

---

## Derrida and Nāgārjuna: A Post-Structuralist Critique on Logocentrism

J.D.A. Kumara

University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

ashokakumara@gmail.com

Logocentrism is basically focused on the relationship between thought, speech, and writing, according to Derrida, logocentrism accords special privileges to “logos”. As per Derrida logocentrism is an unquestioned metaphysical assumption, based on constructed structures that are alien to the reality. Post-structuralists, like Jacques Derrida rejected the binary oppositions in Western tradition where one term is given hierarchical advantage over the other. Différance, a central concept in Derrida's deconstruction -- that helps to deconstruct metaphysics of presence, identifies the difference that shatters the cult of identity and the dominance of Self over Other; it means that there is no origin (originary unit), further logocentrism needs to be deconstructed. Nāgārjuna preached Śūnyatā which is critical on the realm of objects and the realm of subjects as he refutes a self-existing Svabhāva, where logocentrism is rejected. Nāgārjuna debunks logocentric Dr̥ṣṭis; he attacks all Āstika and Nāstika philosophies including Upaniads, Nyaya-Vaishesika, Sāṃkhya, Yogacara, Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta, Cārvāka, Ājīvaka, Sautrāntika, Sarvāstivāda.

Objective of this research is to reveal the draw the parallels between Western and oriental thought in case of logocentrism and understand the deconstructive endeavor of Nāgārjuna, and compare it with Derrida's effort to reveal misconception of language from Plato to Ferdinand de Saussure. Literature survey has been done to incorporate and synthesize previous literature as the primary method of the research to argue on the hypothesis. The works of Nāgārjuna and Derrida were used for the critical analysis under the study. This research is based on the research method that is basically critical, speculative, and equipped with a momentous historical perspective in the post-structuralist lines of scholarly inquiry. Buddhist theories, like Śūnyatā, need to be rediscovered to understand philosophical questions pertaining to human thought as human beings posit their lives on ideas from antiquity to the present day. Śūnyatā can also be developed as strategy as deconstruction for philosophical inquiry; a course of analysis, criticism, explanation, and speculation.

**Keywords:** logocentrism; Śūnyatā; svabhāva; post-structuralism