

Chapter – 1

The Nature of Critique in Nāgārjuna: Reason and Concept of *Sūnyatā* in Nāgārjuna's Philosophy

1.1. Introduction:

In this chapter, a Conceptual History of the Ethics of Critique of Reason is discussed in the light of Nāgārjuna's critique of reason. It starts from the Buddha's conceptual priorities in criticizing reason, knowledge and metaphysics to grow through the Mahāyāna Buddhism and finally the thoughts of Nāgārjuna. The study as divided the chapter into three sections:

1. Mahāyāna Buddhism , Nāgārjuna and the origin of Critique
2. The Dialectic an tools of Nāgārjuna's Critique
3. Relation between reason, critique and ethics in Nāgārjuna and Mahāyāna Buddhism

1.2. Mahāyāna Buddhism, Nāgārjuna and the Origin of the 'Critique'

*Sarvaṃ tathyaṃ na vā tathyaṃ tathyaṃ cātathyaṃ eva ca,
naivātathyaṃ naiva tathyaṃ etad buddhānuśānaṃ.*

Everything is such, not such, both such and not such, and neither such and not such: this is the Buddha's admonition. [Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana¹]

Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XVIII no.8

1.2.1. Nāgārjuna: A Short Biographical Sketch

It seems that scholars have not been able to agree on a universal date of Nāgārjuna but the two significant works on Nāgārjuna's biography has come over both in Chinese and Tibetan much centuries after his life, though they are said to be relatively historically unreliable and have their extension to the mythical properties. It is assumed by his allegiance towards the Vedas and the rational sensitivity of the

historical era that Nāgārjuna must have born in a Hindu upper-caste/Brahmin family in the southern Andhra region. The correspondence of the historical evidences rates Nāgārjuna's significant years of his life sometimes between 150 to 200 CE and the Tibetan sources trace him down to have descended to Nālanda for the study of Buddhism. It is also assumed by the Tibetan sources that he underwent conversion to Buddhism by his parents to avoid a pre-mature death that was predicted on him. "After having been converted, Nāgārjuna 's adroitness at magic and meditation earned him an invitation to the bottom of the ocean, the home of the serpent kingdom. While there, the prodigy initiate "discovered" the "wisdom literature" of the Buddhist tradition, known as the *Prajñāpāramita Sūtras*, and on the credit of his great merit, returned them to the world, and thereafter was known by the name Nāgārjuna, the "noble serpent."²"

To mention about some of Nāgārjuna's most important contributions :

"Nāgārjuna wrote *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way* (*Mūlamādhymakakārika*), and then, in order to further refine his newly coined and revolutionary concept, the *Seventy Verses on Emptiness* (*Sūnyatāsaptati*), followed by a treatise on Buddhist philosophical method, the *Sixty Verses on Reasoning* (*Yuktisastika*).. Included in the works addressed to Buddhists may have been a further treatise on the shared empirical world and its establishment through social custom, called *Proof of Convention* (*Vyāvaharasiddhi*), though save for a few cited verses, this is lost to us, as well as an instructional book on practice, cited by one Indian and a number of Chinese commentators, the *Preparation for Enlightenment* (*Bodhisambaraka*). Finally is a didactic work on the causal theory of Buddhism,

the *Constituents of Dependent Arising (Pratityasamutpādaḥṛdaya)*. Next came a series of works on philosophical method, which for the most part were reactionary critiques of Brahminical substantialist and epistemological categories, *The End of Disputes (Vigrahavyāvartani)* and the not-too-subtly titled *Pulverizing the Categories (Vaidalyaprakaraṇa)*. Finally are a pair of religious and ethical treatises addressed to the king Gautamiputra, entitled *To a Good Friend (Suhṛlekha)* and *Precious Garland (Ratnāvali)*. Nāgārjuna then was a fairly active author, addressing the most pressing philosophical issues in the Buddhism and Brahmanism of his time, and more than that, carrying his Buddhist ideas into the fields of social, ethical and political philosophy³.”

1.2.2. A Critical Analysis of Reasoning as the Necessary Form of Thought Structure: The Foundational Methodological Asset of the *Pramāṇa* Theorists

The formation of different schools in Indian and Western Philosophical traditions throughout the history presupposes the significant role played by a structural understanding in thought, which itself presupposes the importance of Reason in thought process. According to prevalent thesis of Immanuel Kant, Reason itself does not represent knowledge out of itself; it only regulates the datum collected by empirical observation. Reason is a source of subjective modification of perceptive data. Modification of particular percepts into a general idea of the object of perception is constructive in essence; however, knowledge is not all *construction*. What *Construction* is all up to, will be discussed later. Knowledge,

for Kant, starts from experience and ends in Reason. Reason doesn't produce knowledge, but regulates it⁴.

Reason inheres from experience. The heart of syllogistic reasoning in Indian Philosophical system, *Vyāpti*, is the knowledge of the invariable concomitance between the middle term (*hetu*) and major term (*sādhya*). This knowledge of invariable concomitance is not deductive i.e. not certain and based on experiences of particular instances⁵. *Vyāpti* is confirmed by *Arthāpatti* of negative instances⁶. Observation of particular instances leads to generalization. Every particularity has a 'type' in itself. A particular tree yields two forms of knowledge – the knowledge of a particular tree; it also depicts the *treeness* according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. This principle also leads to the validity of *Vyāpti*- the relation between *Sādhya* and *Hetu*, in also represents its universality. This generality is confirmed by repetition of observation of the same instance, and the non-observation of the otherwise.

Reason categorizes knowledge into ideas. The ideas are necessarily *a posteriori*, i.e. comes from experience. The idea of the pure form of a perfect circle or a perfect square in the Platonic theory of ideas or the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika generality would follow from the experience of a particular circle or square or any other particular thing that would refer to a '*ness*' of its kind respectively. Therefore, it follows from that, that the categories of our knowledge are *a posteriori* to experience too. They are not like Kantian categories (that comes *a priori* of knowledge), they are categories of Vaiśeṣika and Ancient Greek Philosophical Tradition, i.e. the logical or metaphysical classification of predicates and knowable

respectively⁷. Vaisesika categories or *Padārthas* are the ‘object signified by a word⁸.’ However, Knowledge according to Gautama is immediate cognition without an explanation in words.⁹ Naming is a later process. Therefore, categorization, for Vaisesika is *a posteriori*.

The main thing that has to be taken to consideration is how metaphysics and logic are junctured in Indian Philosophy. Rational Cosmology in context of speculative construction would be better explained in relation to the junction of metaphysics and logic. One of the examples can be found in the Nyāya epistemological speculative estimation of the *Self*. As Radhakrishnan observes:

“...Nyāya insists that things are the grounds of logical truths, that the external world exists apart from our knowledge of it and determines that knowledge, that our ideas correspond to things. It divides the real into two compartments of subject and object, and thus transforms the ordinary assumptions of common sense into a metaphysical theory which is inadequate to the facts of consciousness as well as the demands of logic¹⁰.”

Logic makes the unknowable speculatively knowable. The knowing *self* has been tried to bring down within the paradigm of knowledge through reason. If consciousness is the result of the causal action of the non-self¹¹ then the knowing of the origin of consciousness would require another consciousness and thus to infinite regress. Reason is in a strict sense, an epistemological tool so far the case is pertaining to the acquisition of phenomenal knowledge. Logical reasoning is not warranted to apply on objects that are beyond the phenomenal experience. It is observed further that:

“So long as the Nyāya gives an account of what is immediately experienced in the act of knowledge, it is on secure ground; but when it tries to offer a metaphysical explanation, in terms which take us behind the ultimate fact of knowledge, it is open to criticism. That we have a direct awareness of the world which is not a mere putting together of abstract particulars but a complex cosmos with terms and relations, particulars and universals, that our ideas have working value, are views warranted by experience. The fundamental mistake of Nyāya is the mistake of Locke, and other empirical thinkers who regard the individual as one natural unit and the world as another¹².”

The mechanism of human thought involves several phenomena, the most prominent of them all which not only optimizes any sort of mental activity and fosters the gradual growth of successive and progressive human action, but also is the most significant aspect of human kind that divides him from other members of animal kingdom is the faculty of reason or Rationality. To bring Plato to the context of reasoning as a necessary thought process, true judgment for the value of knowledge is made possible only by the faculty of reason and nothing else. Therefore to critically analyze the forms of thought as offshoots of the process of reasoning, it is necessary to take into account the process of reasoning in all its potential aspects.

Thought as popularly accepted among philosophers is an activity of *rational/critical* engagement to a judgment on the basis of the material provided by ordinary experience. Here, the word *Judgment* demands a proper appraisal. Judgment actually is a unique mental byproduct that is evidenced by factual experience, re-constructed and manipulated by rationality. On the contrary, the constructive modes, belonging to the mind, are often prone to perk up their heads in the form of normative expression or sometimes as some semantic necessity of

language constitute or more abruptly to forms a mental world with least intervention of evidence from the outside world. As Luise R. Gordon. says:

“... all thinking has the paradox of coming in and out of being into reflective activity that presents the world of ideas as if they were eternal instead of conceptual. In the theoretical moment, we move from the everyday world of things and activities and ordinary time into a subjective reality governed by such terms as what *would*, *could*, and *should* be the case. It's a world without being as we ordinarily conceive of it because it is a world not of what is known but of what is *understood*¹³.”

In such case, when evidences are supposed to face the fate of collapsing themselves into mere opinions, not only a gap between reality and thought is formed, but also points rises against the authenticity of *thought* either as a constructive process or something synthetic. It also fumes in its bosom the never ending tussle between objectivism and subjectivism on authenticity of knowledge proper. It should not, however, be forgotten that thought cannot be reduced only to mere opinion, for opinions, according to Plato, are least rational. Reason, for Plato, played a vital role in the construction of genuine knowledge. For Aristotle and Kant, Knowledge starts from experience of the factual world and ends in reason¹⁴. Thought therefore, are neither opinion, nor constructive judgment, it is an analysis of fact under some categories of knowledge. These categories are a priori and not only categorize knowledge, but also condition them. Thought comprises of the finding out the causal relation between these conditions of knowledge and apparently seems intranscendable. Thought in itself comprise conditioned knowledge or the speculation of the relation of objects, the knowledge of which

already raises themselves conditioned by our intangible subjectivity and demands an ethical enumerative of self-transcendence.

1.2.3. Contradiction in Reason and the Purpose of the Critique

Science is fact, but Philosophy is an abstraction critically made. The abstraction, in a dialectical form points toward reality. D.A. Gangadhar while writing on the ‘ultimate concern’ not only as a religious presupposition, but as also a postulate of philosophy, makes a distinction between fact and reality. He says:

“The ultimate concern is not a matter of fact but it is matter of Reality. Only the fact can be known directly but not the Reality. Reality is something to be experienced, realized or to be. For reality, we use transcendental and for facts, we use empirical terms¹⁵.”

Judgments of science claim to have a relation with (atomic) facts; facts that are ‘thought of’ categorically, and moreover ‘spoken of’ in linguistic terms or at least demonstrated. The Absolute or the abstract knowledge of the reality, unlike the other scientific facts, cannot be constructed in a synthetic manner. The knowledge of the absolute is not a synthetic knowledge, and therefore cannot be judged depending on any mediation of senses or any other external conditions of knowledge. The *a priori* principles that become themselves the ground of all that are *thought of* cannot be made an object of thought themselves in basic terms¹⁶. It is non-discursive; it is only spoken of in context of its content that refers to it, or presupposed as the ground of all the other principles that expresses itself in terms of a categorical proposition. To be categorized means to be thought of, and the principle which is thought of, comes *a posteriori* to cognition. Therefore, it is impossible to materially categorize the *a priori* principle which is itself

presupposed to construct a categorical proposition. The knowledge of the Absolute is an *a priori* knowledge that is presupposed as the ground of all manifestations; it is immediate and comes to us as the ground of all the other knowledge of the particularities participating in its ever purposive journey towards perfection. Reality, *out there*¹⁷, is incognisable as it is external to human cognitivity, i.e. transcends all the traditional faculties of human cognition.

They are unconditional and cannot be theoretically established by demonstrating (it) in terms of the inherent relation between the cause and the effect because there is no such relation between the cause and the effect. The schools (such as early Vaiśeṣika) that believe in the pragmatic theories of truth, themselves believe that the effect is an accidental consequence of the cause and no essential or *a priori* causal relation is established between the cause and the effect. The Sāṅkhya cannot satisfactorily answer the relation between cause and effect the essential/substantial identity of cause and effect does not philosophically succeed in fulfilling the criteria of calling an effect an effect properly so called. That which binds the cause with the effect is still mystical. Science is interested in establishing the relation of the ‘know how’ between the cause and the effect, and is not interested in the relation of ‘Why’ between them. The problem of ‘Why’ of the relation between the cause and the effect is inconceivable. But on the other hand, the *internal activity* between the subsequently following incidents that makes them termed as cause and effect respectively are themselves absent in the ‘know how’ of the relation between the cause and the effect. The knowledge of the Absolute, on the other hand, is immediate and self-evident. It shines in its own right. The Reality

does not reveal itself to us from an outer world; Reality is within and immediate. Reality, or the Absolute resides in concepts- unspoken, unqualified, manifesting itself in a dialogical framework. Like the Platonic concept of the acquisition of the knowledge of the ideal forms in concepts that already existed in the soul, the knowledge of the Absolute or *Sūnyatā* already exists in the *Bodhisattwa*; but the fact is that, that knowledge of the Absolute actually transcends both the realistic as well as the idealistic point of views. Platonic dialogue essentially leads towards a determinate form of thought. The dialogical consequence of Mādhyamika leads toward an indeterminate form of reality, the criticism of all views. Reality is not a view in context. A view is a sort of bondage, Liberation is *Sūnyatā*. The real knowledge is not a theory, is not an activity; it is the cessation of all the activities or most importantly the cessation of all the bondage that are formed by sticking to a theory or by commitment of actions themselves. The real knowledge is therefore the criticism of all the other forms of thought process, which does not arise as a separate form of thesis, but the knowledge itself is the negation of all the other forms of thought that occupies the mind of the thinkers and thus making them to be mere opponent of each other condemns them in disputed engagements, instead of contemplating the reality as such. The Mādhyamika psychology though evolves from Ethical standpoint culminates in Reason and its self-criticism.

One of the noted commentators, T.R.V. Murti says, that it may have been argued that Mādhyamika is a refutation of all the other views; but he also says that the Mādhyamika dialectic is not a ‘refutation of other views’; it is pre-eminently a *critique* of Reasoning. The Mādhyamika psychology is basically that which works as an antidote to all the other notions that are basically biased to some or the other

dimensions of the reality and considering the dimension to be the reality's original form sticks to it like an insect sticking to a spider's web. The reality or that, which Nāgārjuna calls Absolute, is not a formal *structure* but a transcended psychological position that is to be realized by the virtue of universal love and compassion. The realization is neither a mediate nor an immediate knowledge. It is not outside, but grows within. It is not knowledge in terms of an informed thesis. It is, in fact, a state where all knowledge becomes exhausted. It is the cessation of all knowledge, the cessation of all the different view-points of the different dimensions of the same reality. It is *Sūnyatā*.

A view, whether sound or unsound, depends on the viewer. Every one may have a separate subjective thought structure in accordance with his or her Karmic impression or *Sanskār* as that he or she acquired in his or her previous birth. This Karmic impression has a lion share in the formation of the thought construction that includes verities of choices and psychological considerations. If the concept of the point of view fits well with the subjective considerations of the viewer, it is sound to him otherwise not. It has been observed in the history of thought, that the psychology that functions behind the acceptance or the rejection of one view depends more on our critical or biased thought structure about the subject concerned than a dialogical examination and elucidation of the matter in its actual sense. We hold fast to it as the truth. The process is no doubt unconscious and goes beyond empirical experience. In that context, the person who is skeptically opposing other's view may not even realize that he himself in some other form of view.

Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamika is a psychological incarnation of Vedānta's metaphysical tenant about liberation. For Saṅkara, liberation is not something in an outer heaven. The *Jīva* does not acquire anything new in liberation. The *Jīva* in the state of bondage was subject to three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep, and was happy in imagining himself to be finite (as taught by Śr Saṅkara). These misconceptions as positive mindfulness occupy the cognitive categories of the being in bondage and thus the real nature of his is hidden from him. The cessation of all sorts of misconceptions is what is known as liberation for Saṅkara. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Sāṅkhya as well maintains that liberation is not the attainment of a positive pleasure, but the negation of pain because pleasure itself brings pain in the long run. Uddyotakara argues that if the released soul is to have everlasting pleasure, it must also have an everlasting body, since experiencing is not possible without the body mechanism. These arguments are pertaining to a metaphysical realm but are relevant here from a psychological point of view. Nāgārjuna's treatment of the concept of Liberation is rather psychological than metaphysical. We can notice by a very careful reading of both the Vedāntic and the Mādhyamika treatment of the concept of liberation that there is a subtle simile between the *Jīvan-Mukti* concept of the Vedic systems of thought and the *Prajña-Pāramitā* concept of Mādhyamika. Both *Jīvan-Mukti* and *Prajña-Pāramitā* operates on a psychological level; however, the concept of *Jīvan-Mukti* is not as much empirical as Nāgārjuna's concept of liberation as a cessation of all the *dṛstivādas*. Nāgārjuna, stretches the concept of nirvana in a more psychological and empirical level. His basic outlook pertaining to the concept of liberation is the cessation of any sort of *dṛstivāda* or the viewpoints that acts as the positive

misconceptions in the cognitive categories of individuals about the form of reality. Liberation for Mādhyamika is thus primarily a psychological process rather than a metaphysical transition. *Parinirvāṇa* of individual is only possible after the psychological freedom of the individual. The Absolute is only attainable through dialectic that Nāgārjuna insists as a means of liberation. Therefore, Buddha remains silent when Vacchagota asks Buddha if there was a soul or not. As a justification to that, Buddha explains to Ānanda that if He would have said either no or only yes to the answer to any of the questions, He would have been drawn to the net of dogmatism or the *Diṭṭivāda*. To hold a position is to stick to a particular framework which is by nature contrary to other theories or framework. To understand or conceptualize a particular *form* of framework is to conceptualize it to a given framework. This conceptualization construes a particular sort of mental adaptation. This mental adaptation may be a natural selection for the purpose to survive the phenomenal world which leads to a *dharma* which is conditional, not relative, but static. This outright staticness of *dharma* is the effect of ignorance and thus brings in context and justifies the concept of Dependent Origination. Reality, says C.D. Sharma¹⁸, is neither affirmation of a particular viewpoint (*Diṭṭivāda*), nor negation of it, nor both, nor neither. Empirically it means relativity.

Mādhyamika is a turning point of Buddhism. Murthy observes that epistemologically, the revolution was from empiricism and dogmatism (*dṛsti-vāda*) to dialectical criticism (*Sūnyatā* or *Madhyamāpratipāda*). And ethically, the revolution was from a private egoistic salvation to that of a universal unconditional deliverance of all beings. At that point, *Karuṇā* (Universal Love) and *Prajñā* (intellectual perfection) are identical. The state of dogmatism is a state of bondage.

It a state of mindfulness, some kind of an obsession of some phenomena, no matter how strong it argues on its metaphysical doctrines. *Sūnyatā* is a position of an out and out critical analysis where, in true sense, no particular view point is propagated. It is an epistemological cessation. Ignorance is bondage. Epistemological bondage is the bondage of thoughts, of viewpoints. Criticism is liberation. Criticism is *Sūnyatā*.

The Mādhyamika interprets *Sūnyatā* as empirical validity of things and their ultimate unreality. Things or objects of daily experience exist in their respective empirical form only, but devoid of inherent existence or *Swabhāva*. Mādhyamika or the middle path signifies avoidance of both the dogmatism of realism (the reality of objects) and the skepticism of Nihilism (the rejection of object and consciousness both as unreal). Murthy again says that the Mādhyamika system as having emerged out of a sustained criticism of the Abhidhārmika school, which themselves grew as the rejection of the *ātmavāda* of the Brahmanical systems. It is thus a criticism of both the *ātman* and *anātman* theories. Impermanence is not just a characteristic of the phenomena of the external world, it applies to oneself. The Buddha always affirmed that persons have an empirical self-hood constituted by a body and a mind. Belief in a permanent substantial self is not only false but also leads to selfishness and egoism, which, in turn, make the world so dissatisfactory for everyone. The realization of the absence of such a permanent self leads to selfless loving kindness and compassion for others.

To be hostile to reasoning as an epistemological approach is not concerned here. There are of course certain issues which are intuitively indubitable¹⁹. But on the other hand Reasoning makes certain dogmatic constraints. Critique of

Reasoning, here, should not be understood as the ‘criticism of reasoning to be a tool of epistemological analyses, rather, the term ‘critique of reasoning should be understood in a technical sense. Now what is the technicality about that sort of critique? The purpose is not to discard Reasoning as *Reasoning* and Metaphysics as *Metaphysics* respectively, in their most arbitrary terms, but to clarify Reasoning of its fixedness of judgments and Metaphysics of its evidential biasness with empiricism.

Reason is criticized so far it advocates essence (*svabhāva*) of *dharmas* at the *vyavāhārika* level. A.M. Padhye rightly observes when he considers that metaphysics, in Buddhism, has not been discarded on the basis of it being *Metaphysics* (biased of empirical evidences), rather, as he says, “...the Buddha has used *Sūnyatā* as a weapon, explained it at a greater length, and exploited it to cut off much of the ontological and epistemological rubbish with which what is genuinely there comes to be polluted²⁰.”

The cause of bondage, and thus sufferings, in Indian Philosophical context is none other than the concealment of truth on the one hand and constructive wrong knowledge on the other. While in Advaita Philosophy, they are seen to be as split up into two separate processes – *Āvarana* and *Vikṣhepa* respectively, in Buddhism, they are identical to be contemplated as a positive wrong knowledge in the form of illusion of constructive consideration of reality. The functioning of reason is regulative and not constructive or constitutive. The regulation of thought is guided by experience though, but as a regulative principle it is a means towards knowledge and the knowledge thus produced is not an end but a means categorizing the

functionality of understanding towards knowledge. The critique of reason is the awareness of this contradiction and a suspension of the tendency of understanding which thus identifies the regulative functionality of reason with its constructive/constitutive contingent considerations.

The problem can basically be stated thus: the use of reason for an empirical categorization of thought is prone to formulate the categorical principles of understanding in terms of a 'type' that the understanding considers being universal in its applicability. The 'type' is basically empirical in character and based on uniformity of observation and successive/productive of similar experimental conditions. But this is a method used by sciences to explain the existential hierarchies of the phenomenal world and inapplicable to the speculation of the things of transcendental order²¹. But speculative rationality by a prejudicial use of reason in scientific formulation of the standards of truth tries to measure the levels of the transcendental. To add up something more in this regard, T.R.V. Murthy argues:

“Philosophy has however been pursuing a method not in consonance with its objective. Though the objective is exalted and far different from that of the sciences and arts, philosophy has in the main adopted the scientific method of hypothesis and explanation or the literary method of imagination and construction²².”

Again, about the function of reason in the same context he says:

“Once we accept a fundamental pattern, reasoning can get underway; we can then, and only then, reject some other notions as inconsistent with or opposed to it. This merely means that *if* you accept an idea, you are necessarily committed to its implications, and not that you are committed to the idea itself. Moreover, the adoption of any ideal pattern necessarily restricts our scope and narrows down our vision²³.”

1.2.4. Purpose and Scope of ‘Critique’ in Mahāyan and Nāgārjuna’s Scepticism

As T.R.V. Murti opines, “He (Buddha) characterizes all speculations as *diṭṭhi-vāda* (dogmatism) and consistently, refuses to be drawn into the net (*jāla*). He is conscious of the interminable nature of the conflict, and resolves it by rising to the higher standpoint of criticism... Criticism is the deliverance of the human mind from all entanglements and passions. It is freedom itself²⁴.”

An initial historical examination in the form of the epistemological standpoint of Mādhyamika reveals that it was a clear trajectory from empiricism to dialectical criticism. Murti, while comparing it with Kant, says that like Kant, “Mādhyamika brought a veritable revolution in Buddhist thought.” But unlike Kant, according to some scholars, Nāgārjuna was an empiricist. Kant’s trajectory from rationalism to criticism can be justified by sufficient reasons; the question here is that does somewhat similar reason work in motivating the epistemological trajectory of Nāgārjuna from empiricism to dialectical criticism. Here it should be kept in mind that Nāgārjuna’s trajectory as compared to that of Kant in this context is more a historical investigation of the epistemological transformation or rather a Copernican Revolution of an all new system from the ensconement of already established Buddhist sects such as Sarvāstivāda etc.²⁵

Metaphysically, the entire Mādhyamika system is a re-interpretation of *Pratītyasamudpāda*. *Pratītyasamudpāda* is not the principle of temporal sequence as has been misunderstood by some, but of the essential dependence of things of each other, i.e. the metaphysical ‘doctrine’ of the unreality of separate

elements. It is therefore equated with *Sūnyatā* which indicates to the empirical validity of entities and their ultimate unreality. *Sūnyatā* is *Sūnyatā* of thought, of dogmatism and of the ideal of ‘personal freedom’, towards a critical and unconditional dialogical spectrum that should cover the essence of humanity and not some daunted perspective that would do least good to the phenomenal sufferings of humanity. Thus *Sūnyatā* is not only freedom from pain and sufferings, but also from the ignorance which is covering the real which is unconditional in nature. Essentialism or *Dṛstivāda* binds the soul into the cycle of birth and death and is thus the root cause of all the sufferings. When we take anything as essential, substantial or permanent, we become attached to it and dislike other things that are opposed to it. The main purpose of Mādhyamika (Critique) is to have a middle path between all the two extremes by negating either of the two - Essentialism as well as Nihilism. Since many years back, many interpretations of the teachings of Buddha were brought out, but the attempt of Mādhyamika in the form of *Sūnyavāda* of Nāgārjuna is the most appropriate an attempt which is most consistent so far in the form of Ethics. Buddhism can hardly be taken as a metaphysical religion. It is more ethics than religion. In the words of Murti, “Ethically, the revolution (Buddhism) was from the ideal of a private egoistic salvation to that of a universal unconditional deliverance of all beings... Universal love (*karuṇā*) and intellectual perfection (*prajñā* or *sūnyatā*) are identical. The Theoretic and Practical Reason coincide²⁶.”

On having been asked by a monk some metaphysical questions on the nature of the world, body and soul, the Buddha said that no matter what particular answers one might learn concerning the philosophical questions the monk had raised, the dissatisfactory condition of the ordinary, unenlightened life would

remain like that poisoned arrow, which when struck a person, all its unnecessary aspects were being taken to account but not the condition of the person concerned. These questions, concludes the Buddha, do not lead to *religious edification*, and thus He would like to take into consideration some of the more important questions about the matter that “tend to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, knowledge, supreme wisdom and Nirvāṇa²⁷.” It has very prominently been said by some scholars that the Buddha did not want to be involved in any of the metaphysical abstractions pertaining to religious issues, because that do not advance spiritual transformation. Buddhism, not as a religion, but as a philosophy, was a revolution against the realistic and dogmatic mentality. The Mādhyamāpratipāt or the doctrine of the middle path that has been taught by the Buddha has been propounded by Nāgārjuna as a system known as the Mādhyamika.

Nalinaksha Dutt opines that Buddha experienced the trodden paths for attaining perfection but though found them inefficient for attaining the goal, He could not shake of the age old Indian believes and traditions, as we find some of them incorporated in his teachings¹. He says, “He (Buddha) rejected outright all those views which might be generalized as Āstika (Belief in the existence of the Supreme God, the Creator), Nāstika (Annihilationism as also Materialism), and Daistika (Determinism or Fatalism) or as Sāsvata (Eternalism)and Uccheda (Nihilism) or a Matrix of the two (Partial Eternalism and Partial Nihilism)...he developed therefore his theory of dynamism and arrived at the conclusion that a

being should rise above the changing state (anitya) to an everlasting unchanging state to rest and peace (nitya, nirvāṇa)²⁸.”

To contemplate the relation among ‘religious edification’, ‘Supreme Wisdom’ and ‘Nirvāṇa’ without any light from the abstractions of a metaphysical world from the standpoint of Buddha (although it would not be fair to connote it a standpoint) would not be an absurd. Buddha rejected all the metaphysical speculations as *unethical* and decisive to spiritual transformation. Does it mean that all the Buddha’s teachings construe to a possible suspension? Murti speaks about some of the like western speculations²⁸ about the nature of the teachings of the Buddha and their connotation about him as an agnostic or so, are due to an inadequate reading of Buddhism. Speculations in the form of a theory bind the essence of the meaning of the subject of the speculation that *intends to show something beyond* the ordinary assertion, to some syntactic structure, which actually tries to go beyond the structure breaking the utter conventionality of language.

While talking to Ānanda about his conversation with Vacchagotta about the nature of soul, He says that when Vacchagotta asked Him that if there was no existence of soul, if he would not have answered in affirmative, he would have taken the side of annihilationist. Again, when Vacchagotta asked Him that if there was existence of soul, he said that if he would have answered in negative, he would not have been according to his own teaching that nothing is permanent.

The basic psychological aspect behind Buddha’s such attitude towards the notion of a theory is that a theory presupposes a structure. A structure binds the content

within some conventional forms of language, and thus killing its essence which is an injustice with the normativity of the content. Metaphysics is inaccessible through language. The notion of religion that actually follows from an ethical perspective quite justifiably connotes the meaning of the Latin term '*Religare*' which means to tie fast with

On being asked by Vacchagota²⁹ about the nature of *Avyākṛta*, Buddha responded that one does not enter the *Sangha* in order to answer these kinds of philosophical questions related to the *Avyākṛta*. If one does so, one can spend all his or her time pondering these questions and never have time for religious practice, namely, for following the path that leads to Awakening and Nirvana. In fact, the Buddha added, a person would not live long enough for the Buddha to explain the truth concerning all of these speculative matters. No matter what particular answer one might learn concerning the philosophical questions about the *Avyākṛta*, the dissatisfactory condition of ordinary unenlightened life would remain like a poisoned arrow. So he said that there were some questions he would leave unanswered, namely those that do not lead to religious edification. Therefore he would only teach about those matters that tend to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, knowledge, supreme wisdom and Nirvana. Buddha did not want to be involved in abstract discussion about speculative/metaphysical issues that do not advance spiritual transformation. Some scholars conclude that the questions themselves were ill formed, such that no sufficient answers could ever be given. Others claim that Buddha only wanted to teach about what directly impacts the existential wounded condition of human kind. This redefines itself as an Ethics of Spirit more than some trodden abstractions from an outer lunar.

The Monastic Mahayana was basically a small group that revolted against the dominating Abhidhāmmika stream of thought. This portion is based on the legitimization of criticism as an accepted form of thought structure on an ethical background. It is rather very important to discuss how, under what circumstances or purpose and to what extent criticism is justified. The Mahayana principle is based on the voidness of the suchness of substance (*Swabhāva Sūnya*) from a phenomenal standpoint and voidness of the transcendental manifestation of categories (*Prapañcha Sūnya*) and to live in equanimity of universal emptiness.³⁰ The importance of critical analysis has been the backdrop of the rise of Mahayana as a separate school. Criticism, in a very arbitrary sense, ordinarily refers to an opinion about something that depends upon the presuppositions of the follies of the counter thesis concerned. It is basically the passing of judgment about the basic prevalent structure of the object of criticism concerned, presupposing another structure that has to be replaced of the original one. The history of Philosophy, both East and West is a witness to the fact that criticism of an argument has been purposed and presupposed by a counter argument of one's own. But, on the other hand, criticism of an argument to its essential absurdity without propounding a counter argument of one's own is not a criticism in an ordinary sense.

Here Murthy says: "Refutation is the rejection of an opponent's view by an interested party having a view of his own to establish. A critique is the disinterested analysis of Reason by itself."³¹ In such a case the nature of criticism should be carefully appraised. The question that has to be raised here is what is that we call *Pure Criticism* and what enhances it. While Kant only categorizing the conditions of knowables, could say that thing-in-itself (or the Substance) is unknown and

unknowable (but not unthinkable), K.C. Bhattacharjee, going a step ahead, asserts that the thing in itself is not only unknowable, but also unthinkable, because no logical proposition can be formed of a metaphysical statement. Therefore, from the above mentioned assertions it can be figured out that thought *naturally* presupposes logic and the *a priori* categories of understanding. *Pure Critique*, as in the case of the Mahayana, is the one that is free from all sorts of per-suppositional contradictions. Though Nāgārjuna presupposes and uses his specialized form of the logic of *reductio ad absurdum* it is only for an instrumental use of the logic to *show* that his opponents are inconsistent to *their respective presuppositions*.

Different doctrines propound their own logical arguments to establish their own *forms* of thought while trying to logically prove the other to be problematic. While in that exercise, the substantial or moral essence of the thing and its teleological *order* or *Purpose* is often missed out. Criticism, in ordinary sense, presupposes contradiction in thought. Contradiction, on the other hand, simultaneously gives rise to the *constructive* form of thought structure. Knowledge, thus, becomes only a pre-established/analytic cordon. If the logic of a stream is criticized of its self-contradictoriness, the doctrine based upon it also comes under criticism. An analytical or tautological statement doesn't add or provide anything new to knowledge. Therefore, proponent doctrines always attempt to aim and falsify the elements of each other's argument where the knowledge is contingently synthetic. Both tautology and contingency are two sides of the same coin depicting the limits of thought. In this crisis the status of pure criticism should be properly appraised. Pure critique or criticism in its truest spirit is not a doctrine in itself. It uses logic to criticize the logical flaws of the opponent doctrine, but in itself it

transcends them. Criticism is trans-logical; it only uses logic as a means to determine the necessary flaws in the logical structure in the other. When a particular thing is said to be self-contradictory, it is on the basis of a particular logic that it is termed as self-contradictory. Nāgārjuna's *Sūnyatā* transcends that self-contradictoriness on the basis of being a-logical.

The Reality is beyond all categories of logical framework or theoretic demonstration. The Reality is transcendent to all the limits of thought and experience. Destructively it is the negation and annihilation of all categories to thought and experience and constructively it is that for which phenomenal world including its mode of experience and demonstration becomes possible.

Scepticism is not only a state of doubt or an ordinary form of enquiry about the structure and functioning of the metaphysical entities³², because the scope of a consistent order of skeptical enquiry even extends its limit and lies in the bosom of a radical theoretic suspension of all the traditional cognitive categories that form the sources of our knowledge about the universe. Therefore, the most consistent skeptical question that formulates the basic theoretic structure of critical philosophizing starts from the metaphysics of knowledge: *What is knowledge and how Knowledge is at all possible*. The need of questioning of the knowledge/truth claims with a proper critical temper becomes not only evident but a philosophical necessity in this context³³. This question, which Nāgārjuna actually poses towards his opponents, the *Pramāṇa*-Theorists (Particularly *Nyāya*) is on the fallacy of circularity that naturally follows from the question raised against the certitude of the traditional sources of knowledge considered conventionally, represents

Nāgārjuna's skeptical temperament implicit in his foundation of critical philosophy.³⁴ The *Pramāṇa*-Theorists, however, consider the authenticity of the existence of the sources of knowledge by considering them to be pragmatically existent.

Dilip Kumar Mohanta opines on the functioning and importance of skepticism thus:

“A sceptic holds that what we know about the world we live in, what our ‘commonsense’ tells us about the factual matters is not indubitable, because such knowledge is not grounded on sufficient justification³⁵.”

Therefore,

“In the philosophical circle, the word ‘scepticism’ is used in a more technical sense, in its usual technical or specific connotation, it is associated with a negative sense. In the negative sense it is taken to mean an epistemological position which denies our claim to the possibility of any knowledge. The sceptics are critical from the very beginning against any kind of cognitive guarantee or certitude³⁶.”

B.K. Matilal doesn't hesitate to call Nāgārjuna a ‘sceptic’: “(...) in so far as he offers formidable objections to the *pramāṇa* theory³⁷. Matilal justifies Sceptical stand in Nāgārjuna with sufficient arguments and urges the reader not to exhaust the methodological standpoint as ultimate ‘labels’ or as repository stand of Nāgārjuna³⁸.”

The question of a (provisional) skeptical stand in Nāgārjuna brings within its scope almost the entire philosophical context of Nāgārjuna, for he challenges the truth claims about the structure of the Reality by his opponents to the extent that he calls into question the very epistemological foundation upon which the entire

cognitive context and philosophical apprehensions of *pramāṇa-theorists* are based³⁹.

According to Matilal, it becomes more evident that “He (the sceptic) raises questions about such things as whether, or how, we are justified in making assertions about philosophical objects on the basis of our sense-experience, or in assuming and talking about other minds on the basis of their bodily behavior, or in regarding our memories as giving us knowledge of the past.” By saying this Matilal goes on to add that, “Nāgārjuna, however, raises more fundamental questions about the consistency of the *pramāṇa* doctrine as a whole: he asks whether or not our so called standards of proof form a coherent system, whether our fundamental assumptions are endowed with at least psychological certainty. It is his contention that in the long run the concept of the standard of proof would be found to be self-refuting or self-stultifying⁴⁰.”

The nature of the challenge that Nāgārjuna thus throws to the truth/knowledge claims is a major counter to the cognitivists and *pramāṇa-theorists* of Indian Philosophical tradition. The chief purpose behind such an endeavor in his part in the form of a radical criticism that justifies the skeptical stance of Nāgārjuna is the ‘spiritual freedom’ above all counter-argumentations of dogmatic philosophizing.

1.2.5. The Theory of Two Truths

Theoretically, *Pratītyasamudpāda* can only be concealed as a conditional transition, a dependent origination without static hold on. It is at once both in between being and becoming i.e. neither nether being nor becoming. It is neither

being, nor becoming, neither real, nor unreal and accommodates in itself both the transcendental being as well as phenomenal becoming. To a theoretic mind, it can be further investigated as the two levels of Truths one transcending the other; on having been realization of the one, the other gets consumed. They are levels of truth through which Reality as ‘pure existence’ (*Bhutatahatā*). Unlike in Advaita Philosophy where the theory of the levels of Truth is accepted in three categories: the *pratibhāsika*, the *vyabāhārika* and the *pāramārthika*, being the dream state, the walking state and the transcendental state of the Real, Mādhyamika considers only two levels of truths: *samvṛti* and *paramārtha* as phenomenal and transcendental truth respectively. Truth and Reality are neither inclusive, nor exclusive terms, the scope of the former having been a part of the later. Truth, irrespective of being conceived in exclusive and inclusive factual as well as fictional categories reflects the light of real Absolute which is self-illuminating⁴¹. The origination of entities that is apprehended in dependent origination is only phenomenal. The concept of origin, dependence as well as destruction is mere concepts. In reality, things neither do originate nor do they demolish. Therefore, to initiate a debate on the scope of the non-*swabhāva* of objects, with a presupposition of the negation of *real entity* is obviously a misapprehension of the treatise of Nāgārjuna. The fundamental ground of all the negations by the Buddhist scholars is the idea of ‘Two Truths’- the phenomenal truth of every-day life as well as the transcendental truth of the ultimate reality.

The two Truths, neither inclusive, nor exclusive nor both thus categorizes the different levels of exposition of Reality in theory and also for the sake of theory. The purpose of the two Truths in its theoretic use is confined to the cognitive

understanding of the values and aesthetics associated with Reality in its phenomenal/conditional purposive state as well as critically purposively reveals their non-eternal nature which makes them transient and eternally non-existent.

The opponents of Nāgārjuna, on their objections of the critique of the intrinsic nature of things by him, missed the concept of the 'two truth'. Nāgārjuna's critique of the intrinsic nature of things is concerned to the phenomenal aspects and not the transcendental *form* of objects. The opponents could not grasp the difference between the transcendental as well as the phenomenal nature of objects and that is why all their objections do presuppose the intrinsic existence of *swabhāva* to be the transcendental and thus, accuses Nāgārjuna of refuting the intrinsic nature of things with the proposition which (according to them) is not devoid of intrinsic nature of things, and thus a contradiction to them.

The argument that is put forward here in favour of Nāgārjuna's non-substantiality of negation is that Nāgārjuna's Destructive Dialectic as a methodological tool phenomenologically instrumentalizes the transition of consciousness from the world of phenomena to the world of Absolute. Absolute is not theoretically professed, but critically reached to; and the methodological tool obtained by Nāgārjuna is Transcendental or Destructive Dialectic which proceeds by logically denouncing the opponent's argument which is (again) equivalent to the negation of thesis.

Negation in Nāgārjuna can be appraised in two ways: One is Negation pointing towards a provisional conceptual thesis; in this case, the negation is just a methodological tool used in transcendental shift from the phenomenal to Ultimate

and later being negated itself. This negation is phenomenal, but transcendently explicable; and the other is Transcendental Negation, which can be explained as the Negation devoid of inherent existence, as Nāgārjuna tells that he does not negate anything himself.

“To the Mādhyamikas reason and language apply only to the finite world. To transfer the finite categories to the infinite world would be like attempting to measure the heat of the sun by the ordinary thermometer⁴².” Reason and language would be inapplicable to the absolute. Therefore, in Negation, the methodological usage of language and reason is an inevitable part in the dialectic; and later the (conventional) negation is again being negated for good by the transcendental one.

Negation in the first category is competent to phenomenal use only to the finite world. The argumentation follows in literatures in a conceptual manner which, at the end, is being negated transcendently. The methodological negation that is used to counter opponent theses makes an apparent condition for a thesis pertaining to *Sūnyatā* that is only logically apprehensible i.e. it is only a logical demand to the intellect (that cannot apprehend an isolated negation) that negation should have a positive base of affirmation to stand upon. In the second case, the Negation distinguishes itself from the ordinary conventional negations assuming itself to be a special kind of negation which is empty of essence. If the negation that Nāgārjuna uses as a methodological tool be a negation of a special kind which is empty of essence then there is no use of negating it once again, moreover that might lead to a regress.

Negation in terms of use of language and reason is accountable to ignorance that persists in form of particular conventions of plurality and subject-objectivity. “Everything that is subject to the law of birth and death exists only because of ignorance and karma.”⁴³ The shift of consciousness from ignorance to enlightenment instrumentalizes negation as a methodological form of argumentation in dialectic that enables the shift. Negation reflects/represents in lingua-rational manner reflects the reflective consciousness. Absolute negation presupposes absolute reflection. Absolute negation is transcendental in terms. It is only in terms of the absolute negation that the philosophy of Nāgārjuna is designated.

Negation has been adopted by Nāgārjuna as the methodological principle of his dialectic. The principle of methodological ‘negation’ is thus confined to its phenomenal use only. Buddhism doesn’t make any necessary distinction between thought and being and *vice versa*, therefore, ‘being’ breathes its existence in understanding, which when exaggerated through the constructive conceptualization of the speculative knowledge may bring harm to the spiritual development of human rationality. The use of negation as a tool is to be considered as only for the theoretic purpose of the expression of the non-essence of objects. The technique that belongs to Nāgārjuna in that regard is the resolves the essentiality/eternality of negation by eschewing ‘negation’ from a transcendental point of view, and that is, by negation the existence of negation itself which he had used with a methodological purpose.

1.2.6. A Re-appraisal of Critique: Nature and the Significance of Dependent Origination (*Pratītyasamudpāda*)

“All compounded things are impermanent, prone to arise and fall⁴⁴.” All the empirical as well as the non-empirical existents that appear to be permanent are nothing but the compound of the impermanent constituent components that arise together and fall apart. Existents are considered to be neither real, nor unreal. Real existents (if there is any) are out of our cognitive range and therefore we hardly gain any sort of information of them. Even the mental existents are themselves infected by a formal notion that is considered to be permanent and inherently existents. Speaking from a realistic standpoint, the *form* presupposes the cognition. Aristotle never used the term Ontology. But what he advocated is the *form* or the being *qua* being or what there *is*. ‘Form’ presupposes permanence and inherence. Even if the external objects are regarded to be transient as compounds, the inherence of their substantial reality is taken for granted. The constituent components that are believed to have composed to form a non-eternal compound are believed to be permanent by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Metaphysics. But for Buddhism, nothing is inherently existent except the Nirvana. Form, is a one of the categorical existential of ‘Inherence’ that almost ‘hypothetically’ qualifies the predicate, that resides outside our mind and may or may-not, or even partially reveals itself in its actuality. If the mind has no control over the knowledge of the reality how it would be possible to predict even the most probable *form* of the existing reality. And idealistically speaking, *form* is a thesis, a monologue that is inconsiderate to other forms of thesis, but unable to find out its own loopholes.

Both the anti-thesis that advocates a formal theory contributes nothing to the thought, but threshes the thought into a never ceasing dogmatic slumber.

Metaphysics is the study of forms and their causal categories; therefore, the rejection of Metaphysics naturally counts for the rejection of the presupposition of a formal structure as well, whether objective or subjective. Socrates calls the form, an *eidos*, while Aristotle calls it the thinghood of the thing. The form is not incorporated in any artist's imagination, nor can it be an accidental attribute of its material. It only serves purely an epistemological purpose. Epistemological characters are always formal. Form cannot escape being one of the categories of knowledge. Categories of knowledge, whether objective like the catalogue of the objects known, which can be both named and defined, given by the Vaisesika or transcendental idealism apart, when tends to take a formal structure, leads to a structural foundation of viewpoints. This foundation that forms a bindings to thought, leads to sheer dogmatism. Of course form, or structure, is necessary and serves as a base or a foundation to knowledge of any sort in the form of concepts, because concepts presuppose a particular structure or 'form'; but when the 'form' comes to be considered as an inherent *being*, the Mahayana Buddhism would refute it on the ground of a necessary causal connection not between *occasions* and *things*, but a mere mental constructions. These mental constructions, which are purely subjective in nature, form an appearance of the reality as a substantial element having an inherent existence. This sense of inherent existence of objects is caused by ignorance and thus should be shunned by virtue of *Prajñā*, the contemplation of *emptiness* or the cessation of the mental construction of objects to be inherently existent.

The Mādhyamika cannot be accused to be nihilistic, for it does not deny the existence of the world outright, it only denies the inherence of the existence of the object instead, defines the existence to be conditional in nature. A reappraisal of the nature of form, therefore, is necessary here to arise from the standpoint of the *form* as a constant thought structure because a constant thought structure with a *formal* background, according to Mādhyamika, leads to nothing but dogmatism. Not only the Orthodox Schools of Indian Philosophy but the classical Greek Rationalism has always maintained an external realistic body of forms with an Ontological end. Mahayana Buddhism, as a complete opposite trend to that realistic and utterly substantial outlook and with an idealistic form of approach to the metaphysical interpretation, refutes any real existence of an external reality with a constant formal structure. The Vijñānavādins show how it is self-contradictory to take into consideration any external formal reality. However, the Vijñānavādins propound an idealistic Dharma theory as a momentary association of *skandhas*, but refuses that the *skandhas* thus form any identical unchanging soul.

The Mādhyamika criticizes the Abhidhārmika distinction between the primary and secondary phenomena, the original and the derivatives. The division between primary matter (*mahābhūtas*) and empirical objects (*bhautic*) presents an objective character of categorical forms. While to stay away from the *ātma* concept or any other category that would stand for a substantial unity, the *viññāna* or *citta* is pure consciousness, *vedanā* (feelings) are mental.

The Mādhyamika criticizes the Abhidhārmika derivative form of phenomenon into primary and secondary on the basis that it is useless to consider the two

distinctive categories because, primarily, there is no secondary matter apart from the primary cause, and secondly the primary or the secondary matter, whatever it may be, is inconceivable without the other. The original and the derivative are not intelligible either as related or as unrelated to each other. When Mādhyamika speaks of all *dharmas* being empty, it means specifically that all the *dharmas* or things are empty of inherent existence. Therefore, we now come to the point that there is obviously a subtle link between the ‘inherence’ as a category and *form*. Inherence is one of the objective categories or *padārtha* in Vaiśeṣika. The Aristotelian Form, the concept of a primordial form of Anaximenes and also the Absolute Reality of both Parmenides and Saṅkara presupposes an inherent quality for itself.

“...dharmas, atoms or the Self cannot have inherent existence since they are causally dependent, they are a part of a causal and conceptual flow⁴⁵.”

Entities originate in dependence on causes and conditions that they lack inherent existence, they are empty.

1.3. The Dialectical Tool in the Critique of Nāgārjuna

*Svabhāvaṃ para-bhāvaṃ ca bhāvaṃ cābhāvaṃ eva ca,
Ye paśyanti na paśyanti te tattvaṃ Buddha-śāsne.*

Those who perceive self-nature as well as other-nature, existence as well as non-existence, they do not perceive the truth embodied in the Buddha’s message

[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana⁴⁶]

Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XV no. 6

1.3.1. Critique as the counter Method of Metaphysics in Nāgārjuna

The practicality of suffering belongs to the experience, the perceptual faculty of human understanding, under the domain of transcendental ignorance. The domain of ignorance is transcendent to sense-object-contact and thus inevitable. Therefore, suffering as a phenomenon under the impact of transcendental ignorance is also inevitable.

Suffering is an immediate experience, a phenomenon that can hardly come under theoretic categorization. The categorical gulf of understanding distinguishes the domain of immediate experience and theoretic mechanism of the intellect under the limits of Reason⁴⁷. The moral domain of Rationality that belongs to the practical use of reason presupposes suffering as an existential entity and consequently gives way to religion and metaphysics⁴⁸. Metaphysics in this regard is the enquiry of the ultimate existential state of being where sufferings can be permanently done away with. Metaphysics configures the true form of philosophizing if it represents a critical foundation of philosophical enquiry whereas becomes dogmatic when speculatively being spinned by the pure form of theoretic reason to bring the components of pure metaphysical importance within the scope of understanding which is itself fundamentally guided by sense experience. Thus the theoretic competence of reason tries to exaggerate the limits of metaphysical understanding beyond the limits of thoughts as a result subjected to contradiction in reason.

Freedom from such limit-contradictions is an obvious practical rational postulate. The postulate of Nāgārjuna's concept of freedom lies in the freedom

from knowledge of the world *in concepts* or in the other way, the conceptualization of the transcendental or the transcendentalization of the concepts⁴⁹ (*imperfect* concepts). Reason as a regulative principle constructs the world of knowledge. While speaking of the Copernican Revolution in Kantian context in his book, “*The Dialectics of Nāgārjuna*”, Ramendranath Ghose puts it thus:

“We live in a conceptual world which our understanding constructs for us, but we do not create it. Indeed he⁵⁰ makes a distinction of meaning between ‘Construction’ and ‘creation’. Therein lies the secret of his crucial dialectics. When he makes man the center of everything – the measure of everything, he regards him not as a ‘creator’, but as a ‘constructor’⁵¹.”

Again he writes:

“Like an efficient engineer, better say, as a scientist, man constructs a world for him with the apparatus or tool of his understanding out of a chaotic mass sense given *aposteriori* through sensibility. He cannot create these *aposteriori* constituents, materials or contents of knowledge as they are due to the thing-in-themselves⁵².”

What Ghose is referring to is that both Kant and Nāgārjuna, like other Vedāntic Thinkers presupposes an ultimate Reality and that there is something given in the world of *a posteriori*; a transcendental state of unmodified, un-constituted existence, waves of modified manifestations of which constitutes the entire components of the *a posteriori* world of communicative reality. This is not a ‘creation’ of the reason since it is very much transcendental to it and reflects its subjective manifestation, the world of *a posteriori* is a constructed totality that dominated human knowledge and categories of understanding throughout ages and has been the most important force in the process of history building.

Criticism, in its more consistent or skeptical use of the term refers to the total annihilation of views or *dṛṣṭis* but annihilation in this case does not refer to nihilism, because ‘nihilism’ as a philosophical stand has altogether been ruled out. Nāgārjuna’s Criticism of thesis is not another theory, it is the emptiness of all views, rejection of all theories or *prajñā*. Criticism in Nagarjuna, thus, is a reflective awareness of the false in all *dṛṣṭis* and not a counter promotion of one’s own view-point. Therefore, Philosophy, in Nāgārjuna is pure critique in which the ‘truths’ and the faculties of reason that apprehends it is accepted in its purest form, un-manifested, un-constitutive, and sublime. This is to see the things as they are. The ‘suchness’ of the objects, thus, can only be realized by the thought which is thus critical enough to be free of any such constructive functionalities and limit contradictions⁵³.

1.3.2. Nature of Dialectic in Nāgārjuna and the Dialectical Consciousness: On *Prasaṅga*

Paradoxes and logical contradictions are but the methodological reflections of the conditionality and categorical framework of human understanding. Nāgārjuna’s methodological category of argumentation transcends this conventional *understanding* of the human faculties/categories of understanding⁵⁴. It seems Nāgārjuna pushes the human faculty of apprehension of the Real to a transcendental level⁵⁵. The methodological framework of skeptical argumentation that Nāgārjuna carries on to reach his purpose is dialectical in its essence. The Dialectical Consciousness is the consciousness of the logical contradictions in thought as non-transcendental to the theoretic functioning of Reason⁵⁶.

To think along with T.R.V. Murthy again:

“The Mādhyamika is the turning-point of Buddhism. It is the central or the pivotal system...In metaphysics, it was a revolution from a radical pluralism (Theory of Elements, dharma-vada) to an as radical absolutism (advaya-vāda). The change was from a plurality of discrete ultimate entities (dharmah) to the essential unity underlying them (dharma-tā). Epistemologically, the revolution was from empiricism and dogmatism (drsti-vada) to dialectical criticism (sūnyatā or madhyamāpratipād). Ethically, the revolution was from the ideal of a private egoistic salvation to that of a universal unconditional deliverance of all beings. Not mere freedom from rebirth and pain (klesāvarana-nivrtti) but the attainment of perfect Buddhahood by the removal of ignorance covering the real (jñeyavarana) is now the goal. The change was from the ideal of the Arhat to that of the Bodhisattva: Universal love (karuṇā) and Intellectual perfection (prajñā or sūnyatā) are identical. The Theoretic and the Practical Reason coincide⁵⁷.”

The Dialectic is an outcome of the awareness of the conflict in Reason in the domain of experience; it is a critique of both Reason and Experience⁵⁸. For Buddha, Dialectic is a consistent engagement of criticism of the antinomical character of Reason with an attempt to transcend the duality of the antinomies⁵⁹. Buddha was aware of the antinomical character of Reason and thus by Dialectic He attempted to rise beyond the antinomies to a higher level of consciousness or the Absolute. T.R.V. Murti describes Dialectical Consciousness as“...the consciousness of the total and interminable conflict in Reason and the consequent attempt to resolve the conflict by rising to a higher standpoint⁶⁰.”

The contradiction that lays the foundation of the rise of the dialectical consciousness arises in the reflective awareness of the *gulf* that exists between the transcendental genre of the reality of object and the empirical as well as rational

effort of understanding the same. The empirical approach of understanding the transcendent that is always conditional in nature tries to reach the unconditioned, the transcendent with the aid of some methodological tools accessible to the finite human intellectual faculty and therefore, necessarily rational in nature.

Therefore Murti says:

“Human reason seeks to understand the ultimate unconditioned ground of objects...The aim in the cosmological speculations (Rational Cosmology) is to reach the unconditioned ground of empirical objects. By means of a regressive chain of reasoning (i.e. by arguing from effect to cause) stretched illegitimately, as Kant points out, beyond the possibility of experience⁶¹.”

The incapability of reason to reach the ultimate gives way to contradictory statements about the conclusion of the theoretic foundation of the ‘rational cosmology’ resulting to a philosophical dead end in the ‘conflicts of reason’⁶². The dialectical consciousness is the immediate awareness of this ‘conflict in reason’.

Therefore again:

“The formulation of the problem in thesis-antithesis form is itself evidence of the awareness of the conflict in Reason... Buddha reached a very high level of philosophic consciousness, and he did give an answer to the problem- the only answer possible for a critique of experience⁶³.”

1.3.2.1. The Nature of the Dialectic

Reason is antinomical in character and cannot apprehend reality with the aid of its competitive characteristics. Dialectic is necessarily a critique of reason in its cognitive competence. Dialectic in Nāgārjuna is thus persuaded by a thorough skeptical aptitude that questions the sources of knowledge and thus reluctant in

accepting any thesis as a knowledge-claim without a question. The nature of the dialectic in Nāgārjuna is destructive. Buddha declares certain questions to be insoluble by logical deliberations. The speculative efforts to find an answer to these questions is not only fruitful in the truest sense of the term but also spiritually harmful and drag them down to the world of logic/language and other forms of traditional categorical mechanisms.

Though the world as it appears to us in the walking state seems real, but from an absolutistic point of view they all gets consumed by the perfect wisdom of the non-essence of objects, that ignorance is the principle cause of all the particular phenomenal modifications that seems substantial and permanent. Buddha's teaching of the *Pratītyasamudpāda*, viewed from phenomenal point of view is *Samsara*, and whereas viewed from the absolutistic point of view is *Nirvana*. The dialectic courses the consciousness through the Middle Way of realization of the difference as well as oneness of Nirvana and Samsara. Thus all the modifications that shatters human being to the darkest corner of ignorance and non-reflective material engagements and dogmas, as well as the modifications instrumentalizing his emancipation by being a guiding principle to him. In a more illustrative manner C.D. Sharma thus says:

“Before the mighty stroke of the destructive dialectic of Nāgārjuna and his commentator Chandrakīrti the entire structure of phenomenal objects crumbles down like a house of cards or a palace on sand. The external objects and the individual subject, matter, motion, causation, time, space, thinghood, qualities, relations, attributes, substance, soul, God, religion, morality, the four Noble Truths, Nirvana and the Buddha are all found to be hypothetical relations. But from the empirical view point they are all quite real, though ultimately they are all merged in the bosom of the absolute⁶⁴.”

The argument continues further:

“In the very first stanza of his Mādhyamika-Kārikā, Nāgārjuna gives his famous eight ‘No’-es and in the next salutes Buddha, the perfectly Enlightened and the greatest of all teachers, who has taught Praṭītyasamudpāda, which viewed from the absolute standpoint is blissful Nirvāṇa itself wherein all plurality is merged. From the absolute standpoint there is neither destruction, nor production, neither nihilism nor eternalism, neither unity, nor plurality, neither coming in nor going out⁶⁵.”

The structure of the dialectic is very consistently designed to serve its purpose which is simply to use logical negations as accepted by the opponent to reject his own thesis. This is destructive dialectic because the purpose of the dialectic is to destroy all thesis without constructing a newer, replacer counter-thesis.

Having been aware of the conflict in reason and its nature, Dialectic is the process of rising to a higher standpoint of criticism⁶⁶. Dialectic consists in rising beyond theory; it is the metaphysics or criticism of *dr̥sti* and its nature. It is to assume deliverance from all viewpoints. D.K. Mohanta defines *Prasaṅga* as such:

“...*prasaṅga* is the Critical Reason which by judging the “*pros and cons*” of a question, brings about a clear consciousness of the antinomies into which Reason gets bogged up, and hints at a way out of the impasse by rising to a plane higher than Reason (J. Singh, 1956, p. 16)⁶⁷.”

‘Critique of theory’ is not one more theory; it is the critique of the process of theorization as a whole. Theorization is the art of manifestation of a particular characteristic of an object that often ends up serving pragmatic contingent purposes. A theory thus suggests only a genus of the way of seeing an object among the other potentialities and the way it should be appraised, handled or used. Thus a theory does not transcendently define the object, rather defines it only

pragmatically. Therefore, if thus a theory is considered to be characterizing an object transcendently, having empirical experience or reason to be the media of such a consideration, it leads to dogmatism.

1.3.2.2. Consciousness and the Dialectic

The nature of consciousness in Indian Philosophical context having been identified to cognitive considerations, the study of consciousness ultimately leads to the study of knowledge. Consciousness is not bare consciousness in Indian Philosophy and is characterized by pure knowledge. The distinction between a reflective and a dogmatic consciousness is a critique of the nature of the relationship between knowledge and consciousness. The nature of knowledge justifies the nature of consciousness. Knowledge which is related to the consciousness by the contextual and considerable substantial clingingness is a knowledge being transcendently and negatively appraised by the Mādhyamika.

T.R.V. Murthy speaks out, after Nāgārjuna, on the relation between knowledge and consciousness thus:

“Consideration of the real in any particular mode, e.g. as Substance, Being, Becoming etc. necessarily creates an other, the opposite, from which it is distinguished. We cannot help being attached to what we take to be real-our view-and reject others. A view, because of its restriction, determination, carries with it duality, the root of samsara. Nāgārjuna states this dialectical predicament thus: when the self is posited, an other (para) confronts it; with the division of the self and the non-self, attachment and aversion result. Depending on these all vices spring up. Attachment begets the thirst for pleasure, and thirst hides all flaws (of the object). Blinded by this, the thirsty man imagines qualities in things and seizes upon the means to achieve pleasure⁶⁸.”

The consciousness that sees itself in a substantial form, a subject, and characterized and conditioned by the knowledge it contains, presents itself in a subject-object dichotomical relation and the kind of knowledge thus generated makes the 'known' an exclusive other. It thus only qualifies knowledge with constructive contingent considerations pertaining to the 'known' object and thus conditions the self with 'I'ness and 'mine'ness. With the rise of *Prajñā* with the reflective consciousness and the dialectics, the conditioned consciousness is deconstructed to non-substantiality and non-conceptuality of the knowledge, thus making way for the release of clingingness, fear of the loss and sufferings that results.

In Buddhism, particularly in Mādhyamika the dialectical consciousness is defined as the reflective consciousness. It is an awareness of the contradiction in Reason and its dogmatic collapse. The immediate awareness of the contradiction results in rising to a higher reflective standards of dialectical consciousness that transcends all the sub-stages of un-reflected, rational, cognitive considerations of the intellect. This awareness of the contradiction in reason, and thus rising to higher planes of reflective consciousness, theoretically structurizes the conceptuality of 'Freedom' in Nāgārjuna.

1.3.3. Importance of the Dialectic in Nāgārjuna

Dialectic is a method by Nāgārjuna as an antidote to cut the bondage of Metaphysics, both positive and negative⁶⁹.

Dilip Kumar Mohanta, writes on the purpose of the Dialectic thus:

“...the purpose of the dialectic [in Nāgārjuna] consists of disposing or deconstructing the theories so carefully propounded by others without suggesting or reconstructing any theory of his own.”⁷⁰

A.M. Padhye reasonably argues for ‘Sūnyatā’ as a tool. *Prasaṅga*⁷¹ is a philosophical method by which this tool is realized and utilized in Nāgārjuna⁷². Though Nāgārjuna is not a founder of the Mādhyamika system, but “Nāgārjuna’s original contribution is said to be linked with the evolution of philosophical method. It is called *prasaṅga* which is usually rendered in English as Dialectic.”⁷³ The Silence of Buddha can only be exposed and expressed dialectically⁷⁴. The method of *prasaṅga* i.e. the method used by Nāgārjuna is the only way by which the essence of Nāgārjuna’s philosophy can be grasped⁷⁵. Therefore, it can be observed that the purpose of the dialectic refers to a rational (critical) approach towards freedom. As TRV Murti rightly points out that the dialectic is a self-conscious rational approach which intends that Freedom, in Indian Philosophical context is a practical rational domain.

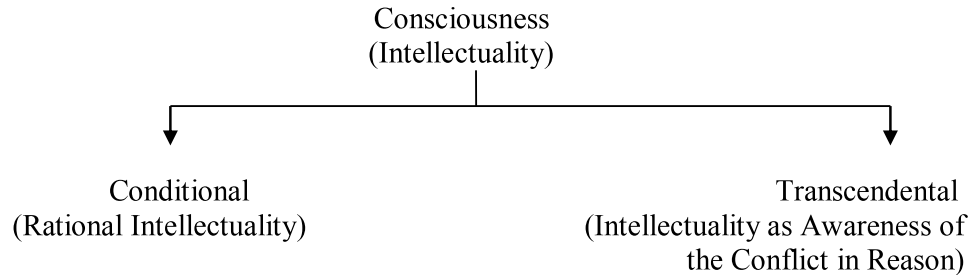
Every tool and every method in philosophy has its own purpose and the *Sūnyatā* and Dialectical method respectively are not exceptions. The importance of Dialectic is to transcend the exposition of Speculative Metaphysics beyond limits of thought. Speculative Metaphysics brings the ultimate within the frame of the intellect and thus speculatively argue for its absoluteness. The theorist of speculative metaphysics deliberately disposes and extends the scope of empirical and rational deliberations to the extent that follows skeptical considerations regarding the cognitive aspects of the particular contents of the theory. The

Speculative Metaphysics, however, has been the only tool for the Upaniṣadic thinkers to *explain* or bring forth the inexplicable linguistically. The Upaniṣadic thinkers are very much aware of the non-explicability of the Absolute, yet have no other option, but to follow from the overall consideration or absolute presupposition of the existence of the non-dual Absolute. Even Buddha has never doubted the existence of the ultimate non-dual Absolute. But, the inexplicable needs a medium to be expressed in words- positive, negative, or critical. While the other Upaniṣadic schools had no other choice but to be positive on that, Śrī Saṅkara choose to be negative on that. While Upaniṣad and Śrī Saṅkara hold two extremes, Buddha is critical to both the extremes. The Upaniṣad had to choose the positive way because they had nothing prior to them to criticize or to deny through.

The argument continues:

It thus appear yet so far that critical method only serves the purpose of untangling the bonds that Speculative Metaphysical arguments, both positive and negative ways of knowing and expressing the Absolute commits to. The Dialectic thus, is also a tool used as an antidote to cut the bonds created by (Speculative) Metaphysics whether positive or negative. Metaphysics, whether positive or negative, if speculative, is also a tool used to bring Metaphysics, which is transcendental in nature, within lingual framework. It is a method with considerable epistemological importance to know the form of the Absolute. The point is, if an intellectual appraisal of the Absolute is contented to be the 'end' in itself, it would result to the bondage to the order or realm of intellect.

In the methodological study of Consciousness in Indian Philosophy, it can be classified into two categories:



Transcendental and conditional intellectuality according to the Mādhyamika structure of argumentation, like the Advaitic stand point does not belong to exclusive categories of intellection. The knowledge of the Absolute transcending all the categorizations of constructive imaginations or *dharmas* (*dharma sūnyatā*) as conditions of dogmatic reasoning contextualizes the awareness of conflict in reason in terms of the ‘absolutization’ of the conditioned and *vice versa*. The dialectic only concerns the critical intellection of the conditions responsible for the bondage to the conditionals by exposing the necessary logical flaws associated with conditional intellection. Both the inclusive yet transcendental level of intellections, as ways of knowing the different levels of truth comprehend the same Reality from different perspectives. The conditioned intellectuality that can only comprehend the structure of the phenomenal world of the manifested Reality is incompetent to approach Reality in its Absolutistic contemplation with the help of theoretic metaphysics.

Metaphysical questions are irrelevant to intellectual thinking so far it is conditional and functions only in a theoretic framework or more specifically,

theoretic Reason. The questions that appear to be insoluble as according to the teaching of Buddha and Buddha to be agnostic is because of the fact that these questions are rationally insoluble, reason being prone to act in terms of antinomies. Buddha is critical to the *intellectual (Rational) way of thinking on* Metaphysics and not the Metaphysics itself⁷⁶ but the metaphysical essentialities of objects and their relations theoretically appraised. Dialectic is not critical to Metaphysics⁷⁷. Dialectic is the transcendence of conditional intellectuality manifested through logical argumentations. The dialectical method that has been obtained by Mādhyamika as a mode of philosophizing has been operated by Nāgārjuna quite consistently with the help of the tool called *Sūnyatā*.

The dialectic in Nāgārjuna necessarily follows from the Great Silence of the Buddha but reflects the importance of phenomenality of the world in its methodological use of logic and language⁷⁸. Nāgārjuna's dialectic follows from the Great Silence of Buddha as its postulate. But Nāgārjuna takes repose to language and methods of logic as assuming only a phenomenal part of understanding. The Suchness or the Bhutatathatā is beyond all linguistic, logical and methodological contingencies. Therefore, the use of logic and language has been employed by Nāgārjuna and Chandrakīrti as to cope up with the limits of understanding as well as the conditionality of every-day world.

D.T. Suzuki says:

“In order to enter into our limited consciousness, to become the norm of our conscious activities, to regulate the course of evolutionary tide in nature, suchness must surrender its “splendid isolation,” must abandon its absoluteness.

When Suchness thus comes down from its sovereign seat in the realm of unthinkability, we have this universe unfolded before our eyes in all its diversity and magnificence⁷⁹.”

Again,

“It is on account of our limited senses and finite mind that we have a world of particulars, which, as it is, is no more than a fragment of the absolute Bhutatathatā. And yet it is through this fragmentary manifestation that we are finally enabled to reach the fundamental nature of being in its entirety⁸⁰.”

This brings to light in the Mahayana tradition the philosophical importance of the manifestation as well as the manifested.

1.3.4. Silence and the Language of the Dialectic

Dialectic, in Mādhyamika is a metaphysical expression of the ‘Silence’ of the Buddha. Therefore, it would be quite relevant and also a methodical necessity to study the meaning and significance of the silence of Buddha and its relation to the dialectical deliberation of Mādhyamika. The purpose of the Mādhyamika is to show the untenability or inconsistency of theoretic exposures the thesis of *prāmaṇa*-theorists who tried with their respective logical argumentations to not only confront the thesis of their opponents but also to establish themselves a theoretic structure of the Reality by the instrumentalization of Reason. Whereas certain questions, according to Buddha himself, have been considered to be unanswerable, the condition being that human reason is psycho-physically antinomical in character.

Murthy points out:

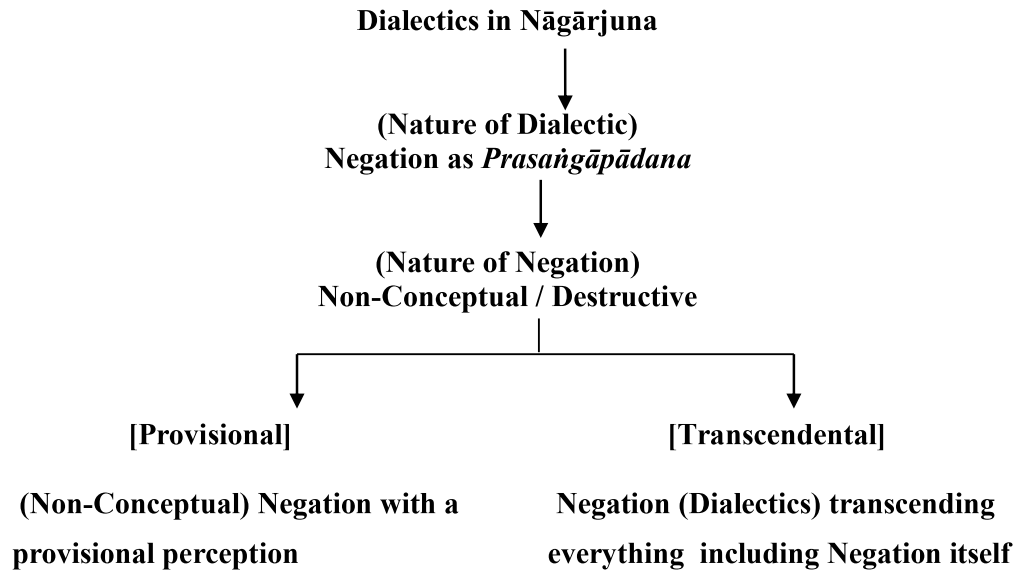
“The utter inability to relate and characterize the Unconditioned in terms of the phenomenal is the reason why the questions about the Tathāgata and others cannot be answered outright. Dogmatists inevitably confound the Transcendent with the empirical... Deeply conscious of the empirical nature of the categories⁸¹, the Tathāgata does not indulge in such unwarranted extension; he does not spin speculative theories. He has realized that the Real is transcendent to thought⁸².”

Therefore,

“His silence can only be interpreted as meaning the consciousness of the indescribable nature of the Unconditioned Reality⁸³...The rejection of theories (*ditṭhi*) is itself the *means* by which Buddha is led to the non-conceptual knowledge of the absolute, and not vice versa...Buddha ascends from the conflict of Reason to the inexpressibility of the absolute⁸⁴.”

In order to relate Silence as the signifier of the Dialectic and as the only effective mode of expression of the critical aptitude of the Dialectic in the methodological spectrum a more transcendental approach towards the meaning of the Dialectic is contextual. Dialectic signifies the ‘rising’ of consciousness over all dogmatic historiographies as intellectual commitments to the conditional. It is the methodological language of the reflective consciousness of the competence of the human rational faculties, including the intellect itself, towards the unconditioned sublime. Silence of the Buddha is a qualifier in terms of the expression of the sublime. There is no better language than Silence itself which could qualify the autonomy of the Ultimate over all categorically known substance. The ‘rising’ of the consciousness has to assume a means of expression at times which has perfectly been qualified by the Transcendental Silence of the Buddha.

1.3.5. Theorizing the Purpose and Function of Negation in Nāgārjuna's Philosophy



Negation with provisional (phenomenal) and transcendental usage

It would be contextual to start with the following words of Ramendranath Ghose on the nature and purpose of the ‘negation’ used in Nāgārjuna’s methodological scepticism:

“The framing of four alternative position regarding the problem of causality, reality and appearance, voidity or independence of own-being, survivality of the Buddha after death, identity and eternity of self-hood and their negation in Nāgārjuna’s Treatise of the Fundamental Mean (MMK) has close relevance to Buddha’s treatment of ten interminable questions regarding finitude and infinitude of the universe, eternity and non-eternity of self and the question of his own survivality after liberation (*parinivvāṇa*), etc. and his rejection of these four cornered logically improper questions (*kallo panho*) concerning their pseudo metaphysical problems⁸⁵.”

Nāgārjuna's methodological skepticism is purposive to the outright rejection of all theoretic standpoints including the state of total annihilation as a theoretic pattern of engagement. The dialectic used by Nāgārjuna is a negative process that asserts nothing but expresses the autonomous nature of the Ultimate by the use of methodological negation. Nāgārjuna therefore, uses 'Negation' in a very consistent methodological and dialectical manner to refute the logical possibilities of the metaphysical questions that are unanalyzable in logical terms. The unanalyzable questions are thus technically pointed out by Chandrakīrti in his commentary on the *Mulamādhyamikākarikā* as *avyakṛta*⁸⁶. On account of an adherence to this skeptical standard, Nāgārjuna uses the method of *prasaṅgapādana* that justifies the true sense of negation in Nāgārjuna⁸⁷.

Regarding the purpose of Negation in Nāgārjuna's Dialectology that actually qualifies the silence of Buddha, D.K. Mohanta states:

“He (Nāgārjuna) believes that as soon as our mind becomes clear and free from these faulty views (*dṛṣṭi*) the vision of non-dual *prajñā* would automatically emerge and there would not have a single word to say about Reality in either positive or negative terms, since Reality is non-conceptual in nature, Reality cannot be 'put into words'. Nāgārjuna calls it *dharmānām bhūta-pratyabekṣā* (to see the things as they are)⁸⁸.”

The Nature of dialectic, thus, in Nāgārjuna is *Prasangika*, i.e., without any standpoint and even rejecting Negation as an exclusive position. Negation, in the philosophy of Nāgārjuna is thus used with a dialectical temper – the dialectic is not but another thesis, a counter-theoretic expression of the nature of the Real but tries, through negation, to purify the dogmatic mind of the constructive determinations that reason formulates out of illegitimate extension of the empirical categories to

the Real. ‘Negation’ is the only philosophical and dialectical *method* used by Nāgārjuna only in a pragmatic sense to reach to his goal of a mystical intuitive dominion of the realization of the ultimate⁸⁹. Methodological criticism is the only way of philosophizing for Nāgārjuna which even he abandons at the fulfillment of the purpose. Thus Mohanta again very pertinently argues: “By doing this the ‘dialectic’ tries to show the utter *indeterminateness* and *non-conceptuality* of the Real...according to Nāgārjuna, *prasaṅga* or dialectical method of philosophizing corrects the blemishes of dogmatic reason and helps us in realizing the relative as relative, the Absolute as the Absolute and the Absolute as the ground of the relative.”⁹⁰

The Negation in *prasaṅgāpādana* is a logical endeavor on the part of Nāgārjuna by which he proves, by the use of logic acceptable to his opponents, the un-accountability of any of the alternative positions of the four fold alternative standpoints to which the opponent belongs and even suspends the logical method thus used by him so far that actually scaffold his assent.

Prasaṅga as a dialectical process categorizes ‘Negation’ into two conceptual formats, the phenomenal and the transcendental: one, the Negation as ordinarily instrumental to refute anything and the other as transcendently negating the entire phenomena of all the logical methods and pragmatic standpoints including the scope of phenomenal negation itself respectively. It is the ‘Negation of Negations’, as TRV Murthy uses the phrase, refers to Nāgārjuna’s superseding and abandonment of all his dialectical tools ultimately to the autonomy of the Absolute. Nothing exists except the Absoluteness of the *Sublime*. Thus almost all

the thinkers belonging to Brahmanical and Buddhist scholarship are of the estimation that there is neither any origination, nor any destruction, neither coming in nor going out, neither being nor becoming, neither existence nor non-existence in categorical framework etc. do successfully relate to the autonomy of the absolute; it is only for the sake of argumentation and a logico-linguistic endeavor to express the inner implications of the Silence of Buddha and the non-categorical, non-substantial and theoretically non-comprehensive nature of the Real that Nāgārjuna and the entire Mādhyamika school obtains as methodological tools to fight the illegitimate exaggeration of the intellect and the rational use of categorization of the unconditional by the *pramāṇa*-theorists.

1.3.6. *Sūnyatā*: ‘Negation in Negation’ and a Critical Survey of Destructive Dialectic

A.M. Padhye makes a detailed critical examination of the different major perspective made by scholars on the nature of Nāgārjuna’s negativistic methodological treatment of the critique of reason. The problem pertaining to the appraisals and explanations of Nāgārjuna’s philosophical engagement as nihilistic, monistic, absolutistic or mystic is instrumentalized and problematized by the use of ‘negation’ in Nāgārjuna’s philosophy⁹¹. The instigation behind the re-appraisal of Nāgārjuna’s philosophy pertaining to the *standpoints* that are claimed to have been obtained by Nāgārjuna refers to a purposive dissatisfaction caused by the claims of the structure of thought Nāgārjuna is supposed to have obtained. Therefore, the following study goes in line of a critical re-appraisal of the causes that makes way to the various structural claims that Nāgārjuna’s thought is supposed to be attributed to.

The appraisal of Nāgārjuna's method to be attributed to the theoretic structure of any of these major perspectives doesn't maintain Nāgārjuna's *non-substantiality* of negation. It is because of the result of the misunderstanding of the theoretic structure of the Negation in Nāgārjuna and the concept of Two Truths along with its contextual importance in Nāgārjuna's negation that the negativistic methodological structure of Nāgārjuna's philosophy is subjected to different suggestive contents of metaphysical speculative conventions.

Prasaṅga is a special form of dialectic as distinct from the dialectics of Ancient Greek Dialectics.

Emptiness, as denial of the eternal existence of *swavhāva* by the enlightened one, that got theoretically expressed in Nāgārjuna should not be confused as an antidote to one theory by the other and thus on the basis of a traditional formulation of the arguments by a objective basis of thinking and be evaluated from the subjective basis of *dṛsti-sūnyatā*. As the absence of being in things is not supposed to have been said from a realistic point of view, it is the emptiness of all views, and therefore, the absence of being in things is equated to the exhaustion of all theories and views.

Sprung says:

“The exhaustion (*nihsaranam*), the ceasing of function of all ways of holding to fixed concepts stemming from theories or views (*dṛsti*) of any kind what so ever, is the absence of being in things. But the mere ceasing of function of what stems from holding views is not itself a real thing. With those who obstinately hold to the reality of things, even in the case of the absence of being, we can have no dialogue⁹².”

The *sūnyatā* of *dṛṣṭi* is not a *dṛṣṭi* by itself *holding* which to be an end-in-itself one could attain liberation. The dialectic proceeds in this way that is exemplified by Sprung as “It is not causeless that renders the elements of existence causeless; rather the elements are by nature without cause. It is not purposelessness that renders the element of existence purposeless; rather the elements are purposeless by nature⁹³.” Nāgārjuna may be considered the father of philosophical Mahayana. “Nāgārjuna was committed to rejecting any solution which remained within the boundaries of mere theory⁹⁴.” The ‘spiritual conqueror’ has proclaimed the absence of being in things or the *swabhāva* to be exhaustion of all theories and views⁹⁵ and thus for those the absence of being is one more theory are incurable.

“*Sūnyatā* is not only a repudiation of a *causal* account of the everyday, it makes the repudiation of *any* account.: it is not a theory about the space-time world.” *Sūnyatā* is not one more theory among the traditionally placed other theories trying to grasp the nature of the universe. “They (Mādhyamika) attempt to show that theoretical explanation is found on the delusive fiction of entities in being affected each other causally. Nāgārjuna says it sweepingly, ‘*Sūnyatā* is the exhaustion of all view’⁹⁶ (p. 150,8) and adds ‘Those for whom *sūnyatā* is itself a theory are incurable.’⁹⁷”

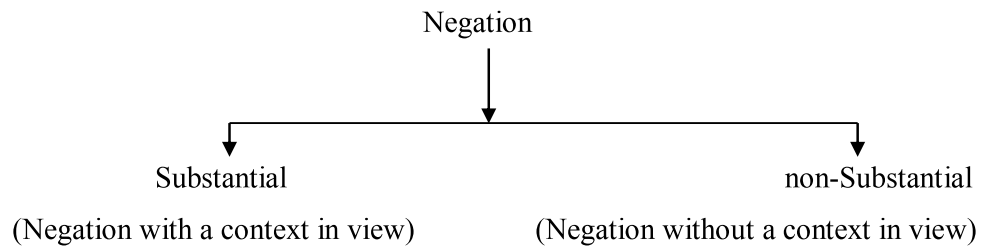
Destructive Dialectic is not agnosticism.

“His (Nāgārjuna) interests lie in checking the accuracy of the opponent’s method in order to see in order to see if they can yield certainty of the position vindicated by them...The method of *prasaṅga* is a form of dialectic in the sense that it reduces a philosophical thesis to an absolutely negative consequence by restoring to hypothetical reasoning and consequently impresses upon non-identity

characterization between the concept and the things, between the universal and the particular, the subject and the object, knowledge and reality, i.e., between any two notions where dichotomization is possible. it also keeps an impulse for truth even if it fails to achieve something positive by way of negation⁹⁸.”

1.3.7. Destructive Dialectic: the Relation between Negation and Silence

Destructive Dialectic characterizes critique of reason in Nāgārjuna.



A non-Substantial negation is not purposed to conflict or negate or refute a view to replace it with the other alternative; i.e. a non-Substantial negation is not a conceptual existence. Negation in Nāgārjuna thus, is devoid of any substantial pre-existents.

In this context Paul Williams argues:

“Since the *Perfection of Wisdom sutras* taught that all entities, including *dharmas*, are only conceptual existents or constructs, it follows that for the *Perfection of Wisdom* there can be no essence at all... It comes to signify generally ‘inherent existence’ in the sense of independent real existence.”

The evidences and the argument that the scholars use to support Nāgārjuna’s commitment to either of the above mentioned theoretic methodological structure are studies for the present purpose as according to the study of them made by A.M.

Padhye from his book “Framework of Nāgārjuna’s Philosophy”[1998; Sri Satguru Publications] and the following arguments in favour of Nāgārjuna’s non-substantiality of negation is based on a critical investigation of the arguments in accordance to Nāgārjuna’s theoretical treatment of the two truths in the major secondary sources.

1.3.8. Re-examining the Theoretic Purpose of Concepts in Nāgārjuna:

Sūnyatā and Pratītyasamudpāda

The word ‘Concept’ presupposes a theoretic engagement. The purpose behind a concept often contextualizes a phenomenal issue. The question of a purpose is important here in the sense that the purpose of the concept of *Sūnyata* and *Pratītyasamudpada*, at least when it is used as a theoretic concept in Nāgārjuna, it does not cohere with the phenomenal use of the term in its absolutely negating contingencies. The purpose of *Sūnyata* and *Pratītyasamudpada*, even as a theoretic concept are only instrumental to a transcendental end⁹⁹.

The concepts of *Sūnyatā* and *Pratītyasamudpāda* are transcendental concepts. A theory criticizing theory is a philosophical contradiction. The categories of transcendental object, that defies the conditions of any pragmatic usage of arguments, cannot be systematically applied to the disposal of phenomenal purpose¹⁰⁰. The concept of *Sūnyatā* as the *structure* of critique of Reason in a theoretic engagement thus, would have created the controversy pertaining to the structure and function of *Sūnyatā* as a foundational structure of the critique of theories. Therefore, Nāgārjuna felt the importance of a theoretic structure of the Absolute in the form of *Sūnyatā* that could be developed and used as a tool that

enables theoretic emancipation from the world of *Vāda*¹⁰¹. *Sūnyatā* is basically a methodological tool¹⁰² developed by Nāgārjuna, serving the purely phenomenal purpose of transition of the consciousness from the determinate to the indeterminate ultimately to nullify itself¹⁰³. *Sūnyatā* is not a concept, but a practical whole, a subjective way of seeing the world around¹⁰⁴. *Sūnyatā* has been theoretically and methodologically conceptualized by Nāgārjuna to fit into the faculty of Reason of common human intellect as to critically appraise the opponent theories and the prejudice that follow. To serve the current pragmatic purpose Nāgārjuna develops the concept of *Sūnyatā* theoretically and methodologically that apparently presents Nāgārjuna with a theoretical stand. The theoretic *Sūnyatā* which is *spoken of*, apparently presents itself as a theory and Nāgārjuna with a stand, but it is only a means that is being theoretically served by the concept of *Sūnyatā*.

A.M. Padhye says:

“...Nāgārjuna employs the methodological tool called *Sūnyatā* to accomplish the task of tailoring off the genuinely real world from that which is accepted as real in commonsensical ground¹⁰⁵.”

1.3.9. Negation as De-categorization: Contextualizing the Great Silence

Destructive Dialectic as negation, in other way may be termed as de-categorization. It is to negate ‘something of something’ both qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Categorical and conditional contingencies are relative and insignificant in judging the absolute. Thus *de-categorization* (in terms of both

qualitative as well as quantitative categories) can be expressed only in negating terms.

““it is not so (*nāiti*),” therefore, may be the only way our imperfect human tongue can express it. So the Mahayanists generally designate absolute Suchness as *Çūnyatā* or void¹⁰⁶.”

But on the other hand *Sūnyatā* is logically explained in terms of the negation of the Chatuskoti or the four alternatives. The terms such as bondage and liberation when used as noun or in their individual sense, their meaning stands in relative connotations; and as adjectives they form categorical propositions or statements that categorize something or someone to be either in bondage or in liberation. They are languages having only pragmatic value to express the transcendental modifications of/in consciousness.

The terms as Samsara and Nirvana, bondage and liberation, or any such terms are only used against transcendental/primordial modification that happens in the consciousness because of ignorance in the form of phenomenological contingencies. In fact, there is neither any bondage, nor any liberation as they are only the effects of transcendental modification of/in consciousness which in turn is the effect of transcendental ignorance and thus conditional. Therefore, the best way of entering the Dharma of Non-duality is to go above letters and words. Phenomenologically, it appears to be silence. Silence: The Great Silence of the Buddha is not an agnostic silence; rather it is defined as a continuous process of de-categorization as a result of self-reflection.

1.3.10. Theorizing Emptiness: A Conceptual and Non-Conceptual Appraisal

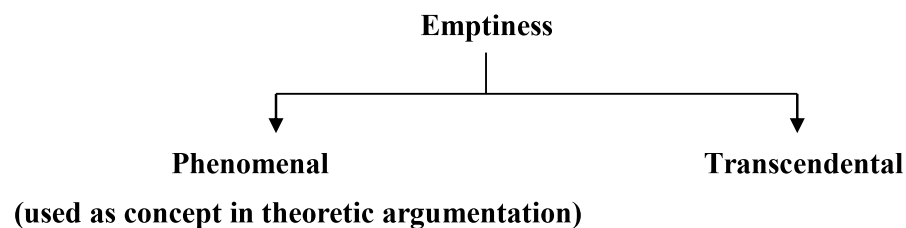
According to Westerhoff, Chandrakīrti observes that whatever withstands *logical* analysis (after being decomposed of parts and the residue that is left out) is the thing that is not-created and that what is actually to be considered as the *swabhāva* of the particular thing¹⁰⁷ and gives the example of two composed thing as a chariot and that of *atman*, that on *logically* analyzing both chariot and *atman* they decompose into parts.

As a commentary to Chandrakīrti, Westerhoff observes:

“...whatever is not ultimately real disappears under analysis so that what we are left with must be an ultimately real object existing by its own nature. The reason why composite objects such as a chariot or the self (*atman*) are not ultimately real is that they do not withstand logical analysis... Once the chariot or the self is conceptually dissolved into the parts that constitute it, the objects have disappeared and all we are left with are parts collectively conceptualized as a chariot or a self¹⁰⁸.”

Even to theorize Transcendental Emptiness concept and language are necessary.

Therefore, ‘Concept’ in theoretic form is always instrumental.



Theoretic Emptiness is spoken-of in conceptual terms. This concept based usage is a provisional and instrumental to the ultimate/transcendental Emptiness through the dialectics. The state of *Nirvana* is neither being nor non-being;

because, 'Being' and 'Non-Being' are concepts that presupposes conceptual opposites or dichotomy. It is even transcendently incorrect to attribute Nirvana to a 'state' because a statehood again conceptualizes the issue.

Paul Williams says:

“It (nirvana) is said to be like the true nature of things (*dharmata*, i.e. emptiness), not produced and not destroyed—that is, things are always like this; ...It is the result of seeing the way they really are, a seeing which occurs through going beyond the conceptualizing activity of our everyday minds and language, which conditions us to think in terms of inherent existence¹⁰⁹.”

The spirit of Negation lies in and through the transcendental condition that enables the consciousness from the finite to the infinite, from limited to unlimited, from the manifested to the sublime.¹¹⁰ The argumentative initiation of Negation originates from and with the spirit of transcendence

As T.R.V. Murti opines:

“In the *Prajnapāramitā* and the subsidiary Council (Sūtra) literature of the Madhyamika, the one basic idea that is reiterated *ad nauseum* is that there is no change, no origination, no cessation, no coming in or going out; the real is neither one, nor many; neither ātman, nor anātman; it is as it is always. Origination, decay etc. are imagined by the uninformed; they are speculations indulged in by the ignorant. The real is utterly devoid (Śūnya) of these and other conceptual constructions; it is transcendent to thought and can be realized only in non-dual knowledge- Prajñā or Intuition, which is the Absolute itself¹¹¹.”

Nāgārjuna's negation is a transcendental negation. A Concept has only an instrumental purpose. The 'instrumental purpose' that the concept assumes in

theoretic argumentation is provisionally important in the case that it has been the aim of Nāgārjuna, in the *Mūlamādhyamikakārikā*, by the means of theoretic argumentations as dialectics to pursue the transcendental Emptiness. So the negation that follows from the critique of Nāgārjuna is not an inherently existent ‘negation’, i.e., transcendental negation taken a phenomenal form, the ‘form’ that is provisional and pragmatic. From this it follows that Nāgārjuna’s argumentation should not be considered to refer to some kind of an implicit thesis¹¹². Negation is only a phenomenon, and therefore, the act of negation is only phenomenal and that is that there is no transcendental explanation of negation. Negation is always phenomenal and never transcendental. Nāgārjuna’s negation, thus assumes a phenomenal purpose of leading towards transcendental emptiness.

Human faculty of understanding is conditional. It can only grasp what is conditioned by cognitive categories that form a concept.¹¹³ Negation, as the role it plays in Nāgārjuna’s dialectic is a means towards a provisional and textual concept of the non-entity or non-substantiality of objects. The question of a concept is important from a provisional point of view. The view or the concept “that objects are void of substance” has a provisional purpose of being a means towards the end, i.e. the transcendental realm of *Sūnyatā*. The *end* is not a concept, for the dialectic, as it proceeds by, ultimately transcends all the conceptual and cognitive conditions. The knowledge of the non-substantiality of objects is conditioned so far as it acts a means towards the ultimate transcendental realm of *Sūnyatā*. The realm of *Sūnyatā* is unconditional. Negation is the nature of the structure of the dialectic that Nāgārjuna obtains as a method which initiates with a provisional purpose of

directing the consciousness towards the non-conceptual/unconditional/transcendental realm of *Sūnyatā*.

Negation that is reflected in Nāgārjuna's dialectic is transcendental negation. It is not negation *per say*, rather Negation postulated by Criticism. Negation in Nāgārjuna represents the true nature of Buddha's Silence; it is a provisional phenomenon by which it critically declines all the standpoints to be fallacious and ultimately negates, transcendently, its own provisional format and thus establishes that Negation is not a standpoint whatsoever in disguise. By adopting the provisional aspect of Negation, which is pragmatic, Nāgārjuna dissolves the substance view of elements and at the end annuls the provisional (pragmatic) format of Negation by its own transcendental form. It is the annulment of all "the dogmatic procedure of Reason".¹¹⁴ Negation, in the provisional sense is only a *means* towards *Sūnyatā*.¹¹⁵

Nāgārjuna was a *Prasaṅgika*, i.e. a critique of any philosophical position without having a (philosophical) position for oneself. Apparently, 'negation' might seem to be the only context of apprehending the reality, but a more akin and critical intervention into the epistemological conditions of knowledge reveals that truth is conducive through a meditative experience enhanced by the dialectic of destructive philosophical standpoints and thus any such position that enhances clinging towards it. Nevertheless, it is the negation of thesis which enhances dialectics and through which Destructive Dialectic seems to proceed. Negation, bereft of any presupposed thesis is critical to the contradictions of Reason. Negation of all views followed by a critical analysis of the conflict in Reason is *Sūnyatā*, the freedom in

itself; that has been the method Buddha's dialectic, reflected in his Silence and methodologically recognized by Nāgārjuna. Negation of all views as T.R.V. Murthy says, is not a state of suspension¹¹⁶, because for Buddha the knowledge of Reality is dialectically appraised in meditative experience or intuition *through negation of all views as mere subjective devices.*¹¹⁷

In order to study comparatively the concerned methods of both Buddha and the other Upaniṣadic traditions to reach the indescribable, Murthy says:

“While the indescribability of the absolute is common to the Upaniṣads and Buddha, a difference in their approach must be admitted. The Upaniṣadic seers do not concern themselves with the different philosophical standpoints and views of the real. Being pioneers in the field, they had not before them many, right or wrong, views to criticize and to condemn. They appear to start with an intuitive or extra-philosophical knowledge of Brahman and then lead the disciple to that knowledge through arguments and analogies. They are not aware, except in a vague form of the conflict in Reason. Theirs is not a dialectical approach. Buddha on the other hand is more Rational in his procedure. He starts with the total and interminable conflict in Reason as exemplified in the several speculative systems of his time. The untenability of each view, of all views, condemns them as mere subjective devices. The rejection of theories (dīṭṭhi) is itself the *means* by which Buddha is led to the non-conceptual knowledge of the absolute, and not vice versa¹¹⁸.”

Nāgārjuna talks of *Sūnyatā* from a critical perspective examining the evaluative capacity of the intellect encountering objects of the universe. Therefore a distinction is made between the reference between a perceptual perspective and a conceptual perspective. The judicial contingencies of evaluative stances of the intellect depend on conceptual perspective more than perceptual perspective. Thus, the universe is not metaphysically created by the subject, rather conceptually constructed by him/her. However, this has been exclusively the transcendental

position of Kant that relates itself to Copernican Revolution in Astronomy. But whereas Kant could not deny the existence of thing-in-itself, the *objects* as the cause of the cognitive representation of the universe, in the case of Māhdyamika what Nāgārjuna means according to Ramendranath Ghose is: "...that the conceptual totality is a mere appearance and the thing-in-itself is indefinite and void."¹¹⁹ The difference between Kant and Nāgārjuna is that while Kant is judging the competence of human intellect as the source of knowledge, critically both from perceptual as well as conceptual perspective taken as identical (i.e., without distinguishing the difference between a percept and concept), Nāgārjuna on presupposing the distinction between the perceptual and conceptual perspective of human intellect is critical particularly on the conceptual capacity of human intellect. Ramendranath Ghose invites us to look into the distinction between perceptual perspective and conceptual perspective with its reference to the Copernican Revolution in his work, "The Dialectics of Nāgārjuna." He writes:

"The question of a perspective is also important. This is actually to speak of a distinction of reference between a perceptual perspective and a conceptual perspective. A change of axis, or angle of reflection, shifting of stance or position, sometimes reveal to intellect a different world of truth¹²⁰."

Nāgārjuna's problematic exclusively incorporates a critical evaluation of the capacity of the conceptual perspective of human intellect to comprehend the nature of the universe and the argumentations thus forwarded by them in favour of their position on the real nature of the universe. Nāgārjuna's use of the *theoretic concept* of *Sūnyatā* as a methodological tool to bring out the transcendental, indefinite nature of the world is but solely based on and targeted to a critical evaluation of

that conceptual perspective of human intellect. The indefiniteness of thing-in-itself refers to the constructive incompetence of human intellect with a risk of falling into a trap of *dṛsti*. However, the indeterminateness of thing-in-itself does not mean the rejection of the thing-in-itself (or at least the idea of it) because the theoretic consideration of *Tathatā* or *Bhutotathatā* signifies the real essence of universe in Nāgārjuna. Refutation of a (determinate) thing-in-itself as void is always a theoretic refutation to bring forth the truth, and values its position from the conceptual perspective of the individual. While on the other hand, in order to consider/accommodate the perceptual/cognitive categories within the domain of human knowledge with a successful pragmatic consequence, Nāgārjuna had to distinguish between two worlds- Reality and Convention (appearance), though provisionally. However, in Nāgārjuna, even the distinction between these two worlds is none but a conventional consideration.

1.3.11. Logical Objections on Nāgārjuna's Critique of *Swabhāva*

The objection put forward by the Nyāya Logicians against the critique of the intrinsic nature of things by Nāgārjuna follows thus:

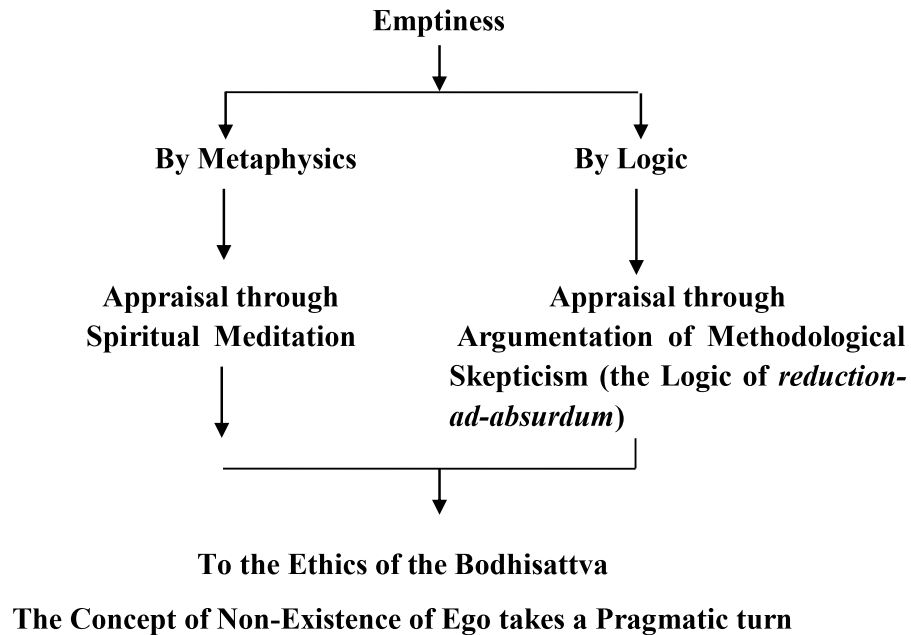
As a response to the objections, put forward by the Nyāya Logicians, Nāgārjuna's criticism is not a critique of the intrinsic nature of things as *a real entity* (the critique does not presuppose the things or their intrinsic nature of things as real entity). '*Swabhāva*' is not real, but ideal. Things/objects are made real by the mental constructs that is due to illusion. Illusion is the non-correspondence of concept to reality (the real nature of things). Language communicates a concept. The term '*Sūnyatā*' is only a linguistic expression of the real nature of things that

actually transcends all the linguistic and conceptual framework. Thus, the concept that ‘*Sūnyatā*’ as voidness does make is devoid of any intrinsic nature of itself. With the rise of *Prajñā* of the real nature of things, the concept of ‘*Sūnyatā*’ as ‘Transcendental Voidness’ also ceases to exist. Negation is not possible on a transcendental level. The objects of empirical experience are transcendently void, and therefore, neither negation itself is possible nor is the object of negation¹²¹. Negation, therefore, is only phenomenal, and not transcendental.

The concept of *Pratītyasamudpāda*, the Four Noble Truths and the *Nirvana* itself exists only phenomenally. Thus, here, the theory of two truths become relevant on the part of Nāgārjuna.

1.3.12. Theorizing Emptiness: Re-approach to Moral Objectives

The relation between emptiness and the ethics of Bodhisattva can be diagrammatically represented as follows



Prajñā or the realization of *Sūnyatā* is the most fundamental knowledge, is what is left behind after an endless series of negation. *Prajñā* or *Sūnyatā* is not the knowledge of the real form of consciousness in either positive or negative form. Forms in theoretic framework are brought by dualism or discrete rationality. Emancipation is not a mere state of negation or assertion, rather it is a state which is transcendent to any sort of theoretic framework. Though the negation appears to have come forward in a synthetic theoretic fashion, the purposive condition behind the negation is strictly dialectical. The conditional existence as a convention is never negated as false in the dialectics of Nāgārjuna, but with the distinctive knowledge of the difference between the conventional and the Real existence, the very essence of the teachings of *Sūnyatā* which the theory of two truths explores. The non-existence of “I-ness” as theorized by the Mādhyamika dialectic thus refers to a transcendental pragmatic role of *Prajñā* that culminates into the negation of self and the moral response to the world with the purpose of mass emancipation.

1.3.13. Nāgārjuna from the Perspective of the Critique of *Dr̥stis*

The entire debate that has followed the alternate sequence of critique and counter-critique by Nāgārjuna and his opponents was actually caused by the opponent’s misconception of the difference between the structure of entities as *dravyasat* and *prajñāptisat*. The fundamental problem with the opponent is that the very first premise of the debate has been initiated from a realistic standpoint. The realist opponents of Nāgārjuna attacks him on the ground of the *non-existence* of *swabhāva* in the *real sense of the term*. *Swabhāva* is the conceptual consequence of

a *dr̥sti* or view. *Swabhāva* as Nāgārjuna actually means is that the entities which are denied of self-existence, i.e. existence in their own right are actually supposed to be so because of the ignorance that the knowledge of the object and the known rise simultaneously not by their own secular right but depending on one another and thus devoid of *swabhāva* or self-existence.

1.4. The Relation between Critique and Ethics: Some Textual Engagement

*Aprahinam asampraptam anucchinnaṃ asasvatam,
aniruddham anutpannaṃ etaṃ nirvāna ucyate.*

Unrelinquished, not reached, unannihilated, non-eternal, non-ceased and non-arisen – this is called freedom.
[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana¹²²]

Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XXV, no.3

Buddha's reaction to the problem of sufferings starts from the analysis of the epistemological problem of knowledge and ignorance. On Kāccayana's question on the nature of the *right view*, as the problem of the rational cognitive orientation would speculate its channel between the two extremes of the categories of existence or non-existence, Buddha answers as quoted in the *Sutra*, occurs in a dialogue between Kāccayana and the Buddha as heard by Ānanda thus:

“The world, for the most part, Kāccayana, is bound by approach, grasping and inclination. And he who does not follow this approach and grasping, that determination of mind, that inclination and disposition of mind, that inclination and disposition, who does not cling to or adhere to a view: ‘This is my self,’ who things: ‘suffering that is subject to arising arises; suffering that is subject to ceasing ceases,’ such a person does not doubt, is not perplexed. Herein, his knowledge is not other-dependent. Thus far, Kāccayana, there is ‘right view’.

‘Everything exists’ - this Kāccayana, is one extreme.

‘Everything does not exist,’ – this, Kāccayana, is the second extreme.

Kāccayana, without approaching either extreme, the Tathāgata teaches you a doctrine by the middle.” That “Dependent upon ignorance arise disposition; depending upon disposition arises consciousness (and psychological personality etc.)...However, from the utter fading away and ceasing of ignorance, there is ceasing of consciousness (and psychological personality etc.)...And thus there is a ceasing of the entire mass of suffering.”¹²³

1.4.1. Introduction:

As we have seen above Nāgārjuna’s dialectical critique of reason appropriates the Buddha’s idea of *karuṇā* along with Pratītyasamudpāda into his own.

One of the major commentators of Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamādhyakika Kārika* , D.J. Kalupahana observes:

“The *Brahmajāla-suttanta* refers to sixty-two varieties of views prevalent during the Buddha’s day. After his enlightenment, the Buddha realized that none of these were satisfactory. He was not willing to subscribe to any one of them...The Buddha proceeds to enumerate two basic views that are prevalent in the world. The sixty-two views referred to in the *Brahmajāla-suttanta* represent, in one way or another, a proliferation of these two basic views of permanent existence (*atthitā*, Sk. *astitva*) and non-existence (*n’atthitā*, Sk *nāstitva*)¹²⁴.”

Thereby,

The Buddha “provides reasons for rejecting both these views (the views of existence and non-existence). The reasons are epistemological...”¹²⁵

1.4.2. *Nirvāṇa* and *Samsāra*

“In the Vicesacinta-brahma-pariprccha Sutra, it is said that (Chap. II): “Samsara is Nirvana, because there is, when viewed from the ultimate nature of the Dharmakāyā, nothing going out of, nor coming into, existence, [samsara

being only apparent]: Nirvana is samsara, when it is coveted and adhered to”¹²⁶.”

Again,

“In another place (op. cit.) the idea is expressed in much plainer terms: “The essence of all things is in truth free from attachments, attributes, and desires; therefore, they are pure, and, as they are pure, we know that what is the essence of birth and death that is the essence of Nirvana, and that what is the essence of Nirvana that is the essence of birth and death (samsara). In other words, Nirvana is not to be sought outside of this world, which, though transient, is in reality no more than Nirvana itself. Because it is contrary to our reason to imagine that there is Nirvana and there is birth and death (samsara,) and that the one lies outside the pale of the other, and, therefore, that we can attain Nirvana only after we have annihilated or escaped the world of birth and death. If we are not hampered by our confused subjectivity, this our worldly life is an activity of Nirvana itself”¹²⁷.”

“Nāgārjuna repeats the same statement in Mādhyamika Sāstra, when he says:

“Samsara is in no way to be distinguished from Nirvana
Nirvana is in no way to be distinguished from Samsara.”

Or

“The sphere of Nirvana is the sphere of Samsara:
Not the slightest distinction exists between them”¹²⁸.”

1.4.3. *Sūnyatā* and the Middle Way: Its Dialectical and Ethical Importance

The Middle Way is a dialectical position which plays its part only in *Samsara*. Middle way refers to a position in between two extremes. It is not a ‘position’ in its connotative sense. A dialectical position in Nāgārjuna is no ‘position’ at all. Dialectic as *Prasaṅgapādana* is a radical skeptical stance by Nāgārjuna to use methodological (logical) negation to reject the theories of the opponents or the contesting camps of metaphysically prejudiced theories of the Real. Therefore, *Sūnyatā* represents only the non-substantiality and non-accountability of theory as view point on.

Sūnyatā is a dialectical position which relates itself dialectically to ethics. *Sūnyatā*, expressed theoretically and with more cognitive clarity as the Middle Way, represents the relation between dialectics and ethics.

1.4.4. The Relation between *Prajñā* and *Kauṣā*

*Ya ājvaṃ-javī-bhāva upādāya pratītya vā,
so ' pratītyānupādāya nirvāṇam upadiṣyate.*

whatever is of the nature of coming and going that occurs contingently or dependently. Freedom is, therefore, indicated as being non-contingent and independent.

[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana¹²⁹]

Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XXV, no.9

Transcending the name and form, reality is unconditioned. The Nature of the unconditioned, the ultimate, is not exclusive of the existence of the conventional nature of the world. The Mādhyamika directs all its spiritual credit of the comprehension of the reality to contemplation or *Prajñā*. Wisdom through contemplation or *prajñā* transcends all theoretical margins; and Nāgārjuna's theoretic dialectic is only a pragmatic boon that enables prepare the way towards *Prajñā*. Nāgārjuna's dialectics in *Mulamādhyamaka Kārikā* is purposed to the rejection of *swabhāva* as a reality independent and uncaused. Neither Emptiness, nor any logical rejection of any view has any essence in the ultimate sense of the term. The knowledge of the essence-lessness of things or the emptiness of *swabhāva*, even the negation of all such negations comprises the nature of *Prajñā*. Thus, the only purpose behind Nāgārjuna's rejection of (a theory of self-sense) after Buddha is to reject any theoretical stance of the intellect to comprehend the real form of nature including the self-substance. The denial is a denial of a

determined swabhāva. The transcendent is the unconditioned totality, the Absolute which is transcendent to all thought-determinations; the transcendental *swabhāva* is Tathatā or Suchness that exists in its own right, the real nature of things, unconditioned, indeterminate by the action of the intellect. The intellect, no doubt, can grasp only the image, the shadowy impression of the real, the impression, which is conditioned and inter-dependent on other factors in itself, but ultimately refers back to the unconditioned. The conditioned in this sense is real. It is real as an image of the unconditioned. Ignorance lies between the non-apprehensions of the distinction between the image and the reality, the conditioned and the unconditioned. But, *Prajñā*, even being transcendental knowledge, guides and gulfs the seekers all intentions towards the mundane world, towards the conditioned world, with the proper knowledge of the distinction between the conditioned and the unconditioned. *Prajñā* contains within its bosom the knowledge of the *Samsāra*, to be in the *Samsāra*, and live the everyday mundane life-world but without clinging. The Dialectic abstains the seeker from falling into the trap of the *Samsāra* by adopting a sense of clinging towards it. This consists the virtue of Dialectic and the gulf that has been thus created by *Prajñā*, consists ethics in Buddhism. The *Mūlamādhyamakārikā* says¹³⁰:

*Bhāvasya ced aprasiddhir abhāvo naiva sidhyati
Bhāvasya hy anyathā-bhāvaṃ abhāvaṃ bruvate janāḥ*

When the existence is not established, the non-existent is also not established. It is, indeed, the change of the existent that people generally call the non-existent.

[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana¹³¹]
Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XV no.5

*Svabhāvaṃ para-bhāvaṃ ca bhāvaṃ cābhāvaṃ eva ca,
Ye paśyanti na paśyanti te tattvaṃ Buddha-śāsne.*

Those who perceive self-nature as well as other-nature, existence as well as non-existence, they do not perceive the truth embodied in the Buddha's message.

[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana¹³²]

Mūlamādhyaṃkā Kārikā XV no. 6

The concept of *Karuṇā* depends on the realization of the purposiveness of *emancipation*, in the form of liberation from ignorance and suffering, directed towards the other¹³³. Dialectics is the touchstone to *Prajñā*. Ethics presupposes *Prajñā* and follows it in its course, on the knowledge of the purpose of *Karuṇā*. *Karuṇā*, or the moral compassion follows from the knowledge of the non-ego, the non-essentiality of self, the non-I; it presupposes the universe as a moral ground of practical materialization of the emancipatory purposive obligations that contingent to it by rise of *Prajñā*. *Prajñā* consists in the apprehension of the true nature of the objects devoid of any mental modification or *vikalpa*. The purpose of *karuṇā* is determined by the true apprehension of *Samsāra* in its dialectical framework. The knowledge of *Samsāra* in its true form lies in the knowledge of the reality and the existence of its composite forces as existence as dependently originated. Ethics in Buddhism is concerned in the philosophical/metaphysical justification of the difference between Samsara-in-Ignorance and Samsara-in-Wisdom (this corresponds to the difference between Samsara in bondage and Samsara in liberation respectively). The knowledge of the ultimate essencelessness of things and the non-attachment that follows thereafter in a Bodhisattva leads him to the realization of the non-essence of Nirvana as an independent entity, as an abode of eternal tranquility. The bodhisattva thus is not in attachment of any sort to the Nirvana, rather he abandons Nirvana to work for the emancipation of those who

struggle in the muck and mire of Samsara. S. Radhakrishnan says: “The insight (of the Bodhisattva) is developed gradually so as to render the heart pure and the mind free from illusion of self. The recognition of the impermanence of things enlarges the aspirant’s compassionate nature, and we get next the stage of *vimalā*, or purity. In it we have the practice of morality and the exercise of wisdom (*adhicitta*).¹³⁴”

*Mūlamādhyamaka kārikā*¹³⁵ says:

1. *Memety aham iti kṣīṇe bahirdhādhyātman eva ca,
Nirudhyata upādānaṃ tat kṣayāj janmanah kṣayah.*

When views pertaining to “mine” and “I”, whether they are associated with the internal or the external, have waned, then grasping comes to cease. With the waning of that [grasping], there is waning of birth.

[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana¹³⁶]
Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XVIII no.4

2. *Ātmety api prajñāpitam anātmety api deśitam.
Buddhair nātmā na cānātmā kaścid ity api deśitam*

The Buddha’s have make known the conception of self and taught the doctrine of no-self. At the same time, they have not spoken of something as the self or as the non-self.

[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana]
Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XVIII no.6

3. *Sarvaṃ tathyaṃ na vā tathyaṃ tathyaṃ cātathyaṃ eva ca,
naivātathyaṃ naiva tathyaṃ etad buddhānuśānaṃ.*

Everything is such, not such, both such and not such, and neither such and not such: this is the Buddha’s admonition.

[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana]
Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XVIII no.8

The idealism of Buddhism neither distinguishes Reality from thought, nor thought from Reality. Therefore, both D.T. Suzuki keenly recognize the *Prajñā* and its relation to *karuṇā* in its psychological aspect more than its ontological aspects.

Suzuki writes:

“...Buddhism does not separate being from thought nor thought from being, which is suchness in the objective world, and *vice versa*. Bhūtatathātā, then, is the god head of Buddhism, and it makes the consummation of all mental efforts to reach the highest principle, which unifies all possible contradictions and spontaneously directs the course of the world events. In short, it is the ultimate postulate of existence¹³⁷...When viewed psychologically, the Heart of Suchness is enlightenment for Buddhism makes no distinction between being and thought, world and mind. The ultimate nature of the two is considered to be absolutely one¹³⁸...Perhaps the best way to attack the problem of ignorance is to understand that Buddhism is a thoroughly idealistic doctrine as every true religion should be, and that psychologically, and not ontologically, should suchness be conceived, and further, that nescience is inherent in Suchness, though only hypothetically, illusively, apparently, and not really in any sense¹³⁹...Nirvana, briefly speaking, is a realization in this life of the all-embracing love and all knowing intelligence of Dharmakāyā¹⁴⁰...He who is in this¹⁴¹ Nirvana does not seek a rest in the annihilation of human aspiration, does not flinch in the face of endless transmigration. On the contrary, he plunges himself into the ever-rushing current of Samsara and sacrifices himself to save his fellow creatures from being eternally drowned in it¹⁴².”

The self in freedom, particularly in *Aprathisthita Nirvana* is a free will which is a necessary postulate to a moral life. In Buddhism, though freedom has been tried to appraise from an ethical point of view, but the metaphysical (speculative) reappraisal of the same could not be avoided altogether. Freedom is intrinsic and transcendental. *Nirvana* signifies only a phenomenological aspect of emancipation. Freedom means freedom from sufferings which is within and not an external factor factually binding the soul¹⁴³. Freedom is intrinsically existent, and therefore is only the state of ignorance about the real nature of objects including the nature of self and other metaphysical beings. Nirvana and the disciplines leading to it, in that sense, do only provide a pragmatic condition of annihilation of the soul-

substance (in the knowledge) as well as the awareness of pleasure and pain. The conceptual construction of a soul-substance as the self is the root cause of all its awareness resulting attachment¹⁴⁴.

In fact, though the origin of *karuṇā* is not that clearly ‘demonstrated’ in the Mahayana Sutras as that of Kant in case of Morality, yet, the very concept of *karuṇā* in its true sense of the term originates from the Perfect Knowledge or the Knowledge of the Reality and the proper understanding of the Concept of Two Truth. The Mādhyamika is not an upright rejection of existences of all beings. Ignorance belongs to the conditions of the intellect that suggests either the existence or non-existence of things as absolute in itself. The Mādhyamika, in its entire attempt, urges to rise beyond the four categories of the intellectual understanding (*chatuskoṭi- vinirmukta*). *Mūlamādhyamaka kārikā*¹⁴⁵ says:

Nivṛttam abhidhātavyaṃ nivṛtte citta-gocara

Anutpannāniruddhā hi nirvāṇam iva dharmatā.

When the sphere of thought has ceased, that which is to be designated also has ceased. Like freedom, the nature of things is non-arisen and non-ceased.

[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana¹⁴⁶]

Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XVIII no.7

Sambuddhānāmanutpāde śrāvakānāṃ punah kṣaye,

jñānaṃ prateyaka-buddhānāṃ asaṃsargāt pravartate.

When the fully enlightened one do not appear; on the waning of disciples; the wisdom of the self-enlightened one proceeds without association.

[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana¹⁴⁷]

Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XVIII no. 12

Yadi śūnyam idam sarvam udayo nāsti na vyayah,

prahāṇād vā nirodhād vā kasya nirvāṇam iṣyate

If all this is empty, there exists neither arising nor ceasing. [As such,] through the relinquishing and ceasing of what does one expect freedom?

[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana¹⁴⁸]

Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XXV, no.1

*Aprahinam asampraptam anucchinnam asavtām,
aniruddham anutpannam etan nirvāna ucyate.*

Unrelinquished, not reached, unannihilated, non-eternal, non-ceased and non-arisen – this is called freedom.

[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana¹⁴⁹]

Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XXV, no.3

*Ya ājavam-javī-bhāva upādāya pratīya vā,
so' pratīyānupādāya nirvānam upadiṣyate.*

whatever is of the nature of coming and going that occurs contingently or dependently. Freedom is, therefore, indicated as being non-contingent and independent.

[Commentary by D.J. Kalupahana¹⁵⁰]

Mūlamādhyamaka Kārikā XXV, no.9

C.D. Sharma says:

“He (the Sūnyavādin) knows that absolute negation is impossible because it necessarily presupposes affirmation. He only denies the ultimate reality of both affirmation and negation. He condemns intellect from the ultimate standpoint only for he knows that its authority is unquestionable in the empirical world. He wants that we should rise above the categories and the contradictions of the intellect and embrace Reality¹⁵¹.”

karuṇā is objected to the real world. By real world it does not mean the empirical world which domains in absolutely empiricism, rather the world as an appearance of the Real. The Bodhisattva by the virtue of *Prajñā-Pāramita* or the knowledge that the empirical world has no existence of its own rather it is real in the sense having been a part of the Absolute, the way Reality itself appears to us,

postpones his *Parinirvāṇa* to compassionately engage himself to the service of the emancipation of the layman. Thus again C.D. Sharma says:

“He asserts that it is the Real itself that which appears. He maintains that Reality is imminent in appearance and yet it transcends them all, that Reality is the Non-dual Absolute, Blissful and beyond intellect, where all plurality is merged... Ultimately it is the Real which appears. The Real is at once imminent and transcendent. The suchness of all dharmas is the suchness of Reality. The phenomenal is the noumenal and the noumenal is the phenomenal. Appearances *are* Reality¹⁵².”

The study sum up the fundamental scheme of its perspective as follows by highlighting the idea that *prajñā* as constructed reality on the one side and redeemed *sūnyatā* on the other side on the one hand and *karuṇā* as that which has been realize as samsara as nirvana on the opposite side.

1.5. Conclusion

The chapter is an attempt to traverse the conceptual history of the Buddhist critique of reason from the point of view of Nāgārjuna’s dialectical concept of *sūnyatā*. It discusses, in this process, the nature of critique of metaphysics and broadly the Indian Darsana’s view of *Prasaṅga* and *Dṛṣṭi* particularly from Buddhist methodology’s point of view. It also attempts to show how *sūnyatā* as a method and tool of challenging metaphysical constructs of levels of reality behind the link between *prajñā* and *karuṇā*. The chapter, therefore, directly refers to one of the major texts of Nāgārjuna that is *Mūlamādhyamakārikā*. *Mūlamādhyamakārikā* is used to reconstruct the relation between *sūnyatā*, *prajñā* and *karuṇā* in Nāgārjuna’s thought.

Notes and References:

- ¹ Kalupahana, D.J.; 1986; **Mūlamādhyaṃakakārikā of Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way**; Motilal Banarsidass; P. 264
- ² Reference from Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/nagarjun/>)
- ³ <http://www.iep.utm.edu/nagarjun/>
- ⁴ Thilly, Frank; 2001; **A History of Philosophy**; Central publishing House, Allahabad; p. 416.
- ⁵ “It is reached through the observation of the concomitance of the major and middle and non-observation of non-concomitance.” Radhakrishnan, S; 1999; *Indian Philosophy Vol. 2*; Oxford; p. 493
- ⁶ “Positive instances lead to the generalization which is confirmed by negative evidence. According to Advaita, inference, strictly speaking, follows only from the knowledge of a concomitance expressed in a universal affirmative proposition as “where there is smoke there is fire.” Knowledge of a concomitance expressed in a universal negative, as in “where there is no fire, there is no smoke,” leads to arthapatti, or argument by implication.” p. 493; *ibid*
- ⁷ Sharma, Chandradhar; 1987; **Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy**; Motilal Banarasidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; See p. 176;
- ⁸ “A category is called the padharta and the entire universe is reduced to six or seven padhartas. Padharta literally means ‘the meaning of a word’ or the object signified by a word’. All objects of knowledge or all realcomes under padharta. Padharta means an object which can be thought (jneya) and named (abhidheya). “ p. 176; Sharma, Chandradhar; 1987; Vaisesika; **Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy**; Motilal Banarasidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- ⁹ “Gautama defines sense-perception as “that knowledge which arises from the ‘contact’ of a sense-organ with its object, inexpressible by words, unerring and well defined.” Radhakrishnan, S.; 1999; Pratyaksa or Intuition; The Logical Realism of Nyaya; **Indian Philosophy Vol. 2**; Oxford; P. 49
- ¹⁰ *Ibid*; p. 134
- ¹¹ *Ibid*; p.134;
- ¹² *Ibid*; p. 134;
- ¹³ Gordon, Lewis R.; 2006; **Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times**; Paradigm Publishers; p. 7
- ¹⁴ “Genuine knowledge, however, does not consist in mere acquaintance with fact but in knowing their reasons or causes, and why they cannot be otherwise than as they are.” Thilly, Frank; 2001; **A History of Philosophy**; Central publishing House, Allahabad; P.98
- ¹⁵ Gangadhar D.A.; 1980; **Essays in Philosophy of Religion**; Vishwavidyalaya Prakashan, Varanasi; p. 59
- ¹⁶ Nagarjuna, as a critique of knowledge questions the *Pramana* Theorists that how do they prove that the means of knowledge, on which we so realize for our knowledge, are at all there. Matilal, B.K.; 1986; **Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge**; Oxford; p. 49;
- ¹⁷ Even Nagarjuna had to admit a highest state of reality
- ¹⁸ Sharma, C.D.; 1987; **A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy**; Motilal Banarsidass Publishers; P. 84
- ¹⁹ “Even in philosophy where methodological tool like *Sunyata* come to be exploited with the purpose of getting a better and clearer insight into certain issues, the insight that we shall come to gain cannot compel us to sacrifice that which is intuitively indubitable.”; Padhye, A.M.; 1988; **The Framework of Nagarjuna’s Philosophy**; Sri Satguru Publications; P. 55
- ²⁰ *Ibid*; P. 58.

²¹ “The procedure, however, carries a necessary limitation with it. Systems of philosophy adopts this procedure, but discard the limitation; they seek to comprehend the entire universe in their scope and attempt to reach the unconditioned.”; Murthy, T.R.V.; (2006); **The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of Madhyamika System**; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 210

²² Ibid.; P. 211

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.; pp. 40-41;

²⁵ “An intelligent reading of the development of Buddhist thought shows the Madhyamika system as having emerged out of a sustained criticism of the Abghidharmika schools, which themselves grew as the rejection of the atmavadaof the Brahmanical systems. It is thus a criticism of both the atma and anatama theories. An analogous position in the West is that of Kant in modern philosophy. His *Critique* is primarily an criticism of Empiricism, which itself was a rejection of the standpoint of the standpoint of Rationalism with regard to the origin and scope of knowledge.”; Murti T.R.V.; (2006); **The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of Madhyamika System**; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; P.8

²⁶ Murthy T.R.V.; (2006); **The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of Madhyamika System**; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; pp. 5-6

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Dutt, Nalinaksha; 1980; **Early Monastic Buddhism**; Firma Klm Pvt. Ltd.; pp. 133-34

²⁹ See the dialogue between Vacchgotta and the Tathāgata in p. 45; Murthy; T.R.V.; 2006; **The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhyamika System**; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

³⁰ Lindtner, Chr.; 1982; **Nagarjuna: Studies in The Writings and Philosophy of Nagarjuna**; MotilalBanarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 261

³¹ Murthy; T.R.V.; 2006; **The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhyamika System**; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 146

³² “...there is a difference between a skeptical attitude of the seeker of truth and the skeptical arguments as presented in the philosophical writings of Nāgārjuna, Jayarāsi, Śrīharṣa or in the Sextus Empiricus’ *‘Outlines of Pyrrhonism’*. In contradiction to this, the Vedic-Upaniṣadic expressions are mere attitudes of doubt and they may be considered as some provisions or conditions set for seeking the nature of truth. It is not scepticism proper.”; Mohanta, Dilip Kmr; 1999; **Cognitive Scepticism and Indian Philosophy**; Punthi Pustak; p. 2

³³ B.K. Matilal argues in favour of the philosophical importance of the role of an inquirer (with a skeptical stand) who doesn’t compromise with the ‘knowledge’ available to him: “A philosopher has to learn live with a sceptic, for they are both in the same profession, so to speak. A sceptic is not an intruder in the ‘Temple of Truth’, he shares the same concern for truth with the philosopher, and is reluctant to accept anything less. A sceptic is first and foremost an ‘inquirer’ and in this regard, all philosophers participate in inquiries and play the role, at least provisionally, of a sceptic of varying degree.” Matilal, B.K.; 1986; **Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge**; Oxford; p. 46

³⁴ “If we claim that we have means of knowing (*pramana*)the way the world is, or if we believe that we have such means available to us, it stands to reason to ask further: how do we *know* those means of knowing?...A means is not a means unless it does something and hence if we have the means, we have to make them effective. To make them effective, we have to *know* that they are there. Nagarjuna therefore rises the legitimate question: How or through what means, do we know that they are there?...If our means is turned into an end, then to achieve that end we need further means. If our standards of determining others are themselves to be determined by another set of standards and then a further set is needed for the second set of standards, we may regress into infinity and our search for the final standard may never come to an end.”; Ibid.; pp. 49-50

³⁵ D.K. Mohanta Dilip Kmr; 1999; **Cognitive Scepticism and Indian Philosophy**; Punthi Pustak; P. 2

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Matilal B.K.; 1986; **Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge**; Oxford; p. 51

³⁸ Matilal thus argues: “There may be objections against my use of the term skepticism in ‘connection’ with Nagarjuna. One could say that Nagarjuna was a Buddhist and not a sceptic.... (but) By calling Nagarjuna a sceptic or rather by using his arguments to delineate the position of my skeptical opponent of the *pramāna* theorists, I have only proposed a probable extension of the application of the term ‘scepticism’.” Ibid.; p. 50

³⁹ B.K. Matilal says: “What he (Nagarjuna) called in question was the very concept of *pramana*, our standards of proof, our evidence for knowledge. He did not use what is generally called argument for illusion, nor did he appeal to the fallibility of our cognitive process. He did not argue on the basis of the fact that we do misperceive on many occasion, or that we make false judgments more often than not. Instead he develops a very strong and devastating critique of the whole epistemological enterprise itself and therefore his arguments have a lasting philosophic value.” Ibid.; p.49

⁴⁰ Ibid.; p. 51

⁴¹ “Chandrakīrti takes up the problem explicitly in Chapter II (*Prasannapadā*). He argues (p. 59-60) that neither is the idea of a characteristic apart from what it is a characteristic of intelligible, nor is the idea of what is characterized apart from its characteristics. This reciprocal dependence deprives each term of its claim to exist or to be intelligible in its own right, and that fact, Chandrakīrti states, is the mark of *samvṛti*; it is unintelligibility which distinguishes it from *paramartha* – the higher truth; it is the failure of the concepts ‘characteristic’ and ‘thing’ to make sense which tells us they cannot be true ultimately.”; Sprung, Mervyn; 1979; **Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way**; Routledge and Kegan Paul; P. 15-16

⁴² Radhakrishnan, S; 2008; **Indian Philosophy Vol. I**; Oxford; P. 571

⁴³ Suzuki, D.T.; 2000; **Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism**; Munsiram Manoharlal Publication; P. 116

⁴⁴ **Ten Sutras from Dīgha-nikāya, II, Long Discourse of the Buddha**; Sri Satguru Publication; Delhi; P.157

⁴⁵ Williams, Paul; *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundation*; Routledge; p. 61

⁴⁶ Kalupahana, D.J.; 1986; **Mulamādhyamakārika of Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way**; Motilal Banarsidass; P. 231

⁴⁷ The domain of immediate experience is synthetic in nature, whereas, the domain of Reason is universal and necessary. Reason can theorize a subject matter to specialized branch of knowledge or sciences in a universal forum. Immediate experience transcends the limits of rational judgment.

⁴⁸ On discussing the need and significance of Mahayana as a religion and a moral domain, (in a distinguished format from that of Hinayana) Radhakrishnan comes strongly in favor of practical rationality of human intellect: “The wronged side of human nature asserted their rights and rebelled against the cold understanding with an imperious violence which was as tyrannical and exclusive as that of the understanding had been. The famishing soul and the thirsting fancy sought to derive nourishment from the suggestive symbolism of the prevailing religion. The life of Buddha could arouse emotion. Naturally Buddha was made a god. He was the realization of the moral idea, the law personified.” Radhakrishnan, S; 2008; **Indian Philosophy Vol. I**; Oxford; p. 506

⁴⁹ “Nagarjuna...points out that the conceptual totality is a mere appearance and the thing-in-itself indefinite and void. He speaks apparently of two worlds,- the world of conventional unity and the world of ultimate reality. We normally believe that the world in which we live, move and have our being, the objects and persons whom we intimately know and do not fail to recognize as our own

and as related to us by some laws, principles and relations, is a world which exists independently of us and is possessed of the nature which our perceptual perspectives refer to.”; Ghose, Ramendranath; 1987; **The Dialectics of Nāgārjuna**; Vohra Publishers and Distributors; p. 57

⁵⁰ Here, by ‘he’ Ghose refers to Kant

⁵¹ Ibid.; p. 56

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ “The *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra (Kasyapaparivarta)* states the middle position thus:

“The Bodhisattva desiring to adopt the spiritual discipline must cultivate the attitude of unceasing, critical alertness with regard to things (*yoniso dharmaprayuktena bhavitavyam*). And what is this alertness? It is the perception of all things in their true form (*sarvadharmāṇām bhutapratyayavekṣā*). And again, what is the nature of this true perception? Where, Kāśyapa, there is not the viewing of things as atman (substance) etc., that which does not take rūpa, (matter), vedanā, samjñā, saṃskāra, vijñāna as eternal (*nitya*), or changing (*anitya*). That things are unchanging (*nitya*), this, Kāśyapa, is one end (*antah*); that they are changing is another...that reality is substance (*ātmeti*) is one end; that it is only model (*nairātmayam iti*) is another end; the middle between these two extremes of ātman and *nairātmaya* is the intangible, the incomparable, non-apprehending, not comprehensible, without any position...that verily is the Middle Path – the vision of all Real in its true form.”; Murthy T.R.V.; 2006; **The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhyamika System**; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; pp. 209-210

⁵⁴ Garfield and Graham Priest opines in their joint project “Nagarjuna and the Limits of Thought” opines: “He (Nagarjuna) does not shy away from paradox and apparent contradictions (in his writings)”, *Philosophy East & West*, Vol. 53; Number 1; January 2003, by University of Hawai Press; pp. 1-12

⁵⁵ Graham Priest and Garfield opines: “One of the reasons Nagarjuna so perplexes many who come to his texts is his seeming willingness to embrace contradictions, on the one hand, while making use of classic *reductio* arguments, implicating his endorsement of the law of noncontradiction, on the other. Another is his apparent willingness to saw off the limbs on which he sits. He asserts that there are two truths, and that they are one; that everything both exist and does not exist; that nothing is existent or nonexistent; that he rejects all philosophical views including his own; that he asserts nothing. And that he appears to mean every word of it.” *Philosophy East & West*, Vol. 53; Number 1; January 2003, by University of Hawai Press; p. 1 (Introduction).

⁵⁶ Logical contradictions are imminent to theoretic use of reason. The dialectical consciousness actually critically transcends the autonomy of the theoretic use of reason in human understanding and methodologically proceeds toward the practicality of Reason which itself involves the instrumentality of theoretic reason.

⁵⁷ Murthy T.R.V.; 2006; **The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhyamika System**; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; pp.5-6

⁵⁸ “Reason involves itself in deep and interminable conflict when it tries to go beyond phenomena to seek their ultimate ground...He (Buddha) is conscious of the interminable nature of the conflict, and resolves it by rising to a higher standpoint of criticism...Buddha reached a very high level of philosophic consciousness, and he did give an answer to the problem- the only answer possible for a critique of experience.” pp. 40-41; *ibid.*

⁵⁹ “Criticism is the very essence of Buddha’s teaching. He was aware of the antinomical character of Reason. His refusal to answer questions about the beginning and extent of the world or of the unconditioned existence of the soul (*jīva*) and the Perfect Being (*tathāgata*) was the direct outcome of the awareness of the conflict in Reason. It is at the same time an attempt to transcend the duality of Reason. Dialectic was born.” p.8; *ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid*; p. 8;

⁶¹ *Ibid*; P. 39

⁶² “Reason involves itself in deep and interminable conflict when it tries to go beyond the phenomena to seek their ultimate ground.”; *ibid.*; p. 40

⁶³ Ibid.; pp. 40-41;

⁶⁴ Sharma, C.D.; 1987; **A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy**; Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; P. 89-90

⁶⁵ Ibid; P. 90;

⁶⁶ “The opening dialogue of the **Digha Nikaya(the BrahmajalaSutta)** indicayes the standpoint of Buddha. He characterises all speculations as dithi-vada (dogmatism) and consistently refuses to be drawn into the net (jala). He is conscious of the interminable nature of the conflict, and resolves it by rising to the higher standpoint of criticism. Dialectic was born.”; Murthy T.R.V.; 2006; **The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhymika System**; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 40

⁶⁷ Mohanta, Dilip Kmr; 1999; **Cognitive Scepticism and Indian Philosophy**; Punthi Pustak; P. 21

⁶⁸ Murti, T.R.V.; 2006; **The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhymika System**; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; P.270

⁶⁹ The term Dialectic, taken from the Ancient Greek tradition as the art of conversation when being used for the philosophical purpose, Roland Hall, accommodates a number of varied principles in the Vol. 3; Encyclopedia of Philosophy [Thomson Gale] by which the meaning of the term Dialectic could be appropriately theoretically exposed; among them two of the points appropriately coheres/expresses the dialectical method of Nāgārjuna: “...among the more important meanings of the term [dialectic] have been (1) the method of refutation by examining the logical consequences (and)...(7) the criticism of the logical illusion, showing the contradictions into which reason falls in trying to go beyond experience to deal with transcendental objects.”

⁷⁰ Mohanta, Dilip Kmr; 1999; **Cognitive Scepticism and Indian Philosophy**; Punthi Pustak; See p. 17

⁷¹ The importance of any particular method or tool obtained by any philosophical system of thought is directed toward some purpose, and whatsoever tool or method is thus obtained, is constructed so as to fit into the proper disposition of that particular purpose. J.N. Mohanti makes it altogether clear that that the principal purpose of Indian Philosophical systems of thought is to contribute towards permanent emancipatory conditions from theory to praxis. For Nagarjuna, the only method that could serve his purpose of emancipation of the consciousness in a consistent manner and only that which could expose and communicate the language of the Great Silence is the dialectical method of *Prasaṅga*.

⁷² “...how can...śūnyatā be realized in one’s own consciousness? Nagarjuna’s reply is that – the only way of realizing śūnyatā is the adoption of dialectical method which he called in saṃskṛta ‘*prasaṅga*’”; Mohanta Dilip Kmr; 1999; **Cognitive Scepticism and Indian Philosophy**; Punthi Pustak; p. 20

⁷³ *ibid*; p. 16

⁷⁴ “In *prasaṅga*, Nagarjuna gives a crystal clear systematized form of the suggestions of silence given by the Buddha regarding metaphysics. According to Nagarjuna, the Buddha was aware of the limitations of the knowability of human reason which is antinomical in character. Because of this awareness, the Buddha used to remain silent about the fourteen unspeakable metaphysical questions and this is precisely the implication of ‘Catuṣkoti Vinirmukta’ position.”; *ibid*; p. 16

⁷⁵ “It is thus reasonably contended that for a clear understanding of Nagarjuna’s cognitive scepticism on must be acquainted with the different dimensions of his philosophy, especially of the nature of his philosophical method.”; *ibid*; p. 16

⁷⁶ “There is no doubt, however, that the Madhyamaka dialectic is the systematized form of the suggestions made by Buddha himself. Buddha resolves the conflict by an intuitive perception of the real as non-dual (*advaya*); the Madhyamaka does it by turning Reason against itself, through the Dialectic.”; Murthy T.R.V.; 2006; “**The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhymika System**”; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 9

⁷⁷ “It is possible to perceive the initial stages of the dialectic in the direct teachings of Buddha. Criticism is the very essence of Buddha’s teaching. He was aware of the antinomical character of Reason. His refusal to answer questions about the beginning and extent of the world or of the unconditioned existence of the soul (jīva) and the Perfect Being (tathāgata) was the direct outcome of the awareness of conflict in Reason. It is at the same time an attempt to transcend the duality of Reason.”; *ibid*; p. 8

⁷⁸ While Buddha’s criticism is transcendental connoted by the transcendental Silence, Nagarjuna’s criticism is logical and methodological.

⁷⁹ D.T. Suzuki D.T.; 2000; **Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism**; Munsiram Manoharlal Publication; P. 109

⁸⁰ *Ibid*; P. 112

⁸¹ The categories that Prof. Murthy is speaking of are the categories of rūpa, vedanā, vijñāna etc.

⁸² Murthy T.R.V.; 2006; “**The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhyamika System**”; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 45

⁸³ “Professor Radhakrishnan unerringly indicates the nature of Buddha’s silence in his works thus:

If the Buddha declared to define the nature of the Absolute or if he contends himself with negative definitions, it is only to indicate that absolute being is above all determinations. Why, then, did Buddha not admit in express terms the reality of the absolute. Buddha refused to declare the absolute, for that would be to take a step out of the world of relativity, the legitimacy of which he was the first to contest in others. The absolute is not a matter of empirical observation. The world of experience does not reveal the absolute anywhere within its limits.”; Murthy T.R.V.; 2006; “**The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhyamika System**”; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 48

⁸⁴ *Ibid*; pp. 48-49

⁸⁵ Ghose, Ramendranath; 1987; **The Dialectics of Nāgārjuna**; Vohra Publishers and Distributors; P. 265

⁸⁶ “Chandrakirti has rightly said in his commentary on MMK XVII. 14 that the questions which are unanalyzable (avyakaraṇīya) in their predictability are technically called ‘avyākṛta’ (unanalyzable), - ‘avyakaraṇād avyākṛta’”; *ibid*; p. 265

⁸⁷ “Nagarjuna has also referred to Buddha on interminable problems, but that seemed to have placed exclusive emphasis on the necessity of logical consistency and has applied the method of *prasaṅgāpādana* as an instrument to judge that a similar statement of inexplicable predication is necessarily untrue.”; *ibid*. p. 264-265

⁸⁸ Mohanta Dilip Kmr; 1999; **Cognitive Scepticism and Indian Philosophy**; Punthi Pustak; p. 22

⁸⁹ “...though the main purpose of the dialectical method of Nagarjuna is to demolish by turning every thesis against itself, his dialectical method is not an end in itself (upeya) but an instrument (upaya), a revealer, to disclose the true nature of phenomenal objects (dharman) and the Reality underlying phenomena (dharatā, tathatā). But Nagarjuna cautions us not to confuse his dialectical method with a philosophical thesis (pratijñā) or a metaphysical assertion (dṛṣṭi) about the world and Reality. He declares: Nāsti mama pratijñā – I have no thesis of my own”. He advances neither any thesis nor any pramāṇa (instrument of valid knowledge) to establish his thesis, because he has none.”; Mohanta Dilip Kmr; 1999; **Cognitive Scepticism and Indian Philosophy**; Punthi Pustak; p. 23

⁹⁰ *Ibid*; p. 22

⁹¹ Dr. A.M. Padhye made a detail study of almost all the perspectives from which the philosophy of Madhyamika has been judged. These perspectives are the structural frames of thoughts claimed by scholars for Nagarjuna’s philosophical engagement to be committed to. In his analytical study of each of the perspectives and their critical exposition he tried to find out the causes behind such appraisals of Nagarjuna and Madhyamika. In his work “The Framework of Nagarjuna’s Philosophy” he mentions thus: “A survey of the different perspectives developed with reference to

Nagarjuna's philosophy will show that they readily fall into four main groups: taking Nagarjuna's philosophy as (A) Nihilistic (B) Monistic (C) Absolutistic and (D) Mystic in character... Before coming to formulate our own view regarding the nature of *Madhyamika* Philosophy, it would perhaps be proper and desirable to consider what makes these scholars to uphold their respective strands about *Madhyamika* philosophical thought in general and Nagarjuna's philosophy in particular."; Padhye, A.M.; 1998; "The Framework of Nagarjuna's Philosophy"; Sri Satguru Publications; p. 1-2

⁹² Sprung, Mervyn; 1979; **Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way**; Routledge and Kegan Paul; p.150;

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid; p. 12;

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid; p. 150 and 8

⁹⁷ Ibid; p. 15

⁹⁸ Ghose, Ramendranath; 1987; **The Dialectics of Nāgārjuna**; Vohra Publishers and Distributors; p. 54

⁹⁹ "...though it is true that the Buddha did not commit himself to any specific metaphysical view yet this in itself does not establish that he had nothing to say, whatever, that could be considered as metaphysically significant. This needs to be made sense of with extreme caution and with the help of such a methodological weapon which will enable us to make sense of his unwillingness to discuss certain metaphysical issues at all. But on the other hand, the tool under consideration would be such that it should not empty his philosophy of any and every metaphysical issue just because it is a metaphysical issue and nothing else."; Padhye, A.M.; 1998; **The Framework of Nagarjuna's Philosophy**; Sri Satguru Publications; p. 56

¹⁰⁰ "Though Nagarjuna himself does not appear to tell us explicitly, at the outset, the purpose of his writing the treatise—*Madhyamakaśāstra*, his commentator Chandrakīrti does not remain silent on the issue. He tells us there are two principal objects of his endeavour: first, to demarcate *neyārtha* and *nītārtha sūtras* (from canonical literature), and secondly, to bring out their respective imports as also to explain inter-connection between the two. He further tells us that those passages which are indicative of the proper mode (of investigation and enquiry) to be undertaken are *neyārtha*, as such a kind of enquiry alone can be said to be leading to the advent of the intended goal of philosophic illumination, while those which are instrumental to freeing us of our bewichment through misleading impressions, confused concepts, ambiguous language and platonistic world-view are said to be *nītārtha*."; Padhye, A.M.; 1998; **The Framework of Nagarjuna's Philosophy**; Sri Satguru Publications; p. 27

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² "Even in philosophy where methodological tool like *Sunyata* come to be exploited with the purpose of getting a bolder and clearer insight into certain issues, the insight that we shall come to gain cannot compel us to sacrifice that which is intuitively indubitable."; *ibid*; p. 55

¹⁰³ "Sūnyavāda is one of the most important schools of Buddhism Nagarjuna cannot be called its founder because it was present before him in the Mahayana Sūtras, some of which are prior even to Ashvaghosa, and in Ashvaghosa. Nagarjuna is only the first systematic expounder of Sūnyavāda. However it is to the glory of Nagarjuna that he seized these threads and wove them into unity; it is to the greatness of Nagarjuna that he developed these more or less scattered ideas almost to perfection in a thoroughly consistent manner."; Sharma, C.D.; 1987; **A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy**; Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 86

¹⁰⁴ "The Sūnyavādins take 'existence', 'is', 'affirmation', 'being' in the sense of absolute existence or ultimate reality; it means Eternelism. Those who maintain that the world exists are committing a great error because when we penetrate deep we find that this entire world with all its manifold phenomena is essentially relative and therefore ultimately unreal. And those who advocate non-

existence or non-being are also committing a great error because they are denying even the phenomenal reality of the world.” Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Padhye, A.M.; (1988); **The Framework of Nāgārjuna’s Philosophy**; Sri Satguru Publications; p. 54

¹⁰⁶ Suzuki, D.T.; 2000; **Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism**; Munsiram Manoharlal Publishers; p. 20.

¹⁰⁷ “Worldly things exist without being analysed. When analysed, [however,] there is no self different from form and the other [four constituents].”; Westerhoff, Jan; 2009; **Nāgārjuna’s Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction**; Oxford; p.25

¹⁰⁸ Ibid; p. 26

¹⁰⁹ Williams, Paul; (1989); **Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations**; Routledge; p. 68

¹¹⁰ “It is on the account of our limited senses and finite mind that we have a world of particularities, which, as it is, is no more than a fragment of the absolute Bhūtatahātā. And yet it is through this fragmentary manifestation that we are finally enabled to reach the fundamental nature of being in its entirety.”; Suzuki, D.T.; 2000; Munsiram Manoharlal Publishres Pvt. Ltd.; p. 112

¹¹¹ Murthy T.R.V.; 2006; **The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhymika System**; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 86

¹¹² “There were those who interpreted Nagarjuna’s denial of a thesis as equivalent to an assertion that the Madhyamika has no position at all and makes no assertion in any sense. He simply refutes. Others, most notably TsongKhapa and his tradition, maintained that Nagarjuna’s denial of a thesis is only a denial of an inherently existent thesis. For TsongKhapa, Nagarjuna clearly has a position, and obviously makes assertions. Any alternative involves paradoxes. In context, Nagarjuna’s text criticizes an opponent who argues that Nagarjuna must accept the real existence of something, to wit, his own words and arguments- otherwise he could not refute anything. His reply is that his own arguments quite obviously also lack inherent existence, but this does not mean that they lack refutative force. It is like when one illusory or dream entity puts an end to another illusory, dream entity (*Vig. V. 23*). From which it seems to follow that when Nagarjuna says he does not negate he means that he does not negate as an act involving inherent existence. It is rather like activities between illusory entities. There is a non-inherently existing negation, and therefore a non-inherently existing thesis too.”; Williams, Paul; 1989; **Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundation**; Routledge; pp. 63-64

¹¹³ “When we make an analytic judgment about an object or any sort of necessary relation between two objects, we verify our knowledge of the object or the relation as the case may be, by some concepts and categories and by some criteria or principles of logic, which determine the formation, formulation or definition of concepts in some patent forms of language. Nagarjuna calls these uses conventional and pragmatic...and regards their truth as relative.”; Ghose, Ramendranath; 1987; **The Dialectics of Nāgārjuna**; Vohra Publishers and Distributors; p. 57

¹¹⁴ “By his (Buddha’s) penetrative analysis he had reached a position which transcended and annulled the dogmatic procedures of Reason.”; Murthy, T.R.V.; 2006; **The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhymika System**; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 47

¹¹⁵ “The rejection of theories (*ditṭhi*) is itself the *means* by which Buddha is led to the non-conceptual knowledge of the absolute, and not vice versa.”; *ibid*; p. 49

¹¹⁶ “It is not also true that Buddha’s attitude was just a suspension of judgment and that he was awaiting a more favourable opportunity to publish the truth. He tells us expressly that he has taught the truth without reservation and without any distinction of the exoteric and the esoteric; he had not kept back anything like a tight-feasted teacher.”; *ibid*; p. 47

¹¹⁷ “When we use Reason in the dogmatic speculative way to construct theories, we are not aware of its nature, how it works. As Reason becomes involved in antinomies, we grow critical and try to understand the structure of Reason itself. The two may thus be equated; to know what a theory

(dṛṣṭi) is, is to know it as false. The very futility of the attempt of Reason to reach the Unconditioned shows it up as a subjective device.”; *ibid*; p. 47

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*; p. 48

¹¹⁹ Ghose, Ramendranath; 1987; **The Dialectics of Nāgārjuna**; Vohra Publishers and Distributors; p.75

¹²⁰ *Ibid*; p. 55

¹²¹ “In the *Mulamadhymikakarikashe* even bases his own argumentation often on the logicians’ principle, namely that a negation is not possible if the object to be negated is not real. Chandrakirti makes it explicit in his commentary, the *Prasannapada*. Only, Nagarjuna does not negate anything, for there is nothing to be negated: all things being void, there is neither a thing to be negated not a negation (karika and vrtti LXIII)”; **Vigrahavyāvartanī: The Dialectical Method of Nāgārjuna**, Translated from original Sanskrit with introduction and notes by Kamaleswar Bhattacharya (1985), Text critically edited by E.H. Johnstone and Arnold Kunst; Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.; p. 90

¹²² Kalupahana, D.J.; 1986; **Mulamadhyamakakarika of Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way**; Motilal Banarsidass; pp. 356-57

¹²³ Kalupahana, D.J.; 1986; **Mulamadhyamakakarika of Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way**; Motilal Banarsidass; p. 10-11.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*; p. 11.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*.

¹²⁶ Suzuki D.T.; 2000; **Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism**; Munsiram Manoharlal Publishers; see p. 20. and p. 353

¹²⁷ *Ibid*

¹²⁸ *Ibid*; p. 354;

¹²⁹ Kalupahana, D.J.; 1986; **Mulamadhyamakakarika of Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way**; Motilal Banarsidass; p. 361

¹³⁰ Kalupahana, D.J.; 1986; **Mulamadhyamakakarika of Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way**; Motilal Banarsidass

¹³¹ *Ibid*; p. 230;

¹³² *Ibid*; p. 231

¹³³ “Basically Karuṇā is defined as the wish that others be free of suffering...” Suzuki, Beatrice Lane; 1981; **Mahayana Buddhism**; with an introduction by D.T. Suzuki and introduction by Christmas Humphreys; 4th ed.; London: George Allen and Unwin.

¹³⁴ Radhakrishnan, S; 2008; *Indian Philosophy, Vol. I*; Oxford; p. 516

¹³⁵ Kalupahana, D.J.; 1986; **Mulamadhyamakakarika of Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way**; Motilal Banarsidass

¹³⁶ *Ibid*; p. 265-66

¹³⁷ Suzuki D.T.; 2000; **Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism**; Munsiram Manoharlal Publishers; p. 20. And p. 99;

¹³⁸ *Ibid*; P. 112

¹³⁹ *Ibid*; p. 116-117

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*; p. 349;

¹⁴¹ Here, Suzuki is speaking of the Aprathistita Nirvana, or the Nirvana that has no abode.

¹⁴² *Ibid*; P. 350

¹⁴³ “The source of suffering is seen more in psychological terms rather than in terms of objective facts. Suffering is not out there which invades upon our souls. Rather it is within us.”; Pandit; Moti

Lal; 1998; **Sunyata: The Essence of Mahayana Spirituality**; Munsiram Manohar lal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 7

¹⁴⁴ “Attachment begets the thirst of pleasure, and thirst hides all flaws (of the objects). Blinded by this, the thirsty man imagines qualities in things, and seizes upon the means to achieve pleasure.”; Murthy T.R.V.; 2006; **The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhymika System**; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 270

¹⁴⁵ Kalupahana, D.J.; 1986; **Mulamadhyamakakarika of Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way**; Motilal Banarsidass

¹⁴⁶ Ibid; p. 268

¹⁴⁷ Ibid; p. 274

¹⁴⁸ Ibid; p. 355

¹⁴⁹ Ibid; p. 356-57

¹⁵⁰ Ibid; p. 361;

¹⁵¹ Sharma, C.D.; 1987; **A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy**; Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; p. 94

¹⁵² Ibid; p. 94-95