BOOK REVIEWS

Nature of Philosophy: Object and Its Utility in Daily Life - A Critique is a bilingual monograph authored by Devendra Nath Tiwari (pgs. XIV + 114), price Rs.280/ Published by D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 2024.

This engaging book is a must-read not only for teachers, researchers, and students of philosophy but also for anyone interested in understanding the nature of philosophy, its subject matter, and its usefulness in daily life, through Professor Tiwari's pure philosophical reflections. It presents various aspects of Philosophy from a fresh perspective, a quality often lacking in contemporary books. With its simple, accessible language and critical analysis of popular views of modern and contemporary philosophy, the book is equally readable for readers interested in learning philosophy to meet today's challenges. The author has organized the chapters in a sequence that engages the reader in a natural dialogue, enabling them to anticipate the forthcoming chapters (topics). This distinctive quality stems from Professor Tiwari's affinity for philosophical wisdom and his critical analysis, enriched with precise examples from the subject matter. The author has divided the work into two sections, in which, apart from the introduction, twenty-nine major points are discussed in precise detail. In the introduction, Professor Tiwari introduces the nature, subject matter, and utility of Philosophy in daily life. I examine the influence of Cognitive Holism, his original contribution to Philosophy in General and Philosophy of Language in Particular, on the book under review. Cognitive holism is Tiwari's philosophical reflection that argues powerfully that knowledge is limited to the intelligible beings of language and meaning; philosophical reflection is confined to the beings the mind apprehends, and language and meaning are the only such beings the mind can know. Notably, this monograph is bilingual (English and Hindi), which broadens its reach and acceptability.

Mapping out the problems of philosophy, Professor Tiwari observes that Philosophers have defined philosophy in different ways according to their inclinations, commitment to their own theories, and the structure of their system. For these reasons, later philosophers have criticized and reviewed their predecessors' views, and that forms the history of philosophy. To explain what philosophy is, the author has, at several points, first tried to explain what philosophy is not, because understanding what philosophy is not makes it easier to understand what philosophy is. Along with this, the author considers philosophy not by dividing it into Eastern and Western, ancient and contemporary philosophy; rather, he perceives that when the intellect confronts a problem, the knowledge and the object of knowledge that are revealed, or when there is a problem, the analytical reflection undertakes clarifying it, and to attain determinate understanding, this reflecting discipline is philosophy.

On the second point, titled "Mind and Knowledge in Philosophical Reflection," the author calls human consciousness self-consciousness and explains that it is precisely because humans are self-conscious that they are called intellectual beings. Self-consciousness means that consciousness illuminates objects and, while illuminating each object, it is also aware of itself; by virtue of this, we distinguish between the cognition of objects and the self-consciousness of that cognition. Cognition, or knowledge, has no otherness or objectness, whereas objects of cognition can also become objects of another cognition. Otherness is a characteristic of the objects of cognition, not cognition itself. Philosophy concerns objects of cognition that are of the nature of the mind; it is an excellent cognitive or epistemic process. To satisfy the intellect's intellectual hunger when it confronts a problem, the mind becomes reflective. No problem is a problem for itself. All problems that the intellect confronts are conceptual. This is why, for clarity, understanding (conceptualization), and discrimination

regarding problems in any discipline, philosophical reflection is undertaken to analyze, clarify, and resolve them. There is no philosophy of philosophy, because the reflection we undertake on the problems of philosophies and of other disciplines is also philosophy.

In "Etymological Meaning of Philosophy," while shedding light on the traditional definition of philosophy, Tiwari says that the term — Darśana is derived from the root "dṛś," which means direct perception, vision, insight, experience, seeing, observing, examining, investigating, and so on. For an ordinary person, seeing is limited to the perception of external objects through the senses; whereas a philosopher's perceiving is related to perceiving the ideas, the object proper of knowledge. They perceive ideas and reflect on them for clear and definitive cognition. Knowledge is the light of consciousness; it guides life and motivates the actions of an individual or a group. If ideas are not specific and clear, they will not properly guide and will also fail to provide proper motivation for life's activities. Knowledge is truth, and when there is confusion or ignorance, we reflect on the objects of knowledge to gain a clear conception. For Tiwari, truth is not dry but a welfare action. In the Indian tradition, "Darśana" refers to this intellectual activity, and the term 'Philosophy' in the Western tradition is not opposed to it. Both traditions love knowledge (love of knowledge or wisdom); they analyze it, reflect on it, and regard it as the highest value. Despite different methods of understanding and explaining reason, both traditions reflect and investigate knowledge because attaining knowledge leads to attaining bliss. Knowledge is always definite, and this definiteness is not possible without language infusing it.

In "Thinking and Reflecting," Professor Tiwari says that philosophy is not the discipline of meta-reflection on problems of understanding concepts. Those trained in this discipline know better how to distinguish between a concept and its theorization. Concepts are universal. Our interaction between speaker and listener rests on a unitary understanding because both share the concept. In the speaker, the concept is illuminated before speaking; in the listener, after hearing. Conceptions may not be universal. They are formed through differences in individuals' cultural dispositions, expressions, and attention. We form many conceptualizations of the same concept; that is, we construct different theoretical conceptualizations of it. For example, the concept of the human being remains the same, but the conceptualizations of the human being in the works of Śaṅkarāchārya, Rāmānuja, Sri Aurobindo, Vivekananda, Tagore, Plato, Descartes, Hume, Kant, and others differ. Be that as it may, if the same conceptualizations of the speaker and listener both are identical, or if the same concepts are illumined in both, then mutual understanding, participation, and dialogue become possible. There is dialogicality in the concept, but when we color it with our dispositions and express it through sounds and scripts, that dialogicality changes, or deviates in practice from the commonly accepted concept, obstructing behavior; then communication does not take place at all. By their very nature, concepts are general (universal).

Tiwari analyses differences between thinking and reflecting. Thinking occurs in all systems, but we reflect on the problems that arise from one system or another; this is what we call philosophy (philosophical activity). Other systems think about concepts, whereas philosophy reflects on the problems that arise in conceptualizing them, thereby attaining clarity and discernment about those concepts. In proportion to the information accumulated from antiquity and modernity, our thinking enriches conceptualization. When the intellect becomes self-conscious, or directly reflects upon itself without mediation, it is called subject-oriented reflection; when, instead of turning toward itself, the intellect takes up objects external to it with which it is confronted, it is object-oriented reflection. Philosophical reflection is the object of thinking on the problem arising out of conceptualizations, thoughts, and theories; in this way, we can

say that philosophy is reflective awareness. Nevertheless, we cannot say that this reflection is meta-philosophy or the philosophy of philosophies, because these, too, become objects of philosophical reflection; that is, they, too, are philosophical reflection. Thus, there is no knowledge of knowledge, no soul of the soul, and likewise no philosophy of philosophy/ies; because philosophical reflection on them is itself philosophy.

On the fifth point, "Language, Thought and Reality," the author says that most philosophical problems arise from the mistaken notion that language, thought, and reality are independent of one another. We also distinguish thoughts by considering some, in certain doctrines, as intellectual and others as spiritual, separating intellectual thoughts from spiritual philosophical schools. Similarly, some thinkers regard being as material, some as spiritual; whereas, for the most part, language is considered merely linguistic. Materialists regard language as an indicator, reference, or representative of being. Theorists describe being in many ways—as metaphysical, material, experiential, logical, illusory, manifestation, and so on. In the representation theory, the triad of language, thought, and being is explained in such a way that the relation among them appears mechanical and contusive. We directly perceive or infer external being. From this, the intellect forms an idea of being, and language expresses it. Therefore, being and thought are inherently separate, and the being structured within thought is different from the being expressed through language. This view recurs: that thoughts are original and separate from language, and that we use language to express them. Being is distinct from thought and language; the thoughts that arise from seeing or experiencing being are represented by language, or language is used to signify being. This entire structure of thought explains the processes of being, thought, and language. From a philosophical point of view, however, the situation is different. Whenever we know being, or think or reflect upon it, we do so not without language but within language itself. We cannot say that any thought that manifests in us is unknown to us, and whenever we know a thought, it is always infused with language. We cannot think about any thought or any being by separating it from language. The being that we know is in the form of thought, and that thought is not only infused with language but is also manifested through language. We know any being only in the form that language flashes it; and being beyond language may be a mystery, but it has no philosophical significance. Thus, Professor Tiwari argues that language and thought infused by language are the only intelligible beings we know, and that our knowledge is confined to these intelligible beings.

Is Philosophy Metaphysics? Metaphysicians claim that they know the thing-in-itself. Traditionally, metaphysics includes epistemology based on principles that determine Being or the ultimate nature of a thing and on questions that arise regarding the existence of external objects, their kinds and distinctions, and their justification. Modern thinkers associate the term metaphysics with the study of transcendent objects—objects that we do not know, but whose self-subsisting existence and values are considered greater than empirical elements. Without dividing the category of metaphysical objects into empirical and transcendent parts, we use it in the sense of Being as it is in itself.

In short, some well-established scholars have not regarded metaphysics as a proper philosophical activity, nor have they considered metaphysical objects to be a proper object of cognition. According to Tiwari, the thing-in-itself (whether metaphysical or physical), being inaccessible to knowledge, cannot be an object of knowledge. Hence, Professor Tiwari says that, in understanding, only those entities illumined in the intellect are objects of knowledge, and they are not merely interwoven with language but also illuminated by language.

Reflecting on the object of knowledge, Tiwari takes it to be "cognitive Being," which means the illumination of the intellect: a concept or idea, an object of cognition;

these are intelligible objects illuminated in the intellect through language. The same cannot be said about external objects of the senses. Objects related to the past, present, and future are also illuminated in the same way, because language presents them in that form. If philosophy is the highest cognitive activity, then intellectual beings alone are the sole objects of philosophical reflection, and therefore, we may call those beings philosophical objects. We know them in contrast to those external objects whose existence, according to objectivists and scientism, is independent of knowledge. By object we mean, in Kantian terminology, the thing-in-itself, which is a form of being dissociated from language. A being dissociated from language would also be dissociated from knowledge, and such a position runs counter to metaphysical entities.

In "Dissolving Forces of Metaphysics," the author argues that the powers that dismantle metaphysics are inherent in ontological, metaphysical, and epistemological arguments themselves. The truth is that it is impossible to come out of the mud without getting muddled; therefore, refuting others' metaphysics and erecting one's own new metaphysics cannot be regarded as an original contribution to philosophy. Metaphysics' greatest strength is also its weakest point. We ground metaphysics in intellectual reasoning, yet we claim that metaphysical entities lie beyond intellect and thought. Similarly, we construct metaphysical structures within language, yet regard those substances as transcending language. Treating being, meaning, and thought as separate from language itself becomes the very force that dissects metaphysics. Whatever the form of being may be, it can manifest only through language. To consider language merely as a 'dead instrument' or a carrier is a philosophical error. In fact, without language, apprehending any being is impossible. Neglecting this very inseparability (interpenetration) of language and thought leads to the disintegration of metaphysics. Knowledge is always woven with language; therefore, to regard reality as devoid of language is a serious internal contradiction of metaphysics.

In the eighth, ninth, and tenth points of the book, Professor Tiwari discusses, in precise terms, three important questions: Is Philosophy a discipline of knowledge? Is Philosophy an analysis? Is Philosophy a Linguistic Analysis of meaning or Use? The intellect does not illuminate some unknown "meta-object" or "meta-knowledge"; instead, it clarifies the "intelligible-object," or the idea illuminated by language. This is because the existence of any meta-object separate from language is unknown, because any object always appears in our thinking only through language.

Discussing "Is Philosophy an analysis?" Tiwari clarifies that after the dismissal of metaphysics by A.J. Ayer (*Language, Truth and Logic*, Chapter 1), philosophical thinking centered on the analysis of language for the clarity of meaning and conceptual understanding. The author believes that the fragmentation of epistemology, as argued in Richard Rorty's essays and Susan Haack's article "Obituary to Epistemology," has completely dismantled the tradition of philosophy as metaphysics. In the current postmodern context, we are witnessing a global scramble driven by materialism and the market. This situation has not only affected intellectual discourse but has also raised a serious question about philosophy's relevance and utility.

In this context, philosophy's identity emerges as "language and analysis." Here, Tiwari asks: Is analysis a philosophical activity? What is the cognitive base of Analysis? Analysis rests on knowledge expressed in language, and it cannot be its own basis. Analytic philosophers believe most philosophical problems arise from confusion caused by the misuse or improper use of language. In Wittgenstein's words, problems arise when language goes on holiday. The only way to resolve these confusions is to analyze language until the problem is solved. In this process of analysis, thoughts become clear, and the problem naturally dissolves. This process is similar to peeling an onion; just as peeling an onion layer by layer eventually reveals that nothing

mysterious lies within its layers, analysis uncovers the hidden meanings of language. However, Professor Tiwari cautions that philosophical analysis differs from ordinary grammatical analysis. It is not merely about disassembling the onion.

Tiwari observes that philosophical analysis is a self-conscious activity. It concerns not only language and meaning, but also the logical basis of the analysis and self-awareness itself. This activity is not merely a mechanical process like extracting a fly from a bottle (Wittgenstein's famous analogy). Its true purpose is to clarify concepts in the very form they flash. Ultimately, when doubt is resolved, and analysis, discernment, and joy bring conceptual clarity, the work is done.

Considering the question, "Is philosophy a linguistic analysis of meaning?" The author clarifies that Wittgenstein's main effort was to free language from its fixed usage and conventional attachment. According to him, the meaning of language is its use. Depending on context and intention, language can convey different meanings. Wittgenstein urged philosophers to examine meaning across contexts and language games rather than seeking an object's form in its original state. He believed that philosophers often get bound by a single model of meaning and then try to find solutions within it, which gives rise to new philosophical problems.

However, the author offers an important critique. He argues that limiting philosophical activity solely to linguistic analysis is inappropriate for scholars who consider philosophy a supremely cognitive activity. The philosopher's task is not merely to remove statements from their technical usage and bring them into the ordinary language of daily life. Technical usage itself carries deep meanings that can be understood only through specific statements; it is not merely ordinary words of daily life. Ultimately, reflective intelligence encounters philosophical problems and engages in their analysis, testing, and companionship so that there is not only linguistic clarity but also genuine cognition and discernment regarding the problems.

From Wittgenstein's perspective, those who rely solely on chatter, empirical epistemology, or figurative metaphors believe they can overcome philosophical distress through linguistic analysis and social epistemology. However, the author holds that such efforts themselves give rise to new kinds of philosophical entanglements. According to Professor Tiwari, any thought, concept, imagination, or mental image that is separate from language is impossible. Philosophically, we understand a word in the sense that it reveals itself. In the various uses of language, we can recognize its multiple meanings and whether they are right or wrong because language does not merely represent meaning; it reveals it directly. The philosopher's task is not limited to pondering the problems he encounters; rather, his contemplation is also based on those very problems. This reflection accepts the intellectual beings of language and the meaning it reveals as the objects of cognition we know. If we limit ourselves to the beings we know, Tiwari is justified in saying that if we ignore the intelligible being of language and meaning, then, in their absence, no knowledge is possible; neither social epistemology nor linguistic analysis nor metaphysics nor philosophy will be possible.

Kant's critical philosophy is essentially a theory of knowledge in which the powers of both intellect and sensory experience are embodied as form and matter, respectively. His philosophy synthesizes the analytic and the synthetic, known as critical philosophy. It defines knowledge as new and necessary (Synthetic A priori). In short, critical philosophy is the process by which knowledge emerges from the combination of sensory experiences as matter and intellectual categories as form. An excellent example of this is David Hume's empiricism, which awakened Immanuel Kant from his dogmatic slumber. Hume's empiricism is a form of critical thinking that completely rejects the rationalists' concept of innate ideas. He subjects rationalist arguments for elements such as God, the soul, the world, and matter to such sharp scrutiny that some scholars view his philosophy as agnosticism, and others as skepticism. In the tradition of Indian philosophy, we also find strong forms of this critical philosophy in Nāgārjuna,

Śrīharṣa, and Jayarāśi Bhaṭṭa. These philosophers argue that the epistemological proofs and methods provided to establish metaphysical entities are not logically organized. Their analysis makes it clear that these methods fail entirely to achieve their intended objectives.

Reflecting on "Controversy Over the Object of Philosophy," the author notes that with the rise of civilization and culture, efforts have been made to understand the nature of knowledge, which is generally seen as a duality of intellect (consciousness) and matter (body). To address this duality, realist and conceptualist theories have been proposed; for example, realists view the individual and the universal as absolute entities. Nyaya-Vaisheshika treats both as independent but dependent on external objects for knowledge; Shankaracharya's Vedanta attributes or derives both from the ultimate and extra-sensory reality; Ramanuja's Vedanta considers both as real but as components of the extra-sensory reality; and according to Bhartṛhari and the Naiyāyikas, the extra-sensory reality as conscious and all-pervading, while the individual and the universal are dualities in epistemology. According to the author, both Indian and Western traditions have long debated and formulated multiple theories of knowledge, including the individual (Particular), the universal, and the relationship between the two. In short, the problem of internal and external subjects has now shifted to the problem of their knowledge."

Is Philosophy Subjective, an Objective, or a Cognitive Reflection? According to the author, some thinkers consider philosophy purely subjective, while others limit it to objective contemplation. The author presents his original perspective after a detailed analysis of both views. According to Professor Tiwari, philosophy reflects on both and transcends them, both the subjective and the objective modes of thinking. It is cognitive activity par excellence.

The author also clarifies that philosophy's essence cannot be understood solely through its history. Philosophy is not a static discipline; rather, it is continuously creative, and this is its true identity. It is entirely different from the history of other subjects or the philosophy of history. Philosophy is fundamentally a reflective activity. Whether practical or theoretical, the philosophical perspective approaches every problem as an object of knowledge, not as an independent external or internal entity beyond knowledge.

In the next point, the author regards philosophy as a Cognitive Activity Par Excellence. He argues that any problem—whether doubt, inconsistency, inadequacy, or erroneous generalization —is essentially conceptual. The primary aim of philosophical reflection is to remove the skeptical obstacles so that a clear and profound understanding of the objects of knowledge can be developed. The author believes that as long as human intellect retains curiosity and doubts, the philosophical activity has a continuous and perpetual future. Therefore, all speculations about the 'End of Philosophy' are meaningless. Philosophy was reflective in the past, is reflective in the present, and will continue as a reflective activity in the future. Hence, those thinkers who proclaim the end of philosophy hold a notion that is nothing more than an irrational daydream, an impossible imagination.

Elaborating the point: Is Philosophy an Autonomous Activity? The author clarifies that philosophy is essentially a cognitive activity par excellence. In this activity, language and thought themselves are intellectual beings, or concepts, that are cognitive beings of awareness in nature. Thus, in philosophical reflection, language illuminates itself first and expresses meaning directly and non-differently. Language and the meaning it reveals are the only objects we truly know, and they constitute the real center of our philosophical reflection. Therefore, philosophical activity is autonomous because it does not need to depend on any external object; language itself expresses

meaning non-differently. Language expresses itself, and its meaning, and knowledge, is determined by language in philosophical reflection. When a philosopher is confronted with a problem, the problem is intelligible, for we become reflective for clarity and conception, independently of external or internal entities, and resolve it by confining ourselves to the intelligible beings expressed by language; thus, philosophy is an Autonomous Activity.

Professor Tiwari, in the second part of the monograph titled "Practical Utility of Philosophy," excellently illustrates the possible uses of philosophy in daily life through highly interesting arguments. From pages 61–94, the author draws our attention to the following important utilities of philosophy that a reader of philosophy should be aware of (i) Guidance and Wisdom: Philosophy is not only a guide to science and other systems of knowledge but is also a science of discernment and a reflection on knowledge (ii) Technical and Analytical Power: It should be seen as a form of technical knowledge and a method of consensus and resolution that encourages and develops the power of questioning. (iii) Therapeutic Approach: The author views philosophy as a form of therapy, whether it is the treatment of the sickness of thoughts, the peace of domestic conflicts, or the refinement and management of desires. (iv) Solutions of Global, Social, and family problems: Philosophy is considered an effective intellectual remedy against aggression and terrorism. (v) Moral and Aesthetic Foundation: Philosophy establishes the pillars of beauty and morality in human behavior.

In the final section of the book, "Conclusion," while highlighting the importance of language for philosophical thought, Professor Tiwari provides a unique analogy: "Language for philosophical thinking is not like water for a fish, but like gills for a fish." This means that a fish can survive for a few moments without water, but cannot survive even for a moment without gills. Here, Professor Tiwari presents a highly significant philosophical principle: Knowledge flashes and is infused by language. Knowledge cannot flash without language; language defines knowledge and enables understanding and dialogue. According to the author, philosophical reflection is indispensable for intellectual peace and for resolving the problems the human intellect encounters. Because all problems are fundamentally conceptual, philosophical reflection alone enables the analysis, clarification, and logical resolution of any issue within a system of knowledge. Against the scientific claim that knowledge is limited to scientific empiricism, and that what cannot be proven in laboratories is not knowledge, the author views such claims as baseless, chaotic, and misleading. Language-based knowledge is the cognitive ground of even scientific observations and experiments.

Professor Tiwari also disagrees with philosophers who treat language as merely figurative. In support, he quotes Professor Raman's view that, for philosophy, language has no external covering or cloak of metaphors; the figurative is embedded within language's internal structure. From this perspective, the direct connection between language, philosophy, and analysis is that language illuminates non-differently, like a flashing concept. In confronting problems, philosophy relies on intellectual honesty, reflection, and a clear understanding of human expectations. Philosophical reflection clarifies knowledge that motivates duty. This is why philosophy and its utility will always remain interesting, relevant, and justified.

"The Nature of Philosophy," authored by Professor Devendra Nath Tiwari, a distinguished philosopher of our time, is a milestone attempt to bridge the theoretical and practical aspects of philosophy. Scholars often have differing views on philosophy. Tiwari accepts philosophy in both its theoretical and practical forms and presents its practical utility in a highly engaging manner. According to the author, philosophy is a cognitive activity par excellence, and the monograph's philosophical reflections help clarify problems, remove biases, and resolve conflicts. Professor Tiwari does not limit philosophy to abstract principles but defines it as a cognitive activity par excellence,

grounded in unique analysis and a critical approach to cognition, aimed at achieving conceptual clarity, interpretation, and discernment. To a great extent, it views the world of philosophy through the lens of its own perception of philosophy of language. Through his reflective competence in perceiving philosophy as confined to language and meaning, the monograph's precise presentation fully achieves its objective. The monograph is an extremely interesting and significant work for those tired of the same way of describing concepts in almost all books and who want to learn something new to face the present challenges in reflective activities. Its bilingual format (English and Hindi) further broadens its reach, making it accessible to global and Indian scholars, researchers, and interested readers.

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