

DISCUSSION

**DOES TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECTIVITY
MEET TRANSCENDENTAL GRAMMAR?**

Does the 'availability of transcendental critique' (Pradhan, 1992) a la Wittgenstein suggest a full-blooded 'transcendental turn' in philosophy? Does it also provide a medicum of continuity between the early and the later Wittgenstein so as to enable us to assert that a transcendental subjectivity meets the transcendental grammar? If Dr. Pradhan (1992) wants to demonstrate that so long as the transcendental critique is available, the transcendental turn is also available, then the only course is to make Wittgenstein a Kantian, and transform the Kantian paradox of knowledge with a Wittgensteinian brush so as to make it look like a semantic Kantianism. (Hintikka 1984 : 4-5). A semantic Kantianism, on Hintikka's view, is a 'linguistic counterpart' of the above paradox, and is also a direct consequence of ineffability of semantics. Pradhan quotes it without building on this. That he deviates from the above view is shown by the way he first treats *critique* of reason (first sense) and then conflates it with the *critique* of language (second sense), and then, with a *critique* of ideology (third sense). So, he raises more questions than he could answer: he wants to show that the 'critique' (in his third sense) insulates Wittgenstein both against philosophy (early Wittgenstein) as well as against science (later Wittgenstein) whereas, the 'turn' recovers it in the form of a transcendental project of a *priori* rules (first sense) of grammar (semantics).

So, Pradhan's first mistake is to identify the transcendental critique of theoretical reason with the critique (in the second sense) of the limits of (meaningfulness of) language (or symbolism), and thenceforward to conflate it with the critique of philosophy itself (a sort of end-of-philosophy). The critique of language cannot become a critique of

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philosophy because it cannot successfully demarcate meaningfulness (sense) and meaningfulness (non-sense), and *a fortiori*, it is not scientific (Baker and Hacker, 1984). The other major interpretation in this genera is that of Hintikka (1986); as on his view, a critique of reason is not a critique of language in at least one sense in that it does not overcome the 'paradox of transcendental knowledge' (45). On the positive side, a critique of language is to be termed as a 'critique of pure language' (17) which accepts the universality of logic (language), and leads us on the consequent ineffability of semantics, according to Hintikka (1986). Now, the latter is not as much anti-foundational as the critique of philosophy is, and *a fortiori*, all the three are to be kept distinct. Not only are they distinct, but if a Rortian slant is favoured, then they are quite opposed to each other seen through Hintikka's lens, Wittgenstein maintains a distance from Husserl; nor is it clear that the Hermeneuticists are Kantians in Pradhan's 'sense' (see for example Habermas's reply to his critiques, especially to R. Bubner in *Critical Debates*). So, it would be naïve to lump them all into one category.

The second mistake is to fuse the 'transcendental turn' with the transcendental critique of the limits of grammar on the basis of its apparent insularity from causal and scientific modes of reasoning. It seems that Pradhan wants to work only with these three options: if it is not philosophy and not science, then it is a transcendental enterprise. How does this conclusion follow? It appears as though Pradhan refuses to consider the Kantian one as philosophical, (he is inconsistent) nor does he take Wittgenstein's later philosophy as a distinct variety of philosophizing. So, the term transcendental serves as a convenient rubric and a self-contradictory rubric, as it were. What positive gain he gets by calling it transcendental turn, he has not shown. If it is a transcendental critique from the standpoint of a *priori*, of grammar, then it is again an inquiry only into the nature of philosophy. Then, it is not entailed by any critique of philosophy, nor does it entail a transcendental turn. It appears that the above basic contradiction is not resolvable within the paper. Seen in the context of two Wittgensteins, the former critique can hardly be continuous with the latter. I only hope that Pradhan must be aware that the issue of continuity is only an issue about the middle Wittgenstein especially after the publication of the *Nachlass*. If so, Pradhan's search for the doctrinal continuity in the former is only a search for an anonymous Wittgenstein.

Pradhan was apparently carried away by the labels 'antiscientific' (Baker and Hacker, 1986) and 'anti-scientistic' (Stuart Shanker, 1986) so as to preempt his mind in the above direction. If it were so, then he runs the risk of a double mistake, instead of one. Baker's reason for calling it anti-scientific is that it is not a scientific theory about the nature of meaning, with which he seems to agree. Similarly, Shanker's reason for characterising it as anti-scientistic is that it is not a sort of scientific paradigm of philosophizing let loose by Frege and Russell. More exactly, Shanker favours of reversal of the images: philosophy should become a paradigm of mathematics *contra* Russell. Pradhan's misunderstanding here is that none of the above is philosophical. Exactly the contrary is true. Shanker's *raison d'être* for showing it as philosophical is based on the fusion of the grammar (of conceptual confusions) with the philosophizing about mathematics. For Baker, it is more about the nature of philosophy than about grammar and hence the above fusion may not be as much warranted as it is made out to be. So, Pradhan's only option is not to impose an *a priori* theory of grammar on the language-game view of language. He must be aware that this does not make him a Kantian in any sense.

Pradhan may backtrack by saying that he only wants to bend the transcendental turn in a similar direction as that of the other writers. *A fortiori*, his view must be taken only as a transcendental without a synthetic *a priori* as many would maintain. But where is the evidence for such a view found in the article? That this is not exactly his view, he would advocate, is evident from a frozen Kantian argument which he appends to it, no less quoting Kant himself on p. 158. Similarly, he also prefers to call the condition of possibility of language as a 'transcendental fact' (161, 164). In a similar vein, he speaks of the transcendental horizon of the language that makes it what it is (163, 165). Pradhan, however, wants to fully endorse Baker's two reasons (normativity and possibilities of phenomena) for identifying the linguistics of rule-following with the normative rules that govern the use of language. But from Baker's own viewpoint, it does not follow that there is plausibly a transcendental linguistics of normativity. The following points go against any such move: (1) Normativism represents a 'counter-theoretical' move in that it works not only against any theory of meaning, but also against any reduction of language to set of rules; (2) normativity is itself *a facon de parler* since normative rules is a myth; (3) *a fortiori*, there is no transcendental *a priori* critique of language-games. It is precisely (3) that seems to be at the forefront of Pradhan's mind is made clear from the way he pursues

a *grammar-an-sich* point of view. It is only in support of this that he quotes the passage (*PI*, 122) on p.156 calling our attention to Wittgenstein's account of 'perspicuous' grammar. In fact the passage in question need not be interpreted as a positive suggestion to that effect. A very similar tendency is noticed in his effort to cement the 'arbitrariness' of the rules, whereas other interpreters do not do so. So also, does Pradhan want the autonomy to imply a *a priori* linguistics?

Again, what Pradhan's 'lay out' (sec. 1) has missed in his research in the middle period is compensated by making two moves: first, he takes that the transcendental turn is as much a phenomenological turn (sec. 2) and reducing the nonmativity of rule-following into a phenomenological turn of rules (sec. 3). Here, Pradhan fails to do justice to phenomenological turn of the middle period that is in the forefront of Hintikka's discussion which he mentions in f.n.6. It is surprising to note how Pradhan hopes to throw light on Wittgenstein's transcendental turn without considering the crucial phase in which he considered 'phenomenology as grammar'. Hintikka focussed attention exactly on this aspect quoting from the *Big Typescript* (cf. Hintikka, 1986). But on Hintikka's view, a phenomenological turn carries a physicalistic implication in the sense of Carnap/Schlick, which centralises the phenomena of grammar. Hintikka also discussed how this could be said to be related to Schlick's account of the relation between meaning and verification, as reflected in a sinn-based account of verification (the *sensse/meaning* of the proposition lies in its method of verification) rather than a reference-based, as it is usually understood. Again, assuming that what he says is correct, it only leads towards a rejection of synthetic *a priori* of grammatical rules - *a point* that goes against *an-sich* point of view. Wherein lies Pradhan's manoeuvre? Again, Pradhan does not hesitate to identify rule-following with the 'constitutive rules' of the later Husserl's transcendental phenomenology but Hintikka's point directly goes against it (see also C. Wright, 1989).

On the whole, Pradhan's manoeuvre does not move an inch beyond the seasoned Kantian interpretation given by Stanley Cavell (1986 reprint) in a similar context under a similar title. Pradhan however does not bother to know that such a Kantian move is exactly a point of dispute even among hermeneuticists like Kar-Otto Apel, who is generally considered to look at Wittgenstein from a Kantian point of view (1986).

Even if Pradhan fails to address himself directly to the question whether the transcendental linguistics of normativity is a worthwhile project in later Wittgenstein, he might have been benefitted by inquiring into Baker's reason for calling normativity as *facon de parlor*, namely that they cannot provide a backdrop for a theory of grammar, into the way Stuart Shanker makes a theory of grammar to get absorbed into a philosophizing about mathematics, so as to present it as a project of epistemology *simpliciter*. Thus, just as for Baker there is a reason for saying that a theory of grammar can never become a good substitute for a theory about philosophy, for Stuart Shanker; a theory of grammar need not necessarily be basic, but at the sametime a theory of philosophy is basic when it sets at rest the conceptual confusions that occur within mathematics. However, a transcendental turn will be a too far distant dream for both. To what extent, the universality and necessity of rules provide an anti-anti-philosophical project is not at all clear from Phadhan's anti-philosophical critique.

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BOOK REVIEW

Nilima Chakravarty: *Indian Philosophy - The Pathfinders and the System Builders*. Allied Publishers, 1992, 358 pages. Price Rs. 325/-

There is no dearth of good books on Indian philosophy. But the work under review may be said to have an edge over many of them. I say so because of its many positive features. First, its language is all along very easy to follow; and so it should be welcome to general students of Indian philosophy. Second, it provides copious 'notes and references' at the end of every chapter - indeed nine pages of such helpful material even after the chapter on Kautilya who is not commonly included in works on Indian philosophy; and should therefore be of great help to researchers. Thirdly, quite unlike the more popular books on the subject, the present volume pays ample attention to individual thinkers too, and not merely to systems and schools.

Further, I like the openness of the work's contents, Philosophy in ancient India permeated every sphere of human thought and activity. So it is only proper that the learned authoress has devoted separate chapters to Kautilya, one of the earliest political thinkers of the world, and Caraka, one of the most illustrious medical scientists of ancient India. In both these chapters, be it noted, due space has been given to the *philosophical views* of the two luminaries.

Here, however, I see a lacuna too. Why has Bharata not been given a separate chapter when, upon the author's own view, his remarkable work, *Nāṭya Śāstra*, is a 'part of the philosophy of value?' (xxvi). Bharata is perhaps no less close to philosophy as traditionally conceived than Caraka.

There are some other oddities too, and I think it necessary to list some of them, mainly with the purpose of enabling the author to remove

them (and their like) when she prepares the work for its second edition which it may well run into:

daulistic on p.xxxiii. and *relization* on p. 338; p. 324, 'complacency' should be 'imperturbability' (for, as extreme self-satisfaction or smugness, complacency is not a desirable attitude, and so cannot be recommended by the yogic disciplines of which the author here speaks); p.213, 4th para, 3rd line: 'describes' (or 'interprets'?) Caraka to mean; p.xi, first para, last but one line. 'appears to' where the entire para uses the past tense all along, could be made bearable by supplementing it ('appears to') with 'have been'; p.177, 3rd para, 1st line, *vyasana* is addiction (bad habits) not 'troubles or calamities'; commas *missing* after 'according to kautilya, Caraka' on pp. 170, 215 respectively; on p.xix, last para, 2nd line, 'of' missing before 'the true nature of one's own self'; and again 'the' missing before 'doctrine of karma' on p.340, last para. On the other hand, the comma after 'lines' in the closing para of the book is a sheer intruder, more disturbing than the absence of 'the' before 'still living issues'.

I would like to believe that many of these defects are the printer's doing. But I cannot say the same of the fourth para on p.215. Here, I regret to say, the meaning is unclear. But let me explain, by inviting attention to the author's own words:

"This prompted him to study *purusa*, the empirical *soul*. It is evident that *purusa* for him (Caraka) is the *human organism*." (Italics added)

My difficulty, here, is that in so far as an organism is organized structure, or that which has it (or a living animal or vegetable), how can *purusa* be said to be (the same thing as) a soul and an organism, though an organism may well be said to have a soul?

But such little blemishes are more than set off by the many excellences of the book. It is, without doubt, a product of painstaking study and research. I can imagine the labour that must have gone into the production of complete chapters, of about 20 closely printed pages each on Uddālaka, Yājñavalkya, and Caraka; and of an even more

comprehensive one on Kauṭilya (39 pages). Here, in the chapter on Kauṭilya, the author has taken care to mention such little known details as the fact that the shrewd and crafty Brahman' (165) regards *harsa* (or excessive joy) too as one of the six psycho-ethical 'enemies' of man (174); and that man, for Kauṭilya, is not 'inherently good' but naturally fickle-minded (177). The conclusion rightly reminds us that

"though *atman* has been looked upon by many as the pivotal conception of Indian philosophy, it does not occupy the same position in the thought of all (Indian) philosophers; (that) for Mahavira, Kanada and Jaimini it is only one of the many realities (and that even) for the Buddha, or Kapila or Patañjali (it is not) the only reality" (334).

In fact, no chapter of the book could be said deficient in substance. Even biographical details have been provided in ample measure, and in almost every chapter; and I feel impelled to say that a volume of 358 pages in smaller than usual (yet easy-on-the-eye) print is no mean achievement.

The table of contents is very helpful, because of liberal provision of sub-headings signifying the main points made out in the chapters. Due attention has also been paid to the proper use of diacritical marks. But what has struck me more is the closing emphasis of the book. It does not provide anythings new; but what it says is true and could well be of positive help to those who do philosophy in India today because it invites attention to some very vital, if non-academic, pre-conditions of philosophic activity:

"The *yoga* thinkers ... (have presented) a very comprehensive and thorough analysis of (the) human mind, characterising its nature and distinguishing its constituents, different levels, functions, and motives. What is more, a highly scientific system of discipline for gathering complete control over the mind, in a gradual manner, (has been) drawn up ... Its (*yoga's*) power of control over one's body and mind and, above all ... *its efficacy for attainment of tranquillity of mind afford ample scope for further research and thought.*" (344, italics added)

All in all, the authoress, who has taught philosophy for about 41 years at the oldest ladies' college of Delhi University, and also for a number of years at the University itself; and what is more, *has been all along liked for her ability as a teacher and qualities as a person* - can look back with satisfaction at what she has been able to achieve in producing this lucid, informative, and comprehensive study of Indian philosophy.

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