

BOOK REVIEWS

Language, Being and Cognition (Philosophy of Language and Analysis: Contemporary Perspective) by Devendra Nath Tiwari, Astha Publication, 2014.

The book under review is presented into six consecutive sections each containing four chapters, and a critical estimate of the main achievement of the book is added as the last chapter. The author's scheme of laying down a document map for each of the chapters of the book enhances its academic worth. The author is originally a philosopher and is well versed in Indian and Western traditions: evident from his discussion which covers a wide range of traditional and contemporary issues of philosophy. His book comprises a complete treatment on the questions of language, being and cognition. The reality for the book is that which we know, and we know only the intelligible being that is the being of the language and the meaning, the signifier and the signified, the expresser and the expressed that are universal in nature. Individuals are known by implication/inference as the ontic substratum of intelligible beings. Since the book accepts the infusion thesis the two, the signifier and signified, are non-different. Naked signified isolated from language is unthinkable. However, if it is any that may be use for the mystics but is of no philosophical use. The world of our knowledge is the world of Philosophy and the world of philosophy is the world of language and, hence, the analysis and interpretation of the language as its author takes is the analysis and interpretation of cognition as well. The author takes that the cognitive aspect of spirit that we know is confined to knowledge and on that basis we infer the ontic aspect of it by implication as the substratum of the former. Thus, the book approaches the whole field of human knowledge only through the analysis of language. The purpose of the analysis of cognition infused by language is to free intellect and human thinking from allegiances and infatuation with the ontic world based on inference, supposition and faith. Thus, as I observe, the philosophy discussed herein enriches our philosophical understanding and is relevant for promoting research in the field of philosophy of language and analysis.

After Independence several books have been written on Indian Philosophy that deal seriously about the metaphysical issues with a epistemology to prove them convincing on the basis of proofs and reasoning and an axiology to justify and make the metaphysical speculation purposive as way of life (Sādhanā). On the other hand books are written on the dialectical reasoning to prove that all the metaphysical and epistemological reasoning fail to prove what they intend to prove. The work under review is, perhaps, the first one after Indian Independence that deals with Indian philosophy without intermingling it with metaphysical and religious allegiances. It provides with not only a philosophical outlook of popular philosophical trends but also presents a critique of cognition in the light of recent advancement in the field. It is really a work of perpetual importance for analyzing the cognition as it flashes by language.

The author is a Sanskrit scholar of repute and has exhaustively used the original texts like Aṣṅadhyaṃyā of Pāṇini, Vārtika of Kātyāyana, Mahābhāṣya of Patanjali, Pradāpa of Kaiyaṇa, all the three parts of Vākyapadāya and Dāpikā of Bhartṛhari, and commentaries of Helāraja (on IIIrd part), Puṇyarāja (on IInd part) and Nāgeśa Bhaṅṅa of Sphoṇavāda. Māmānsā Ślokavārtika of Kumārila Bhaṅṅa,

Nyāyamanjarā of Jayanta Bhañña, Bramasātrabhāṣya and Upaniṣadbhāṣya of Śankarācārya, and texts and commentaries of Buddhism and Jainism and have been nicely utilized. He has referred to the Scholarly works of K. A. S. Iyer, G. S. Shastri, K. Subba Rao, Kunjjhuni Raja, Asoka Akalujkar, R. C. Pandey, Radhika Herzberger, H. G. Coward, Jonathan Ganeri, and many more based on original Sanskrit texts of language and grammar. He is seen equally versed in the philosophical trends of the West and has meaningfully attempted to observe the issues of language in contemporary perspective.

The book opens up an intensive chapter on philosophy and its public utility; discussing the multi-dimensional nature of philosophy, the author provides with a clear platform to a reader to easily comprehend the main tenets and vast scope of philosophy. The Author's discussion on the utility of philosophy is very impressive and updated. He points out that philosophy is a system of reflective activity not only on the situation of human cognition and experience but also on the human aspirations. The author has rightly said that all problems are at thought level, and therefore there is possibility of their analysis, clarification and removal by philosophical reflections. Had problem been an external beyond our limit it would neither be known nor be removed by reflection. They flash and therefore can be analyzed, clarified and removed by thinking and reflecting on them only. Getting wisdom against ignorance is the primary problem that makes the public utility of philosophical reflection highly important.

A thorough philosophical discussion on the different theories of language, its nature and power, autonomy, infusion of language and cognition, language and communication as sharing and responding, meaning of moral language and many more were still to come from Comparative perspective. The Philosophers of the East and West have attempted to free philosophy from metaphysical captive; but to free it from the metaphysical infatuation and allegiances is very rare. The cognitive holistic approach of the book provides with a view of philosophy free from the metaphysical assumptions; it conceives that language, independently of the ontic entities and our allegiances to them, expresses intelligible beings to which our knowledge and philosophical reflection are confined. I must thank to Professor Tiwari for this new trend of philosophy that I found very interesting and profound; it talks about concentrating on the flashes of consciousness, analyzing them as they flash and interpreting them for making them understandably clear in an analytic scheme. For him, the language is power; it expresses itself and its meaning independently of any other thing-in-itself and their allegiances. The author's argument about analysis of language appropriately is the analysis of cognition is really highly relevant for furthering philosophy of language in our time.

The book discusses two major views about language that are 1. There is power in language as we find in *Rhetorics* and heterodox and orthodox systems of Indian philosophy. Some of them accept three and some others only two of the powers in words because of which they convey different kinds of meaning that are –popular, intended and non-intended and 2. The language itself is power that expresses all meanings. The author views the problems undertaken by him on the basis of the later perspective for which language is expresser. The primacy of language as the only power to which all cognitive activities, philosophical thinking and reflections are confined distinguishes this work from all those metaphysical expositions that try to determine meaning in a model and take

language as merely tool for interpreting the meaning. He appreciates the Wittgensteinian view of language game model but very soon criticizes it for the reason that it gives primacy to use and intention as meaning and accepts that word and sentences are dead. On the basis of a simple logic that meaning is not given and the language is only given to us for analysis, interpretation and determination of meaning as the author thinks can be worked out in a reflective theory only when it is infused by language. Isolated from language, no meaning, no cognition is possible or even if possible it hardly concerns with a reflective discipline like philosophy that occupies with the analysis of cognition.

Since meaning in the model theorists is always free rather transcendental to language, an attempt to free it from language finds language as dead and then exercising game-theory to determine meaning through a dead entity is just a waste of interest; a philosophical move having no efficiency to explain successfully either or both of the positions –language determines meaning and vice-versa. Such an attempt is nothing but to strengthen in a more disguised way the same mistake once committed by metaphysician and even so only for showing the insufficiency of model-theories of meaning. “All cognition is determinate” this observation of the author in the book under review may not be acceptable to many who do not give primacy to language in a philosophical reflection but I cannot deny the merit of the stand of the author for giving all primacy to language in a cognitive enterprise.

The author views all events concerning even past and future become the object of knowledge only when they flash in present by language. We know and become self-consciousness of those events only when they flash. They may be given beforehand but they become object of reflection only when they flash in present. Even the memory also flashes in present and that is why it becomes the object of our cognition. That which flashes is a being for the author. He identifies those beings as intelligible objects we know; they are philosophical beings. It is justified to think that if philosophy is a cognitive activity par excellence then objects of philosophical reflections must be the intelligible beings of which one can be aware of and are of awareness in nature. The autonomy of language has got a proper shape with the hands of the author of the book under review. The earlier popular theories discuss the autonomy of the user in the name of autonomy of language without a justification as to how the user's autonomy is the autonomy of language. I found a very different version of autonomy thesis based on language as expression because of it as power; it is fit to express itself its own nature and its meaning indifferently and independently of metaphysical/psychological/religious/ontic entities and our allegiances to them. This basic view serves as the thread of discussions in almost all chapters of the book.

The author is a distinguished philosopher widely known for his works concerning philosophy-proper. One can obviously observe and the author himself accepts well the Bhartṛhariian impact on him. He is very pointed in his exposition of three outlooks concerning the nature of language: 1. The Reference theory; 2. The Representation theory; 3. The Expressive theory and attaches primacy to the last theory. Chapters on Jain view on the limit of language and indescribability of reality, and Buddhist's meaning of religious experiences are fresh and, perhaps for the first time in contemporary history, the author has pointedly argued for and against the representative theory of language in the chapter.

The dichotomy of analytic-synthetic, factual and descriptive have been most crucial problem in the history of philosophy and almost all contemporary philosophers have given divided views on these issues; they have provided a theory for which the propositions concerning the analytic/factual are valid and the synthetic/ descriptive are out of the measure of validity, they have emotive-meaning for some and prescriptive for others. This remotely divides the statements into 'is' and 'ought', and while doing so they are not seen serious in their move, because of which they try to do with only a limited sort of statements that fit to their compass of meaning- testability and a large number of sentence of human behavior/conduct are underestimated and suffer subordination and disregard. This led the later theories to leave the issue in abeyance and concentrate on good reasoning for the meaning as we find in Toulmin and J. O. Urmson.

The author attempts the issue of the meaningfulness of all sorts of statements on the basis of the basic argument of action oriented formation and expressive nature of language according to which it is naturally fit to express some or the other action . In most languages the verb is given primacy, and the nominal words are interpreted to be derived from the verbal forms as we find specifically in Sanskrit. If this is so, the 'is and ought model' of dividing and deciding meaning is a misguided attempt that overlooks the nature and purpose of language. Ought sentences are very much verifiable on the basis of function they perform in our day-to-day life. They express the meaning of accomplished and of non-accomplished character. As well, the later comprises those to be verified later and those to be verified by proofs based on the functions performed on that basis, by analogy and other sources. Thus, the criteria of meaning according to the author can in no way be confined to the availability of referents in the empirical world. Language expresses equally the meaning of finished and non-finished character. Hence the meaning of language is independent from the external existence or the corresponding entity in the experience. The validity of proposition as correspondence picks out only factual sort of propositions as meaningfulness, but all other varieties of propositions, primarily actions-centered, fall outside the compass of this criterion. The author's observation of meaning and truth of moral sentences is quite proper and fit for giving incentive to the explanation and further investigation concerning the meaning of moral language.

Generally, we in philosophical enterprises talk about validity. The author emphasizes the difference of verity and validity of knowledge and accepts the former as foundational to the latter enterprise of the logical skill of verifying criteria. One can deny, but there is no ground to disagree with his position, that Logical skill cannot move to any position without the verity as the incentive and object of verifying skill. The analysis of Sphoṇa in Chapter II is an excellent exposition of Bhartṛhari's philosophy of Vākyapadāya and his commentators like Helārāja, Puṇyarāja, Nāgeśa Bhaṇṇa, Koṇóa Bhaṇṇa, and others. The book for the first time pointedly specifies Sphoṇa as a philosophical being and clarifies that it is a cognitive entity, an intelligible being that cannot be confused as mystical entity, metaphorical or metaphysical substance. It as such is the flash that flashes meaning non-differently. It is philosophical being that is expressed and hence the flash of consciousness we know, analyze and interpret. A philosophical being cannot be confused to be a transcendental metaphysical entity; it is directly known as it flashes. The author clarifies nicely in Chapter I and then

in Chapter XIII that reality has no particular frame of existence, and therefore it can authentically be analyzed as it is presented by or figures in by language. Language presents a reality sometimes as dynamic, sometimes as static, some other times nominative denoted by nouns, and other times as action denoted by verbs. The reality in-itself cannot undergo change in different capacities, either of agent, object, process, etc., or finished and non-finished forms are known thus, because the language presents them so.

For the first time here in this book, we find an exhaustive and threadbare analysis of three major theories about language in the same book. These are: Sphota Theory of language, Autonomy Theory of language, and Indivisibility Theory of language. One cannot miss that while discussing the different contrasting views from the western and Indian perspectives, the author maintains a unity of conclusion which naturally follows from his exposition throughout all chapters. A through presentation in, for, and against the controversy between the wordists/constructionists and the holists deserves appreciation. The author pointedly concludes in favor of his preferred cognitive Holistic Theory of language. Section two 'analysis of word and its meaning' presents a thorough analysis of words-of accomplished and of non-accomplished character, measures by which meanings are known in a sequence, means of learning the meanings (śaktigraha), word-meanings: universal, individual, potency of language and the related issues. His discussion on the rival theories of cause of identical cognition and difference between the knowledge and its objects, between knowledge and no-knowledge, verity and valid knowledge are conclusively discussed from a broad perspective, ultimately favoring the preferred theory that all knowledge is determinate. Isolated from language no knowledge, no idea or thought, even the concept of 'indeterminate' is possible.

The concept of sentence as the signifier, non-difference of the signifier and signified, and the different theories of verbal cognition popular in the east and west are presented in Section Three of the book. The discussion culminates in a view of the non-differences of language and thought. Tiwari's argument against theorists view regarding language and thought as independent from each other of which the thought is original and the language comes forward when the thought needs to be communicated is difficult to accept but I observe the author's view very sound if the relation between the two independents is taken natural fitness of the former. If, otherwise, then explanation of accomplishment of communication will require so many devices with no satisfactory outcome. The author provides a view that language is not confined to articulations. In the author's active theory of language articulated or written marks are devices by which the language as concept or thought is manifested. Our proximity with thoughts are revealed by language only when the later is manifested through articulated garbs. The relation between the thought and the language yields a natural fitness of the later to express meaning; it is like the natural fitness of eyes and other senses to perceive those things for which they are naturally designed. The eyes cannot perceive the objects of ears, and similarly this is the case with the other senses. Similarly the word horse, dog, man, etc., and the sentences having their own identity are naturally fit to express their meanings and not the meanings of the others. Taking the infusion thesis of language and thought only brings to light the view that philosophy can be taken as a cognitive activity *par excellence*. Language then is a foundational being which reveals meaning. The author's view is highly contested

by those who take both language and meaning as independent, and considering language as confined to articulated sounds or written marks.

Language as thought cannot be confused as abstracted being but a flashed or expressed being. In this regard he criticizes the view of proposition as abstraction, and on the same logic he reviews knowledge as a set of propositions and finally concludes the discussion from the view of language as of an awareness in character. A critique of metaphysical, epistemological and other popular approaches to reality, specially Advaita Vedanta, Buddhism, Jain, some medieval and contemporary thinkers is presented by the author. This foundational basis culminates in a purely philosophical vision of reality set against aphilosophical views of reality as it is, in itself and different from, positivistic/empiricists measures as well. One of the most striking features of the book is again its treatment of the most intriguing problem of verbal cognition. A critical analysis of Māmānsā and Nyāya views is presented in detail. It highlights the intricacies between Sphoṇa and Pratibhā. Analysis of the theories of Abhihitānvaya and Anvitābhidhāna, points of their conflict, and a solution from the perspective of the indivisibility thesis of language, is precise and interesting. The merit of this discussion lies in the author revealing the problematic issues of his own views and a response to them.

The discussion in Chapter XIV on the most controversial problem of 'Ontic non-being (Abhava) vs. Philosophical being' is unique in the history of philosophy. Though the author has got inspiration and theme from the Jāṭisamuddeśaḥ of Bhartṛhari, his presentation of the issue brings the material on Abhāva as being of non-being and that is quite afresh and inspiring. On the basis of understanding and analysis of cognition, the author discusses being of negation like being of being as a cognitive/philosophical being; it is a being that flashes when we articulate 'non-being' and this flashing is the intelligible-being that can be analyzed and made understandable. About the reality of non-being or negation, the author is, perhaps, the beginner philosopher who finds out that ontic non-being is the annihilation of external existence. But the intelligible being of non-being cannot be denied because it likes being figured positively and is a being itself expressed by the language 'non-being'. Had there not been existence there would have been no possibility of negative sentences and hence the existence of non-being. His investigation into reality and the reality of negation not only provides incentive for further research on the non-being but also provides a cognitive ground for the distinction between non-being and being. Through logic the author proposes external Non-being as a philosophical being, an intelligible being and, thus, the sentences expressing non-being are not formed out of the sentence about being by adding 'not' or 'non' in the assertive sentences as the western language philosophers think. They are sentences that express meaning 'negation' independently of the assertive sentences.

By presenting a critique of epistemological theories of knowledge and the cognitive view of it, the author analyses and interprets the limit of epistemological approach to reality and pointedly makes the distinction of cognition of reality as flashes and the epistemological approach to reality. After progressing through the chapters of his book, I was confronted with a response to the question 'why do we not concentrate on epistemology for the issues pertaining to the knowledge of the objects, their nature and proving their existence, etc., which is traditionally accepted as the trusted means fit for

knowing and proving their cognition and that why do we concentrate only on analyzing the cognition as it flashes in the cognizer for subordinating the epistemology as insufficient or that is, why we write the obituary of epistemology'.

I must thank the author for including Section V which discusses issues of highly philosophical importance. Epistemology has its limitation to the objective proving of objects outside and may be extended to the subjective as well; but these two approaches limit the reality to the subjective and objective outlooks only. The two theorists refute and brutally criticize each other. The author elucidates how they are captive of a model of logical thinking which deprives one from knowing the nature of the thought-object that flashes and gives us incentive to epistemic reasoning for also proving the object in that flashes. This flashing is the cognitive /foundational being, and the epistemic devices are applied for proving it and its outside impositions as external or ontic things. These flashes are a constant content of analytic scheme and of epistemic devices of proving and justifying skill as well. Any device or skill including epistemology is possible only when their constant content is flashed beforehand. This is perhaps the reason that the ancient texts, except those belonging to systems of Indian philosophy which are outlined later, do not give primacy to epistemology. I very quickly add that cognition, for the author, flashes in present and is foundational to the logical skill. The book consists of original and mature ideas, reviews of popular theories; uniqueness of its reflecting analysis and thus provides a broader spectrum of understanding useful for all those who are interested to know the subtlest contributions and developments in the field. It is perhaps for the first time that the issue of the language and the logic of its translation is discussed in a way which not only characterizes but also evaluates the nature of the translated version - not as copy but as expression of the constant content of the text in a different garb. The garb of the text and that of the translation are different but their content is constant and thus, analysis and translation are accepted as cognitive activities and hence not different in content from the text

Section VI addresses the chapters on Language and Grammar, Language and Culture, Language and Communication and lastly the rules of interpretation of the hermeneutics of the west, and the Indian view of Māmānsā and Vyākaraṇa. The issues are discussed purely from the point of view of language and cognition without being captive of intermixing with the ontic and religious mode of interpretation. Thus, the author's approach in these chapters is very interesting and fresh. The cognitive holistic philosophy discussed in the book gives importance to indivisibility of cognition; a philosophy that gives primacy to action in life and verb in the language. It follows the same thread in interpreting the text as well. The action is the constant content of the expressions comprising injunctions, commandments and prohibitions. Explanatory sentences have also meaning attached to the action which can be praise or abuse. This method of interpretation is supported by scholars, keeping the reader free from the unnecessary burden and tension of knowing all the geography, history, sociology, political and environmental situations associated with the time which belongs to the text. It accepts that an interpreter is a cultivated wise person and, without altering the text that is action, he is free to interpret the text as per the demands time and an awareness of responsibility to the wisdom and welfare of the subject.

In the last chapter, the author concludes the whole discussion from a contemporary perspective. He pointedly argues the reasons of failure of the popular theories in the proper estimation of the nature of language, being and cognition. His conclusion limits philosophical reflection to the intelligible beings, who are the object proper of analysis, interpretation and further reflection for determination, clarity and wisdom of the meaning of language we use for communication. There are several statements discussed widely in the book that form the main thesis of the book. Since, I think, them philosophically important, I am putting some striking thoughts very regular in the discussion of all the chapters, and the author has introduced them in the very introduction of the book:

- Language is expresser, a complete unit that expresses its own nature first from which its meaning is expressed non-differently (p. XXVII). It in Sanskrit is 'Śabda' comprising of garbs as manifest and the thought-content (concept) that flashes through their instrumentation (p. XXVII).
- Language expresses not only being of being but the being of non-being also. (p. 145)
- The Language and the meaning are intelligible/ Philosophical beings of awareness in nature (p. XXVII).
- The Relation between the language and meaning is the natural fitness of the former (p. XXVII).
- Our cognition is based on and is confined to the intelligible beings the language expresses. (p. XXVIII).
- Language and thought are non-different (p. 236-251).
- Reality is that the language reveals (p. 471)
- All words and sentences are concepts (p. XXV).
- There is difference between concept and the flashing of the concept (p. XXIX).
- The concepts may be given or formed but they are known only when they flash (p.465).
- The flashing is always in the present. This means that the objects/concepts belonging even to past and future events are known only in present because they flash only in present; the present is only cognized (p. XXIX).
- The cognition the language reveals is always disinterested and becomes interested when imposed on our allegiances (p. XXX).
- Cognition is always determinate and veridical (p. XXIX, 340).

It is not easy to digest, and one can wonder how the knowledge expressed by language is disinterested and becomes interested when inflicted or imposed on the interests of our allegiances. Prof. Tiwari, while discussing the issues on language in the chapter on 'language and the possibility of disinterested knowledge', is intensively concerned with the spiritual purpose of language. He takes spirit as light which is knowledge, and reveals the difference between it and cognition. Though he thinks that philosophical reflections are confined to the flashes we know, he accepts things-in-themselves as the ontic substratum of the flashes. Thus, it seems apparent that the basic search throughout the book is to discover spiritual freedom through the analysis and interpretation of language. The author is of the firm view that since language infuses cognition, the analysis and interpretation of language at the same time are that of the cognition as well. The attempt of philosophers who discuss Autonomy of language on the basis of its use is intended to free the language from captive to meaning. But going through the Tiwari's exposition of the Autonomy theory of language I found a different logic being that our knowledge is confined to the language and to what it expresses, and it expresses intelligible beings independently of itself. This is perhaps for the

first time that one can find a discussion that may attract its readers towards a change in the outlook of philosophical reflections and investigations into philosophy.

There appear a few typological errors in some of the pages of the book. However, symmetrical arrangement of the points of the chapters, divisions of sections and the chapters falling under them, printing and finally the get up of the book are attractive. Initially, I was inspired to go through the book after reading the comments of the scholars of repute of our time given on the back flap of the book. While reading, I was invigorated with the originality of thought, excellent analysis, philosophical exposition and style of powerful analysis of the problems undertaken by its author to the extent that I started writing my review of the book. The comprehensive discussion on the problems of language, being and cognition presented in a contemporary perspective, I am sure, is a landmark in Philosophical studies from the cognitive holistic perspective. It is also an excellent incentive and excitement to scholars, students and the general readers interested to go deep into the refreshing and precise discussion on the issues of language, meaning and cognition. It is in brief, a philosophy proper without intermixing any metaphysical, religious entities or their allegiances. This comparative presentation of the issues at full length in the book - as warranted by the advancements in philosophical thinking of the east and west - is an inspiration for further research and examinations in the field.

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