

### BOOK-REVIEW

Gangadean, (Dr.) Ashok K., *Meditative Reason : Toward a Universal Grammar* : 1993, Peter Lang, New York; pp. xxix+386; Price : US \$ 33.95 (sc).

Professor Gangadean's book under review is a collection of essays which he wrote over the past twelve years. It is supposed to be a sequel to his another collection of eassays entitled *Between Worlds : Alterity, Meaning and Truth*, scheduled to appear shortly, Though the essays collected in the present volume were composed for different contexts and occasions, they are collected here taking into account a central concern of great significance running through all of them. The collection contains eleven essays including a post-script, six of which had appeared in their earlier versions in different journals. The book deserves to be studied seriously by everybody concerned, especially in the light of the importance of the central theme it takes up to present and defend, although this in itself does not rule out a difference of opinion along an important line, as will be pointed out below.

It is held that in the world-wide evolution of cultures the intuition, that there is and must be a Primordial Origin which is the source and basis of all that exists, has recurred and manifested itself with considerable diversity. Likewise, there is the perennial quest for Universal Grammar and the Universal Logic of Natural Reason and language. It is similarly held that there is a Universal Law inherent in reality which presides ever various forms of cultural life and manifests in consciousness, language, experience, nature as well as human condition. This Universal Form or Principle is a generative force expressing itself as Universal Unitive Field or Continuum as the foundation of all life and existence. In the evolution of human thought attempts have been made to excavate the deep structure or universal logic of rational consciousness, thought, language, experience and world. Nevertheless, in such attempts certain egological paradigms of logic and reason have resulted into polarization of

great paradigms of philosophical reason. Against them, it is argued that through meditative turn to natural reason we can open the horizon of Universal Logic of natural language. It is shown that Universal Law of Natural Reason or the Principle of Universal Relativity functions as a primordial Unitive Continuum or Unified Field in such a way that all things mutually constitute one another and thus could be said to be co-arising. In the light of this, an attempt is made to develop a Universal Grammatology as a general hermeneutical method for all discourse. This, it is held, is the universal hermeneutical code of decoding not only the structure of rational life, origin of experience and formation of culture, but a grammatical code for world-formation and unlocking the deep structure of the Unified Field of Nature and Existence as well. This is so because all fields are structurally situated in the Unified Field of Universal Grammar, as it is the active and pragmatic foundation of all fields, disciplines and hermeneutical forms of life. Such a shift from egological ontology to meditative Grammatology of Natural Reason can foud and illuminate nature of inter-cultural discourse and open common ground between Philosophy, Religion, Science, Arts as well as cultural life in general. Through such a grand unified field diverse sciences become available complementarily rather than competitively and the so-called Mind-Matter dualism melts into the universal stuff of the universe which is originally psychophysical in character.

It is quite natural to expect that in the foundations of religious life and Theology such themes should be captured in their most developed and refined forms. This is because Divine Being must be held to be the universal foundation for all religious worlds and forms of life. However, religious and ideological battles, localizing ethic and provincial forces of diverse religions are seen compromising with Universal Revelation of the Divine Presence in one or the other way, giving rise, in turn, to ideological idiosyncracies of egological religious practices. It is argued that various egological practices of minding give rise to different religious parthologies and bring about cleavage between the Infinite and the Finite.

In the context of application of Meditative Reason to the Logic of Communication it is argued that objectification and literalisation of meaning reverses the existential priorities of discourse.

By contrast, it is attempted to be shown that meditative narrative brings to our notice that primary discourse and meaning are basically metaphoric rather than literally descriptive. Carrying the argument further, the sort of transformations that need to be brought about with a view to opening possibilities of discourse between diverse cultures and life-worlds are discussed, so that healthy and open ethnic orientation and cultural diversity are not arbitrarily eclipsed. On this background, with the help of analytical and hermeneutical tools of grammatology, ontological and hermeneutical pathologies in the existential dynamics of egological life are discussed and it is shown that various rational, religious, moral, hermeneutical, psycho-social, political and other sorts of pathologies have their roots in the malpractices of egological mind. Taking a clue from Nāgārjuna, a sort of inherently transformative, performative and existentially therapeutic and curative alternative is attempted to be articulated within the framework of meditative dialectic and holistic psychotherapy. Such a kind of therapeutic self-awakening of the mind and voice of natural reason is expected to be brought in to overcome prejudices and pathologies of egological modes of thought and practices. The meditative voice, through the inversion and transvaluation in experience and discourse, is designed to be made transparent to the "true origins of common sense, every day experience, natural language and ways of natural reason" (p.xxvi). Emphasizing primacy of metaphoric discourse, it is further held against literalist discourse of the ego-practice of abstracted, constructed or derived meaning that the Principle of Universal Relativity as an operative force in natural language together with functional as well as pragmatic principle which makes common sense work is the 'rough ground of every day natural language and natural meaning' (p. xxvii). It is in this that we find the original continuum between the voice of thinker-speaker and the Unified Field of Natural Reason or Universal Grammar. In the natural logic of meditative reason one can see that logic of every day language is in perfect order. Circumventing/avoiding distortions and pathologies of egological mind, natural perfection of Universal Grammar at work in every day language is revealed. In summing up, it is held that an inquiry into global evolution of cultures brings to our notice the clue that the way we conduct our mind is the most important factor in the quality of our rational life. Our being human turns on whether we conduct our mind in accordance with Universal Law of natural

reason or whether our conduct of mind becomes deformed and falls into malpractices and fragmentation of egological habits. In preferring and performing meditative turn to natural reason the human mind is said to blossom to its full natural holistic form and in consequence astounding transformation in the experience and conduct emerges. In the right conduct of natural reason lies the universal foundation of experience working in every day common sense. In short, closer we naturally are to the unitive and universal foundation, transparently truth-oriented we remain. Conversely, greater the deviance and departure from the unitive centre, proportionately distortion-prone do we become.

Thus, Professor Gangadean's book attempts to place before us a serious central concern and rise above the narrow confines of regional interests and shallow, superficial and hence misleading clues in the direction of so-called Comparative Philosophy, inviting the concerned to inquire and investigate into the unitive, profounder and universal insights. As far as this is concerned Gangadean's book commands concerted attention. There are, however, some points with reference to which a further deeper inquiry seems to be called for. First, it is not clear whether the plurality and global evolution of cultures is supposed to be considered within the framework of the respective civilizations or independently. If the former, one would be required to consider civilizationally unitive and universal features of human life and understanding, rather than stopping presumptively at the level of natural language and natural reason. If the latter, our understanding of cultures, their plurality as well as evolution—regional or global—is likely to be either very superficial or else one-sided. Secondly, philosophical and cultural orientations seem to have very fundamentally differed from one another through their answers to three questions of seminal concern and the mode of interrelationship between them : (a) What is the appropriate conception of good life together with our conception about ourselves, others—human or otherwise—and world at large. (b) What goods do we value in our life, what are our strong preferences concerning them and by what sort of tenable and universalisable rationale they are backed, and (c) if and in so far as we stand committed to (a) and (b) what price are we prepared to pay for our being able to realise them in our life—individual as well as collective? In the light of answers to these questions, different patterns of

ordering our life may arise and their civilizational moorings cannot be wished away or brushed aside.

It would have been better if while publishing the essays in the form of collection certain repetitions which have crept in were avoided. Similarly, extensive indices at the end together with bibliography would have been very helpful from the point of view of future researchers. One may hope that these short-comings would be corrected in the next edition of the book.

In sum, the book amply deserves to be studied seriously for the agenda it keeps before the concerned and the way it has attempted to work on the project. The sort of questions it has raised are a matter of serious concern and can hardly be ignored.

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I, Surendra Sheodas Barlingay, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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