LIMITS OF TRUTH: NAGARJUNA AND DERRIDA ON APORIAS

Kumara J.D.A.

Department of Philosophy, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

ashokakumara@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

An aporia is defined as an irresolvable internal contradiction or logical disjunction in a text, argument, or theory. The concept is basically found philosophy and indicates a philosophical puzzle or expression of doubt. In its etymological roots, aporia is linked with platonic mythology. Particularly, Socrates successfully pointed that his counter debaters have no fitting definition for certain topics, for instance, piety, love, courage, justice, etc. At a later stage in the Western thought, aporia is meant to indicate something similar to an impasse or paradox (Derrida, 1997). Derrida put forward the concept of "possible-impossible aporias" – while loaning the idea of aporia from the original a Greek term, which means puzzle, but it has come to mean, when it comes to Derrida, something more like an impasse or paradox. Derrida found a range of paradoxes in conventions, for example, conventions like giving, hospitality, forgiving and mourning create ceaseless contradictions, rather aporias. According to Derrida, the condition of possibility of an aporia is also, and at once, the condition of their impossibility. Masterpieces of Nāgārjuna (150 – 250 CE) and Jacques Derrida (1930 –2004), for instance, Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, Given Time, Of Grammatology and The Gift of Death have been used for the hermeneutics analysis of aporia, where limits of truth comes to play. Both Derrida and Nāgārjuna confine in their explanation of the truth as subject-predicate structure of truth-bearing items have inherent limitations that lead to aporia. It is highly misleading to perceive the world as an object-based reality, as modern scientific thought indulged, ignoring its subject predicate structure.

Keywords: Nāgārjuna, Derrida, Aporia, Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, Truth