this time. In *The Self: Naturalism, Consciousness, and the First-Person Stance*, he explores the different and complex ideas of the self and what it means across various philosophies.