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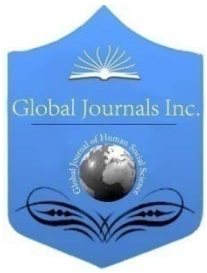

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Nagarjuna's (Buddhist Philosopher) Influence on the Major Theorist of the Frankfurt School

By Steven Gerardi

New York City College of Technology, United States

Abstract- All the sociological literature points to the Frankfurt School Theorists using Marx (for Alienated Labor) and Freud (for psychoanalysis) in constructing Critical Theory, (in an effort to explain the inhuman treatment of humanity by the German fascists). This original effort suggests that the foundational theorists (FTCT) of Critical Theory (Adorno, Fromm, Marcuse and Horkheimer) were also profoundly influenced by the Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna's major thematic focus is sunyata or "emptiness," (one of the key Buddhist doctrines).

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Abstract- **All the sociological literature points to the Frankfurt School Theorists using Marx (for Alienated Labor) and Freud (for psychoanalysis) in constructing Critical Theory, (in an effort to explain the inhuman treatment of humanity by the German fascists). This original effort suggests that the foundational theorists (FTCT) of Critical Theory (Adorno, Fromm, Marcuse and Horkheimer) were also profoundly influenced by the Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna's major thematic focus is sunyata or "emptiness," (one of the key Buddhist doctrines).**

I. Introduction

Context and Overview: The FTCT employed Freud for his psychoanalysis (FTCT concern of the Authoritarian Personality), and Marx for his concept of Alienated Labor in an effort to understanding humanities inhumanity to itself (i.e. Auschwitz, and Nazi Germany).

However, because of Western leanings toward science, and a strong Judeo-Christian tradition, Eastern Philosophical thought/doctrine was simply never disclosed by the FTFS as an important foundation for the make-up of the Critical Theory.

Additionally this ordinal effort will suggest that Nagarjuna's concept of Sunatay which stresses the idea of emptiness of essence, not self, selfless and existence without underlying essence was in fact employed by FTCT in the creation of *Minima Moralia, Escape from Freedom, One Dimension Man, and The Problem of Truth.* These concepts all echo the following precepts (below) set forth by Nagarajuna: emptiness refers to the fact that nothing exists in itself. When something is empty it is without independent of inherent existence. There is no independent self which is separate from what happens in society. Hence, the emptiness concept: Affirmation of Non-being, negation of non-being; All things do not exist: affirmation of non-being, negation of being; All things both exist and do not exist; both affirmation and negation exist, All things neither exist nor do not exist; neither affirmation nor negation. Lastly, the subject always needs the object (Komito, 1999).

Nagarajuna also identified two components of truth concept; ultimate and superficial truth. Ultimate Truth is that everything is empty of essence, and Superficial Truth is that there is no Ultimate Truth. This effort will compare and contrast Nagajuna's concepts as it relates to Adorno's *Minima Moralia,* Fromm's *Escape from Freedom*, Marcuse's One *Dimensional Man*, and Horkhiem's *The Problem with Truth*.

Adorno's *Minima Moralia: Minima Moralia* is believed to be based upon Aristotle's *Magna Moralia*. Loosely translated into English as Great Morals by which the human race must live. Adorno suggested that a good, honest life is no longer possible, because we live in an inhuman society. "Life does not live" Adorno decries, suggesting that in everyday life there is a continuing subversive nature of children's' toys, the desolation of the family, the lack of being genuine, "New Speak", Terrorism, and the rise of occult views all are having a negative effect on GOOD Ethical Behavior/life.

"LIFE DOES NOT LIVE", the subject without the object, an absence of independent self that Is separate from external forces the loss of ethical principles. Here we see Nagarjuna's concept of Sunatay – the emptiness of essence, not self, indeed without underlying essence;

"LIFE DOES NOT Live" Illustratively, let us examine Franz Kafka's (1883-1924) The Metamorphosis. Gregor Samsa, The protagonist, awakes one morning transformed into a Gigantic, hideous multi legged insect. In this perceived temporal state Gregor must conform to Social forces around him, by confining himself to his room; where only to be seen by his family.

He is dependent on his family for every necessity of life. He comments: "what an exhausting Job I picked on. It's much more irritating work than doing actual business in the office. The devil Take it all!" Gregor's metamor-phosed state is a volunteristic autonomous decision to reject self In an effort to recapture his individuality. But this rejection implies for him rejecting his Individuality, his autonomy, indeed his human form (Gerardi, 2006). The subject without the object; all things exist: the emptiness concept: Affirmation of Non-being, negation of non-being; All things do not exist: affirmation of non-being, negation of being; all things both exist and do not exist; both affirmation and negation exist; All things exist neither exist nor do not exist; neither neither affirmation nor negation.

Author: Professor Emeritus of Sociology New York City College of Technology, CUNY 300 Jay St. Brooklyn N.Y. 11201.
e-mail: SGerardi@Citytech.Cuny.Edu

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Fromm's Escape from Freedom: Fromm suggested that the Mass Culture and its economic counterpart consumerism, claims to be a democratic force (for it provides individual free choice in the free market system), but in fact it exercise control over all aspects of social life in post modern society. Indeed, only a few public individuals dictate the public's perceptions of freedom, and individuality. This mass freedom illusion is based upon a few "superstars" (i.e. movie, T.V. and sports figures) who hold control over the perceptions of freedom and individual autonomy in post modern society (Gerardi, 2014).

Here Nagarjuna's Sunatay is strongly echoed – the emptiness of essence, not self, selfless and inherent existence indeed without underlying essence in this case the lack of freedom in modern culture. Indeed, the subject without the object. All things exist: the emptiness concept: Affirmation of Non-being, negation of non-being; All things do not exist: affirmation of non-being, negation of being; All things both exist and do not exist; both affirmation and negation exist; All things exist neither exist nor do not exist; neither affirmation nor negation. Therefore, modern humanity is always escaping from freedom.

Marcuse's One –Dimensional Man: Marcuse argued that the current organization of society produced what he termed "Surplus Repression" (Eros and Civilization, 1962). Surplus Repression suggests that "the struggle for existence in modern society generally is not necessary (only in poor culture does it still exist) creating what Marcuse labeled *Surplus Repression*. In the struggle for existence's place, a new form of control - a "ONE DIMENSIONAL" ideology. An ideology in which thought, opposition, and critical thinking are all organized into one passive form of behavior. Having an individual opinion stands outside the mainstream, hence seen as unreasonable and irrational (Gerardi, 2014). Indeed, social conformity has become reasonable and sensible behavior in post-modern era- the subject without the object.

Again we further see evidence of Nagarjuna's concept of Sunatay – the emptiness of essence, not self, selfless and inherent existence without underlying essence and individual thought. All things exist: the emptiness concept: Affirmation of Non-being, negation of non-being; All things do not exist: affirmation of non-being, negation of being; All things both exist and do not exist; both affirmation and negation exist; All things neither exist nor do not exist; neither affirmation nor negation-the total loss of automamy.

II. Horkheimer's: the problem with Truth

Horkheimer questioned the claim that science presupposes "TRUTH". However, he suggested that science/technology can never be seen as a guaranteed set of truths. Indeed, science/technology is seen as value-free objective process seeking the truth. But the facts are that " …what is true is that which is helpful to the condition of humanity " and not truth without value.

Here we see for the first time Nagarajuna concept of the two truths, ultimate and superficial. Ultimate Truth is that everything is empty of essence, and Superficial Truth is that there is no Ultimate Truth. Indeed, as Goethe is quoted in Horkheimer's "The *Problem of Truth"*... "I have no that I regard as true that idea which is fruitful for me, fits in with the rest of my thought, and at the same time benefits me".. Suggesting the concept that there is no "Ultimate Truth"- the subject without the object.

III. Conclusion

The essays listed above all have profound elements of Nagajuna's Sunyata emptiness concept. Indeed, analogous to Star Trek's "Borg". The "Borg" is a race of quasi- human beings in which the "collective" seeks one purpose, the pursuit of mechanical perfection of the human race through blind assimilation. This assimilation enhances the control of the "hive" or Borg society as a social collective. Analogous to the Borg's "hive" is post modern society's social conformity, loss of individuality, and freedom itself; fostering hegemony (Gerardi 2010)-the subject without the object.

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