

## ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY: A BRIEF APPRAISAL

A. D. P. KALANSURIYA

*Department of Philosophy and Psychology, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya*

Analytic philosophers identify the very subject of Philosophy with an analysis of words, terms, notions, expressions, statements, etc. Wittgenstein gave a new impulse to analytic philosophy with the radiant notion, namely, "A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the use of words." This is a clear recognition of human failure together with a committed estimate of the ability to engineer solutions for problems that have befallen the best brain since the Greeks.

"A clear view of the use of words." But, then, what does it mean? One has to note the nature of the discourse, that of the doctrine, that of the argument, etc. (to which Wittgenstein says 'language game') in which it finds expression that is its original home, in which alone it has meaning. Two conclusions follow (i) that confusions, which occupy us do not arise. (ii) that which are already there, can be dispelled. The implication being a therapeutic one reminds us of a prescription for doing philosophy. That is, putting the word in its linguistic context and the whole statement in its native context.

But, then, how does one do this? By accepting and mastering analytic techniques. The result: To bring words back from their metaphysical to everyday usage (L Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 1953: 48e), implying that metaphysics does not have a logic of its own whereas other discourses have a logic of their own. Implied are "chains of reasoning" or "forms of life" in all discourses other than 'philosophy'; for 'philosophy' is not a discourse but an analytic activity.

Based on this concept of "chains of reasoning," one sees not only the nature of the discourse--science, religion, aesthetics, etc. but also the limits pertaining to 'truth' or 'falsity' of statements that come within first-order disciplines. This brings out the very base of Analytic philosophy understood and practiced in the English-speaking world as a second-order discipline.