

BOOK REVIEW : I

R.C. Pradhan, *Recent Developments in Analytic Philosophy*, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi, 2001. pp. vii-516, Rs. 650

Philosophical enterprise in the new millennium as a search for a new metaphysics is the central idea of R. C. Pradhan's book *Recent Developments in Analytic Philosophy*. Professor Pradhan's endeavour is the reassuring of a new outlook after discussing the major developments of analytic philosophy in recent time. A metaphysical order that he proposes in his entire discussion of the history of analytic philosophy draws a middle path in understanding the deterministic and indeterministic worldviews together and simultaneously rejecting both deductive-model of metaphysics as well as descriptive metaphysics. Moreover, the significance of the work lies in showing the relevance of metaphysics once again as one of the core areas of philosophical explanation of reality since times immemorial. Over and above it reflects upon the triangular facets of reality *per se*, i.e., the logical bond between mind, language and the world. The tripartite relationship gives a holistic conception of reality by seeing its significance through the value of *holy* life of the *being in the world*. As a result, it stands up to transcend all conflicting frameworks of the discourse of reality to provide a solid foundation to both epistemological and moral order to the universe. Thus 'language centric philosophy is not tied down by any conceptual framework or the paradigm but evolves its own approach to address the problem of life - sought the liberating character of philosophy as domain of free thought.'

Since the author belongs to the analytic school of thought, he upholds the consequences of linguistic analysis in the discourses of philosophical thinking. Language centric philosophy has been quite successful in not only resolving the pertinent problems of philosophy but also the whole enterprise has been a critique of language. It mainly suffices for his argument that *linguistic turn* is a second Copernican revolution in philosophy. The critique of language reflects upon the conceptual construction of the root of the philosophical problems, further "It makes us look for the roots of our conceptual constructions themselves, i.e., into the language that lies at the foundation of the conceptual edifice. ...The analytic critique of language,

therefore, is a logical consequence of thought and reason." (P.8) Thus analytic philosophy shows a big shift in the very practice of philosophy distinguishing itself from the classical method of philosophical practices as well as the Kantian approaches.

The book has eleven chapters excluding introduction, an extensive version of selected bibliography and index. These chapters are classified in four parts. And each chapter contains at least eight to ten subsections provides a coherent and comprehensive discussion of the concerned problem. The first part "Linguistic Revolution" includes chapters such as (I) Philosophical Analysis and the Nature of Linguistic Revolution, (II) Logic and Metaphysics : Breaking Away from the Past. Part two is about "Logic of Language" has chapters such as (III) Logic and Language : The Rise and Fall of Formal Language philosophy; (IV) The Logic of Natural Language : Facing Ordinary Language. Part three is about "The Primacy of the Semantical" includes chapters such as (V) The Semantic Models: Foundation of a Theory of Truth, (VI) Meaning, Truth and Verification: Parameters of Theory of Meaning; (VII) Reference and Predication : The Structure of a Theory of Reference. Part fourth "Language, Mind and Metaphysics," includes the chapters such as (VIII) Language, Thought and Reality, (IX) Mind, Language and Subjectivity; (X) Realism and Anti-realism: Towards Reconstruction of Metaphysics; (XI) Knowledge, Value and the Metaphysics of Freedom.

Semantics has been a primary concern of analytic philosophers. It involves three important notions such as meaning, reference and truth. The book fairly brings out the intricacies involved in the analysis of these notions. The pioneers who belong to this camp and their theories are the central focus of discussion in this book. They are Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Ryle, Carnap, Quine, Ayer, Putnam, Strawson, Austin, Kripke, Searle, Dummett, Davidson, Rorty and many of their critics who equally share the thoughts towards the development of analytic philosophy. Pradhan begins with the developments of *formal semantics*, by Frege and Carnap who demand the **logical** analysis of language for explaining logical truth. Language per se, in **fact** defined exclusively through syntax would involve *formation rules* as well as *transformation rules*. Logical truth and logical necessity becomes a **part of the** syntactical analysis of language. Such a

notion of logical necessity brings a 'decisive place' for 'grammar in logic'. Pradhan finds that 'grammar combines the possibility of its semantic sufficiency and syntactic completeness.' (P.91) As a result of which the linguistic analysis, on the one hand, results in dualism within the linguistic discourse showing the 'division between object language and meta-language,' and on the other hand fails to give a broader view of concept of necessity. In this connection, he brings out the notion of *necessity* which is central to the theses of Quine, Putnam and Kripke. Carnap's harmonious definition of extensional logic and intentional semantics 'gives the impression of a two way traffic between meaning and truth' that Quine finds will lead to 'methodological solipsism.' (P.165) In order to avoid the circularity of defining analytic truth, Quine has argued in favour of 'conceptual holism' which could replace the metaphysical atomism of Russell. The holistic character of the conceptual system could 'dismantle the distinction between science and philosophy.' And that is shown in Quine's rejection of analytic synthetic distinction and 'consequently the rejection of two ideas of truth, i.e., truth of language and truth of experience.' (p.96) Further Putnam makes a serious attempt to define truth in terms of identity relationship between 'normativity and rationality'. The latter allows Kripke to suggest a combining thesis for analyticity and a priority which 'takes a shift from logical necessity to metaphysical necessity.' Moreover, for Pradhan, "Formal language philosophy came to lose the grip over philosophical imagination because of the fact that its faith in that language and its rules can secure every necessary truth became weak. It was realized that formal language is not taken into account the contextual and the modal features of language. Therefore, it failed to give a broader view of the concept of necessity." (P.105) Such dissatisfaction over the notion of 'ideal language' semantics for defining meaning and truth consequently leads to a change in the discourse of analytic philosophy by few eminent Oxford philosophers such as Ryle, Austin and Strawson. Their arguments in favour of 'ordinary language discourse changed the method of philosophizing using the larger context of human life and action. (P.109) Over and above, the author clearly notes that formal language semantics does not entirely rule out the scope of metaphysics, he writes, "But Carnap brings out the 'unsayable' into the heart of the meta-language and thus keeps the door open to metaphysics

even if metaphysics concern the world of empirical objects. Transcendental metaphysics is in a way ruled out even without the object language and meta-language distinction." (P. 105) Thus the shift from formal language semantics to the natural language semantics sprouts in Oxford philosophers. His attempt also has been to show the over all continuity in Wittgenstein's approach in dealing with semantics discussing *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations*.

The author finds a similar type of turn in the rejection of Frege's meta-linguistic notion of sense. Referring to Dummett, he writes, "Linguistic turn in the theory of sense may appear to be alien to Frege's semantic theory but it cannot be denied that it has its roots in Frege's theory as claimed by Dummett". (P.204) The meta-linguistic notion of sense provides a prelinguistic interpretation to it which either makes sense living in a Platonic world or a Chomskyan prelinguistic structure of thought. He also points out Dummett's worry about gap between thought and language. He neither subscribes fully to Dummett's intuitionist semantics, nor defines truth in terms of interpretations. Interpretations are mental constructions that could replace truth in terms of justification. consequently the concept of justifiability is explained in linguistic practices, which would further reveal the semantic structure of sentence. (P. 190) Pradhan denies both stating that 'a purely articulated thought expresses its semantic content', hence, sense is embedded in the very structure of thought as well as its expression of it. That is shown in both early and later philosophy of Wittgenstein. Sense is defined in terms of the pictoriality of a proposition. Pictorial form shows the relationship between language and the world. As he puts it, "Sense cannot accidentally acquire language it must show the logical structure of the latter." (P. 210) And verification of *sense* is not further necessary because it already determines the 'structure of experience'. The author suggests that the verificationist method does show a linguistic turn in analytic philosophy but "the verifiability criterion of meaning has the chief merit in showing that meaning is not a non-cognitive metaphysical notion and it must be related to the over all epistemological framework in which we have a scientific experience and the scientific hypothesis which we constantly test against experience. (p.214) The merit of linguistic turn in positivism involves two parts, firstly positivists undertake statements that

are 'units of meaning and only carry the semantic weight' and, secondly it is about reductionism that is involved in positivists' analysis of language meaning as a piecemeal analysis, interpreted by Quine. Quine's naturalistic semantics on the other hand gives *holistic* interpretation to meaning. The indeterminacy thesis does give a broad outline to naturalistic semantics. Pradhan says, "Quine's above conclusion on the nature of meaning has serious repercussions on the nature of translation which is the most ancient art of inter-linguistic communications." (P.220) However, naturalistic semantics has its limitations in 'denying the speaker's access to the transcendent notion of meaning'. (P. 225) The author then brings Davidson and Dummett to discuss meaning and truth going little beyond the strictness of naturalistic semantics. Davidson's idea of *interpretation* 'retains both Tarskian and Quinean insights' in explaining meaning and truth within a conceptual framework, whereas Dummett maintains that *justification* condition can unfold the manifoldness of meaning in the actual practice of language. Pradhan rightly points out that "Dummett is anxious to make meaning and truth available in language itself and so to do away with cognition-transcendent notion of truth meaning." (P. 233) Moreover, Dummett separates truth from meaning, 'truth is driven away by justification whereas meaning lies in the use of language.' Thus the author takes up the issue of *speech acts semantics* advocated by Austin and latter by Searle, which gives a viable challenge to *truth conditional semantics*. If semantics as a whole is necessarily bound by truth and falsity conditions and ignores its other applicability then it would show its 'limited availability'. 'Meaning is also a joint product of convention and the force of utterances.' (P. 235) By stating that he goes back to the root of speech act semantics in Wittgenstein's notion *language use* to strengthen his thesis of autonomy of meaning. Autonomy of meaning follows from autonomy of language use, that is, where 'language speaks for itself.' In his words, "Meaning is neither a mental reality nor it is an entity in the abstract Platonic sense. It is ultimately a reality in language. It is internal to the language system so is autonomous." (P.240)

In the following chapter "Reference and Predication", the author takes up the problem of reference *vis a vis* sense - meaning which defines truth in terms of predication. Interestingly, he associates the predicational

structure of sentences i.e., the *syntactical well formed sentence* with over all logico-grammatical structure of sentences, i.e., *semanically well formed sentences*. As he suggests, "The real grammatical form of a sentence in which the descriptive phase is no more in the subject-predicate form but it is the character of an existential sentences in which the descriptive phrase is no more in the subject-predicate at all." (P.254) And it is in this context the author feels that Russell presses the notion of meaning towards the domain of semantics where truth and falsity conditions are also taken care of. Strawson's critique of Russell's "Theory of Description" brings back to the demand for natural language semantics. However, Pradhan says, "Strawson unlike Russell, recognizes that sentences as such cannot be taken for the truth value assessment and that they must always be related to the context and the speaker for such assessment." (P.258). He further gives a proper attention to the interpretation raised on Russell's theory of description by Searle, Kripke and Donnellan. Strawson and Searle challenge in converting proper names to descriptions for the stronger version of *translatability*. Kripke's cluster theory of description' again is clue for Pradhan to relate Wittgenstein's notion of crisscrossing feature of language games which gives a proper description of meaning. Moreover, he differentiates and maintains that *descriptive content* of sentence is not identical with the sense of a sentence. 'The former is a linguistic entity and proved by virtue of linguistic convention, but sense is pre-linguistic therefore pre-conventional. Thus Frege's theory of sense differs from Russell's theory of description.' (P. 265) He too is not happy with the causal theory of names insisted by many like Donnellan, Putnam, Evans apart from Kripke. Though Putnam rejects the 'theory of description' by analyzing in terms of *rigidity* and *Indexicality*, still Putnam 'endorses the causal relationship as an underlying mechanism of reference.' He appreciates Putnam in rejecting psychologism, denying that meanings are not in the head and along with Kripke he overcomes the referential opacity precisely on the ground that necessity is dependent on reference across possible worlds.

Pradhan conclusively returns to the main theme of the book in part-IV, that is 'Language, Thought and metaphysics'. The linguistic analysis of these chapters focuses on the metaphysical foundations of the structure of

thought and reality. Linguistic analysis is responsible in bringing about change in the theoretical positions. A change in the way of looking at the metaphysics or the metaphysical issues inevitably follows from the linguistic analysis. However this conceptual change is a part of the 'intellectual history of mankind' but they are neither *frequent* nor *radical* as interpreted by Kuhn and Feyerabend. Referring to Wittgenstein and Strawson, he writes, "There is a natural limit to the change in the concepts themselves and for that reason there is an internal link between what concepts we have and what the world actually is." (P. 311) For him, Strawsonian descriptive metaphysics has its limitations. It neither revises the concepts nor is it constructive or speculative, yet it preserves the concepts. Concepts are evolutionary phenomenon and their development is a matter of *necessity*. They are not imposed, as Kant believes rather they are 'the inner structure of the language and reality'. He discusses both Davidson's and Putnam's adherence to the idea of *conceptual scheme*. Moreover, he is critical of the very idea of conceptual scheme, and writes, "relativity of reality to conceptual scheme is vulnerable to the criticism - reality is relative to the language, is illogical, in the sense that it is itself not a criterion of language." (P.320) He contrasts Putnam's theory of internal realism, i.e., defining truth from *internal point of view* with externalism, i.e., *God's eye point of view*. Representation of reality through concepts is one of the classical notions of philosophical discourses, emphasizes the author while highlighting Rorty's anti-representational attitude. Rorty fairly undertakes language as an activity and undermines its representational characteristics. In this context he finds Russell's and Wittgenstein's approaches are quite metaphysical and artificial. However, Pradhan's approach towards representational theory of meaning and truth is substantiated by the thesis of both Putnam and Dummett. His conclusive remark of this chapter is noteworthy, "The representational theory of language brings in its train the concept of truth as it is wedded to the fact that language speaks about the world irrespective of how we construe the relationship between language and the world. The relation between language, thought and reality is not a pseudo-problem as Rorty thinks, and besides this problem is not a source of relativist's menace which Rorty wants to encounter by dissolving the problem. In fact the best way of facing relativism is to take our language

and conceptual scheme as they work and to see that language is firmly related to the world. Both skepticism and relativism arise when we do not see the definite language world relationship." (P.333) In the following chapter, "Mind, Language, Subjectivity", the author makes a shift in his discourse from linguistic representation to mental representation. Representationality remains common to both language and mental phenomena. The dual forms of representation are bridged by the subjectivity of human mental experience. Subjectivity is the route of first person accessibility to the mental experiences as well as the feature of establishing the autonomy of the mind. The *first person point of view* of studying the mental introduces the concept of self. Searle's biological naturalism is one of the central theses of discussion in this chapter which has been effective in refuting the functionalism and identity theory of mind. The analysis of concepts of intentionality and subjectivity simultaneously gives a *turn* to the Cartesian dualism. Nagelean dual positions of explaining the mental seem to be not appealing to the author and he also denounces Searle's naturalism too. Searle's notion of intentionality of mental experience ultimately gives a causal account of consciousness. Mind is neither considered as part of the world nor the self. He advocates a transcendental notion of self in a *Tractarian* sense, i.e., self is the limit of the world. As he puts it "The conflict between the biological point of view of consciousness and the transcendental notion of self is more apparent than real because there is no reason why transcendental notion of self cannot accommodate empirical feature of consciousness." (P.354) The consciousness without *creativity* leads to nothingness in the sense that the mental loses its unique feature. This chapter also focuses on Ryle's *analytic behavioursim* in refuting the Cartesian myth and Davidson's *anomalous monism* seeing a parallel explanation between psychology and philosophy of mind. Rejection of dualism can lead to the presupposition of the self and he is very logical in advocating, "Self is the metaphysical background of the philosophical understanding of body and the mind. It is the basic ontological category that is presupposed by mind, language and the world. ... The self is the person that is engaged in the act of self-knowledge and self-understanding in the first person sense, such that by knowledge what the self can remember and anticipate we can contribute freedom and responsibility to

it.” (P.391) Moreover, the metaphysics of the notion of self goes hand in hand with the metaphysics of truth and reality. And that he discusses in the chapter “Realism and Anti-Realism: Towards the reconstruction of metaphysics”. The realists and anti-realists positions regarding the nature of truth and reality unfold the controversy between the ‘God’s eye point of view’ and the ‘human eye point of view’, Further it replaces classical metaphysical realism with transcendental metaphysics which asserts reality is rationally intelligible. His Wittgensteinian approach is not only to reject metaphysical realism and transcendental metaphysics but also to see a ‘harmony among thought, language and the world.’ He writes, “This cosmic point of view that takes the objects in the world as fixed entities given in a timeless framework. The world is taken as independent of human standpoint (P.403) The human point of view holds a corresponding relationship between language and reality. Linguistic representation goes perfectly well in tracking reference and truth. That is because ‘language and the world share a common logical form’. Austin’s analysis of truth from *descriptive convention* as well as *demonstrative convention* does strengthen the foundation of realist semantics. Moreover, it also focuses on the viable challenges against the metaphysical realism of Kant and latter advocated by Putnam in his famous essay ‘Brain in a Vat’. Putnam advocates a causal relationship between language and the world and tries to point out the follies in McGinn’s notion of mental content. Putnam’s theory of ‘internal realism’ becomes the core of the discussion in this chapter and shows how truth ‘loses its transcendent metaphysical character once it is placed within the frameworks of linguistic practice and cognition.’ (P.427) The cognitive framework as a perspective advocates the involvement of normative order and the role of rational community in justifying beliefs. Justification then remains central to language use and relative to the conceptual scheme. Realist semantics not only insists on truth independent of knower but also determinate factors between language and reality. Pradhan is certainly critical of Putnam’s *internal realism*, however, he synthesizes both the realists and anti-realists stand points, “The metaphysical picture of the world of the internalists as well as of the anti-realists are the same : that is, both take the world to be an emerging universe of diverse and plural entities that do not pre-exist in human mind but are constructed in the conceptual

scheme of mankind. It is not a fixed universe consisting of self-identifying substances. Metaphysical realists wrongly conceive the world to be independent of human minds and languages. The anti-realists correct this picture by bringing in human language and mind to the centre. Thus it brings out a second Copernican Revolution in philosophy by making world dependent on mind and language." (P.437) In the conclusive chapter of the book "Knowledge, Value and Metaphysics of Freedom" the author explains the necessity of understanding the value of person that lies in the rational exploration of his existence. Such cognitive endeavour discloses the exercises of free will and reason in understanding that the nature of self and its relationship with the world. The synthesis is certainly a creative endeavour towards redefining a new worldview in which the value of human life will have manifold descriptions. The cognitive bond between the self and the world will disclose the limitation of reason. Moreover, the critical analysis of epistemology will not only reject skeptical attitudes but will also succeed in showing the shift of the epistemological discourse from individualism to the community towards construing knowledge.

Thus analytic philosophy which is man-centric philosophy must examine different facets of man and the constituting factors of such epistemology lies in human wishes, motives, intentions. More importantly, "In actions alone the whole man is revealed". Pradhan is disappointed about the hiding nature of the rational self, rather he says, "...for the whole understanding of the nature of man we have to look into his behaviour, his character above all his *inner will*." (P. 467) The significance of his argument is deeply touched by the sense of morality and the virtues of the human life. They need to be guided by the reason. He does not disregard reason at all. On the other hand, brings a synthesis in understanding the value of life within the self-referential structure of the causal order of the world and the free will of the consciousness. Hence, determinism and indeterminism are inadequate to resolve the issue of understanding the nature of man. "The actual man is both causally conditioned as well as free in proper context. We are free when we exercise our will, but also we are under causal law when we are executing our actions in the world. Thus man has a dual nature, both as a free and as a causally determined entity. There is no contradiction between these two faces of human action."

(P.479) However, it would be a mistake to conclude him a dualist in this sense. Rather his seriousness about emphasizing a harmony between reason and freedom to give a comprehensive ground for understanding the nature of human life and the values ascribed to it. It is because the values of life are safeguarded by rationality in man. And such a discourse of 'knowledge to value' is a "continuous thread binding mankind into one cognitive and moral community of free individuals." (P. 484)

Thus Pradhan does succeed in showing the analytic philosophers endeavour to provide a sustainable thesis in *reconstructing metaphysics*. His enriching arguments do carry readers to the *sea* of linguistic analysis. The author's attempt has been to bring clarity to most of the issues in analytic philosophy. The work not only brings clarity to readers but also establishes a milestone in unfolding a new facet of analytic philosophy. In this regard, *Recent Development in Analytic Philosophy* is certainly an asset for further research.

RANJAN K. PANDA