**Joseph Kaipayil, *Human as Relational: A Study in Critical Ontology***, Gottigere, Bangalore: Jeevalaya Institute of Philosophy, 2003, pages xii + 62, ISBN 81-87664-03-7.

A budding theoretician in philosophical methodology, Dr. Joseph Kaipayil of Jeevalaya Institute of Philosophy continues to produce important as well as accessible works in Critical Ontology – a method and an ontology that he proposes to the world of methodical ontological thinking in philosophy. The present work is the sequel to his *Critical Ontology: An Introductory Essay* (published 1992; see review by V. F. Vineeth in *Journal of Dharma*, 28,2 [April-June 2003], 296-298), and it attempts to fulfil the promise he makes: that Critical Ontology as a method may be applied to any philosophical problem or discipline, and as a result we have a tenable and sound philosophy from its maieutic instrumentality. Thus, the first tangible daughter of the method has been a philosophical anthropology that never looses sight of the ontological (which he calls “ontic”) and the ontic (which he calls “entic”) in his attempt to synthesize both these in human.

Chapter one gives a critical ontological prerequisite for doing the critical ontology of human. Therein he summarizes the epistemic process or method of Critical Ontology as an ongoing, ever fresh, repetitive process of experience, analysis and postulation *ad libitum*. This part has already been discussed in detail in his previous work: *Critical Ontology: An Introductory Essay*.

Chapters two, three and four expatiate upon the fundamental triple-relationality that humans are by their very being: epistemic, ontic and ethic. Chapter two on the Epistemic Relationality of human, not only discusses cognition, consciousness, truth, meaning, etc., but also presents short but cogent arguments against representative anti-ontological fads that threaten to overthrow all sorts of ontologies, foundations, systematisations, etc. He takes care to place humans’ aesthetic experience and the quasi-conscious feelings of animals within the framework of epistemic relationality.

Chapter three is on humans’ Ontic Relationality. He begins by substituting the Heideggerian ‘ontic’ and ‘ontological’ with ‘entic’ and ‘ontic’, and proceeds to discuss his own critical ontological version of the concepts of existence, essence, difference, materiality, transmateriality (for which he gives the example of our thoughts, and calls them abstract entities!) (36) and God (the supreme Being-principle). He, then, moves on to study the human person as a somatic-psychic-pneumatic unity.

Chapter four is on humans’ Ethic Relationality. Here he discusses the sense of cohumanity, human subjectivity and inter-subjectivity. It serves to systematically unify the moral with the factual side of human existence on earth.

The book is a concise introduction to his philosophy of the human. He has succeeded in embedding humans’ epistemic and ethic relationality in their ontic relationality. The scope of the theme and method is vast. But due to his choice to limit the presentation of the material to its present small size, the book seems to suffer from a partial loss of the chance to really put forth the different concepts to the technically interested student of philosophy. For example, after having worked out the theoretical background to place the human as relational in the ontic, he has satisfied himself with discussing human in particular in just a few pages under the sub-title, The Human Person: A Somatic-Psychic-Pneumatic Unity (45-49). Although Chapter four, too, is on human, it does not directly deal with the ontic-anthropological but tries to integrate the ethical with the ontic-anthropological. It looks as though he has reserved a good bit of his philosophical reflections for future publications, satisfying himself with these introductory essays for the time being. Let us hope to read a more elaborate system in the form of a detailed work from this promising philosopher.

### Raphael Neelamkavil