CASE STUDY IN THE MADHYAMIKA

DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE

MEANINGLESSNESS OF ALL VIEWS:

CONTENTLESS THOUGHT

BY

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PREFACE

To defeat the heirs of the enlightenment with their own weapon i.e. reason itself. To reduce all philosophy all science all views to irrational meaningless babble using their own epistemic conditions of truth. To confound the products of reason by reason itself. To show that the rational in fact collapses into the irrational. By reason itself all products of human reason reduce to intellectual chaos. To shatter the categories of thought, to rob all views and ideas of any epistemic worth by using reason to show that they end in stultification foolishness, or absurdity. Reason confounds reason and convicts reason by it's own standard to unintelligibility, babble, stultification, incoherence foolishness and absurdity, or meaninglessness. Reasons critique of reason shows that there is no consistency in any product of reason, no order , no coherence only chaos and absurdity, or meaninglessness. The life-jacket, or anchor reason gives in the void of meaninglessness is broken by reason itself. Into the void of nothing reason drops us. Cut adrift in meaninglessness we are free to acquire other insights other realizations by transcending reason. Meaning can be reduced to absurdity. Meaninglessness can be reduced to absurdity but for those who hold meaninglessness as a view, or meaning there is no hope.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

All thinking via Aristotelian logic leads to the absurdity, or the meaninglessness of all views and the contentlessness of thought

"an icy cold grips my soul. I am past the point of pain. It's like a death deeper than truth. I'm spinning in vast darkness. It's inside me. My conscious self shatters under this dilating darkness" [1]

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[1] G. Flaubert, 1980, p.212.

THESIS

This thesis is a case study, via an epistemological investigation into thought, based on the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist demonstrations that all our concepts, all our categories, all our ideas, all theses, all antitheses, all philosophies, all epistemologies, all ethics, all ontologies, and all metaphysics, in other words all our views are meaningless. They all collapse into absurdity, or meaninglessness via a dialectical *reductio ad absurdum* form of argumentation (see chapter two). This absurdity, or meaninglessness is epistemological not metaphysical i.e. all metaphysics is absurd, or meaningless epistemologically not necessarily metaphysically. The focus, or limitation, of this thesis will be metaphysical in that I will investigate 'Being' by giving an epistemological critique via Aristotelian logic of a particular ontology, or species of 'being'[2] (i.e. thought). This thesis argues that any attempt to argue, as mental realists do, that thought has a medium, or basis, or essence (i.e. language, or images, or concepts, or any*thing* else) collapses into absurdity, or meaninglessness. Absurdities (i.e. self-contradiction, infinite regress, paradox, circularities and dilemmas) exist within a word, image, concept, or any*thing* else as a yet to be discovered statue exists within the block of marble. What can be done for an essence of thought it is argued can be done for all essentialist thinkings, or ontologies.

 Because of this lack of essence this thesis argues thought is contentless. This case study is meant to give weight to the Prasangika Madhayamika Buddhist demonstration that all conceptualisations, all products of thinking collapse into

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[2] This distinction is based upon Aristotle's *The Metaphysics*, 1V. "being" is the specific species of "Being". "Being on the other hand is existence and metaphysics studies all the species of "Being". "being" are substances (essences) and are, according to Aristotle, what are studied by the particular sciences. Philosophy, science has as many divisions as there are "being" i.e. substances (essences). The principle of the law of contradiction is, according to Aristotle the principle of "Being" and is the   most certain of principles. The principle of identity-a substance must have an essence-is a principle of "being" by which the law of contradiction is proved (Aristotle, 1947, 1V. 1v. 21, 1V. 1v. 26.).

absurdity, or meaninglessness if Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition of truth – which this thesis denies. Thus this thesis, as a case study in thought, is not a thesis in skepticism, as this is just another view, but a full blown epistemological nihilism which advocates the utter absurdity, or meaninglessness of all products of human thinking – the utter incomprehension of 'being', of inner and outer reality. This thesis even maintains that this epistemological nihilism can also be reduced to absurdity; as *all* views are meaningless. Things may be possible, or impossible but there is no way to distinguish between them. All views are negated–reduced to absurdity-including this one. Meaning can be reduced to absurdity. Meaninglessness can be reduced to absurdity. For those who hold meaninglessness as view there is no hope.

CONSEQUENCES FOR RESEARCH

The consequences of this thesis for philosophy are numerous. Firstly this thesis initiates a program of research via *reductio ad absurdum* argumentation that debunks and invalidates essentialist programs of research in other traditions. Secondly with the necessary truth that thought can not be constituted by any *sui generis* medium basis, or essence, the phenomenological search via eidetic reduction for the essence of thought is invalidated and untenable. Similarly some characterisations of analytic philosophy are made untenable. Analytic philosophy, in Dummett's characterisation, gives priority to language over thought. In this tradition by arguing that language is constitutively involved in thought this guarantees that we can analyse philosophically thought by focusing on thoughts mode of expression–because thoughts are formulated and constituted by language. The necessary truth that thoughts are not and cannot be constituted by language (or anything for that matter) means the analytical philosophical tradition of Dummett becomes untenable. Thirdly, as a corollary, what equally becomes untenable is the program of diminishing the 'thinkable' by diminishing the range of thought, as instigated, in Orwell's book *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* by Ingsoc, with its idea of

Newspeak[3], (where it is assumed, like Dummett's analytic philosophy, that "… thought is dependant on words"[4]). Fouthly, a language philosophy of the Sapir-Whorf kind becomes untenable as well. It is a short step from analytical philosophy arguments that thought is constituted by language to the claim that since languages are distinct from each other then there must be distinct thought and 'ratiocination'. In other words different language users think differently to each other. Fifthly, if we accept on the contrary that Aristotelian logic is no epistemic condition for truth then the whole of philosophy becomes untenable and invalidated. Philosophical texts are tracts which in the main contain arguments for a particular point of view based upon Aristotelian logic (see chapter four). If this logic is not an epistemic condition of truth then the truths these texts discover have in fact no epistemic worth.

PREAMBLE:

In this thesis I will apply the Prasangika Madhyamika methodology of the *reductio ad absurdum* [prasanga] to the issue of the essential nature of thought. Traditionally the Prasangika Madhyamika have applied this method to the mentalistic, or analytic traditions of Abhidharma, or Cittamatra. I on the other hand examine the essentalistic nature of thought in a number of representative Western philosophical traditions and locate the whole within the context of critique of Aristotelian logic and metaphysics and the essentialist assumptions which these entail. My application of prasanga to different theories in the communicative and cognitive paradigms is original as it shows via the case study how the *reductio ad absurdum* can be extended to other philosophical issues.

Dummett in his book *Truth and other Enigmas* makes a distinction between thinking and thought. Dummett notes that "the study of thought is to be sharply distinguished from the study of the psychological processes of thinking."[5] In the history of thinking and thought this distinction has not been generally made and

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[3] G. Orwell, 1974, pp. 241-.242
[4] ibid., p.241.

both ideas have been collapsed together. As we shall see in chapter four Dummett is wrong, as an understanding of thought cannot be had unless the process of thinking is considered;. since a thought comes into the mind by thinking.

Finch claimed that almost every Western philosopher since Plato argued for the existence of thoughts, 'images', 'impressions', 'ideas', 'concepts' and thinking[6]; or in other words that 'thought was made up of a 'thing'. A central debate with regard to the 'thing', or content of thought is in regard to whether this 'thing', or content is the medium, or basis, or essence[7] of thought or only the vehicle of expressing thought. When a 'thing' is seen as being the medium, or basis, or essence of thought then thought is regarded as being encoded in that 'thing'. In other words thought is regarded as being constituted by that 'thing'. The 'thing' is the foundation upon which thought is built. The 'thing' establishes thought and is its constituent. It is the *sui generis* ground work the irreducible essence of thought. Without the 'thing'' there is no thought for thought and the 'thing' are the same i.e. without the 'thing' there is no thought. In this regard the medium, or basis, or essence is the essence of thought i.e. that without which it cannot be. When a 'thing' is seen as being the vehicle of thought then the 'thing' and thought are separate and distinct; independent of each other. The 'thing' carries, or conveys the thought, but is not the foundation *sui generis* upon which thought is built.[8]

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[5] M. Dummett, 1978, p.458.

[6] H. L. Finch, 1995, p77

[7] In the literature on thought there is a sloppy use of terms like 'medium' and 'vehicle'. There is a semantic difference between 'medium' and 'basis' but in the literature on thought the term 'medium' is used in the sense of the foundation upon which thought rests-that which establishes it or fundamentally constitutes it. In this regard the term 'medium' is being used like the term 'basis'. In the literature the term 'medium' is used in contrast to the term 'vehicle'. The term 'vehicle' in the literature refers to the carrier or conveyer of thought. In this regard 'vehicle' is being used in the strict meaning of the term "medium". To give some consistency in the use of terms I therefore use the terms that are used in the literature but to convey the idea that 'medium' in the literature is being used like the term 'basis' and are interchangeable I use the expression medium or basis.

[8] To use a metaphor thought and language or an image or a concept or any*thing* else are like wine and a glass. The glass, i.e. language or an image or a concept or any*thing* else is the carrier or vehicle of the wine, but both are separate and distinct entities.

Socrates considered thinking to be the talk (logos) the soul has with itself.[9] Similarly Plato in the *Sophist* considered thought to be inner speech[10]. Aristotle on the other hand considered words to be symbols of thoughts[11]. Although Aristotle claimed that thought must be in images, he nevertheless claimed that there must be something prior to the image. This prior something was a concept, or belief. According to Aristotle, though an image is required as an object (a thought of thinking), this image (object) is only a manifestation of something prior. On this point Sokolov notes "Aristotle makes it quite clear that an image (imagining the particular) and a thought (common sensible) are not the same. He poses the question 'what are the attributes that distinguish primary concepts from images? Or [let] these concepts be not images but [at any rate, they cannot manifest themselves] without images." [12] To account for this something prior to the image, Sokolov notes that Aristotle had recourse to an incorporeal existent the "form of forms"[13]. Frege similarly regards thoughts as immaterial. As he states " thought, in itself immaterial, clothes itself in the material garment of the sentence and thereby becomes comprehensible to us. We say a sentence expresses a thought."[14] Dummett likewise believes language expresses a thought but where Frege believed thoughts were prior to language Dummett believes the converse. Dummett argues, that thoughts exit and that language is the medium of our thoughts[15]. As he states "… the philosophy of thought can be approached only through the philosophy of language."[16] For Dummett language is prior to thought.[17] Any attempt to explain thought independently of its expression in language is according to Dummett overturning the fundamental axiom of all analytical philosophy.[18] Heidegger like Frege believed that thought was prior to language in that Dasein had a pre-

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[9] W. Kneale, & M. Kneale, op. cit., p.17.
[10] ibid., p.18.
[11] ibid., p.45.
[12] A Sokolov, 1975, p. 13.
[13] ibid., p.13.
[14] G. Frege, 1918, p. 20.
[15] M. Dummett, 1991, p.3, 103.
[16] Ibid., p.3.
[17] ibid., p.3.
[18] ibid., p.3-4.

conceptual comprehension of 'being'.[19] But nevertheless he argued that modern thought was the presencing of 'being' via its revealing concealment in language.[20] In other words 'being' was experienced in thought by language. According to Heidegger 'being' via its revealing concealment in language has, since Plato and Aristotle, been mistaken for 'being'-an ontological thing. In this regard we can see in Heidegger's system that philosophers' who argue that the essence of thought is some*thing* ('being') such as   language, images, concepts etc are ontologising 'being' into a an existent 'thing'

In the philosophy of mind, in particular in regard to thought there are a number of paradigms. There are the anti-realists[21], like the latter Wittgenstein[22] and Watson and Skinner[23], who reject all talk of the existence of any ontological stuff of the mental. There are the behaviorists' like Ryle, who "… eschew reference to the mental which is regarded as private, subjective, unobservable and above all non-explanatory".[24] There are realists[25]: Frege, the early Wittgensteinians, analytic philosophy, Materialists and Mentalists who argue that thoughts and mental objects exist. Frege argued that thoughts, though existing, were not mental objects but abstractions belonging to a 'third realm'.[26] thoughts, according to Frege, clothed themselves in language.[27] The Wittgenstein of the Tractatus argued that though thoughts were neither abstract nor mental objects they did exist[28] since they were expressed in language.[29] Similarly, like Frege, Wittgenstein argued thoughts were

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[19] T. Fay, 1977. p.52.

[20] ibid., pp.52-53.

[21] M. Dummett (1991, p.4) points out "Anti-realism in this case may take the form of behaviourism according to which to ascribe to someone a belief or desire, or even to attribute to him a pain or sensation, is simply to say something about the pattern of behaviour."

[22] H. L. Finch, 1995, pp. 73-84.

[23] Anti-realists argue that behaviour can be talked about without reference to mental objects because there are no such things as mental objects. (A. O'Hear, 1991, p.215)

[24] A, O'Hear, 1991, p.214.

[25] M. Dummett (op. cit , p.5) points out " for the realist, a person's observable actions and behaviour are evidence of his inner states–his beliefs, desires, purposes and feelings."

[26] J, Preston, 1996, p.3.

[27] ibid., p.3.

[28] Hans-Johann, Glock, 1996, p.157.

[29] J, Preston, op. cit., p.5.

not identical with language but nevertheless they are not entities beyond language.[30] Philosophers in the analytic philosophical tradition, as Dummett argues, maintain that thoughts exist and that language is the medium of our thoughts.[31] Materialists such as Wilkes[32], Dennett[33], Rorty[34], Carruthers[35] and Field[36] argue that the mental and the mind are identical and as such mental objects have physical existence in the brain. D. Moran notes that analytic philosophy is materialistic in its approach.[37] Putnam's functionalism[38], like Ryle's behaviorism, brackets out talk of mental object, but nevertheless acknowledges their existence; an existence independent of any neuro-physiological physical structures. Mentalists[39] such as Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre saw mental object existing, but in an immaterial form.[40]

Both Frege and Wittgenstein argue that there is some*thing* beneath linguistic thought. For instance Wittgenstein argues that " language disguises thought. So much so that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the thought beneath …"[41] Wittgenstein claimed that pre-linguistic thought was nevertheless constituted by some*thing*; as he states:

> "I don't know what the constituents of a thought are but I
> know that it must have such constituents which correspond
> to the words of language. Again, the kind of relation of the

[30] Hans-Johann, op. cit., p.166.
[31] M. Dummett, 1991, p.3, 103. Dummett argues that "…there can be no account of what thought is independently of its means of expression (1991, p.3)
[32] A, O'Hear, op. cit , p..228.
[33] ibid., p.228.
[34] ibid., p.228.
[35] P. Carruthers1998.
[36] H. Field, 1978, pp.9-61.
[37] D. Moran, 1996, p.20.
[38] A. O'Hear, op. cit., pp. 22-224.
[39] Frege is mentalistic in the sense that he regarded thought as immaterial but not in the sense that he regarded thoughts as not set in the mind. Frege regarded thoughts as inhabiting a "third realm".
[40] A. O'Hear, op.cit, pp.19-32.
[41] L. Wittgenstein, 1953, 4.0002.

constituents of thought and of the pictured fact is irrelevant.
It would be a matter of psychology to find out."[42]

My argument is that if there is a some*thing* beneath linguistic thought then this some*thing* is not constituted by any*thing,* in other words it has no medium or basis or essence.

THESIS FOUCUS:

As we saw above there is a wide range of opinion in regard to what thinking thinks with. This thesis will focus upon just three realist paradigms: language, mental representations and concepts. I will show that the realist paradigm is untenable as it collapses into absurdity, or meaninglessness. Historically mentalists (psychologism), in the phenomenological and empirical traditions, argued our thoughts were not words but mental representations (i.e. mental images[43]). In this regard they argued that thoughts were beyond language[44]. The scholars who have argued that thoughts are mental representations i.e. images are: Locke[45], Hume[46], Russell[47], Langer[48], Arnheim[49], Osgood[50], Kaplan & Werner[51], Paivio & Clark[52], Marschark & Hunt[53] , Marschark et al[54], Harris [55], Honeck[56]. There are those scholars who have argued, [following on from Wittgenstein of the Tractatus], that thought was language. Other scholars again have argued that language is only the

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[42] J. Preston, 1997, p.5.
[43] Glock. Hans-Johann, 1997, p.161.
[44] ibid., p.166.
[45] J. Locke, 1690.
[46] D. Hume, 1739.
[47] B. Russell, 1921.
[48] S, Langer, 1942.
[49] R, Arnhiem, 1969.
[50] C. E. Osgood, 1953.
[51] J. Kaplan & E. Werner, 1963.
[52] A. Paivio & J. M. Clark, 1986.
[53] M. Marschark & R. Hunt, 1985.
[54] M. Marschark et al 1983.
[55] R. J. Harris, 1979.

vehicle for the expression of thought. The areas of debate can be fitted into what Carruthers calls the communicative and cognitive paradigms.

In the cognitive paradigm it is argued that thought is constituted by language, or in other words is the medium, or basis, or essence of thought. In this paradigm it is inconceivable that creatures without language can have thoughts. Dummett argues that "… the only proper method of analysing thought consists in the analysis of language."[57] Carruthers notes that it is only by equating thought with language that a philosophy of language can analyse philosophically problematic concepts "… focusing upon their mode of expression in language. For only then will our thoughts themselves use language for their very foundation."[58] In a philosophical sense Carruthers claims that it is only by language being necessary for thought that the study of language will be the study of cognition. Dummett takes the position that "… the philosophy of thought can be approached only through the philosophy of language.[59] That is to say there can be no account of what thought is, independently of its expression (i.e. language) …"[60] Similarly Dummett argues that language represents our reality; as he states "… language [is] a medium of our thinking, and our representation of reality."[61] Dummett, in passing mentions some philosophical dissent from these points of view; a view which argues for the idea of a pre-linguistic basis to thought. Dummett maintains that those philosophers who argue for this point of view "… are overturning the fundamental axiom of all analytical philosophy and hence have ceased to be analytical philosophers."[62] Philosophers who argue that thought is independent of language and does not presuppose language are Gareth Evans, Ned Block, Christopher Peacocke and Colin McGinn. Block's analysis of language is in terms of distinctive functional roles.[63] Peacocke on the other hand argues in terms of canonical acceptance

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[56] R. P. Honeck, 1973.
[57] M. Dummett, 1978, p.458.
[58] P. Carruthers, 1998, p.18.
[59] M. Dummett, 1991, p.3.
[60] ibid., p.103.
[61] ibid., p.4.
[62] ibid., p.4.
[63] N. Block, 1986.

conditions.[64] McGinn argues that the medium or basis, or essence of thought are concepts.[65]

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The communicative conception of language posits that thinking is independent of language. Language is seen as being only a communicative medium for the transmission of thoughts. On the other hand the cognitive conception argues that language is the primary medium for thinking. The communicative paradigm is exemplified by such philosophers as John Locke[66], Gottlob Frege[67], Ludwig Wittgenstein[68], Bertrand Russell[69], Paul Grice[70] David Lewis[71], Donald Davidson [72], Peter Carruthers[73], and cognitive scientists such as Jerry Fodor[74], Noam Chomsky[75], Willem Levelt[76], K. V. Wilkes[77], L. Weiskrantz[78] and Steven Pinker[79]. The cognitive paradigm on the other hand is represented by such philosophers as Wittgenstein[80], Dennett[81], Dummett[82], Glock[83], Carruthers[84], Field[85], as well as cognitive scientists as Lev Vygotsky[86], B. L. Whorf[87] and E. Sapir[88].

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[64] C. Peacocke, 1986, 1992.
[65] C. McGinn, 1996, p.83-106.
[66] J. Lock 1690.
[67] G. Frege, 1892 (1960).
[68] L Wittgenstein, 1953.
[69] B. Russell, 1921.
[70] P. Grice , 1957, 1969.
[71] D. Lewis, 1969.
[72] D. Davidson, 1984, 1992.
[73] P. Carruthers is an ambiguous case since he argues that thought can be independent of language and as such implies that language is only the vehicle to convey the thought On the other hand he argues that for conscious thought language is the basis/ medium of thought, (P. Carruthers, 1998.)
[74] J. Fodor, 1978, 1983, 1987.
[75] N. Chomsky, 1988.
[76] W. Levelt, 1989.
[77] K. V. Wilkes, 1997.
[78] L. Weiskrantz, 1997.
[79] S. Pinker, 1994.
[80] L. Wittgenstein , 1921, 1953.
[81] D. Dennett, 1991.
[82] M. Dummett, 1991.
[83] Hans-Johann. Glock, 1997.
[84] See note 61 above
[85] H. Field, 1977.
[86] L. Vygotsky , 1962.
[87] L. Whorf, 1956.
[88] E. Sapir, 1921.

In the communicative paradigm language facilitates communication but not thinking; thinking is independent of language. In this regard when we utter a sentence it is because language has encoded our thinking. On the other hand the cognitive conception of language argues that language is the primary medium or basis, or essence for thinking. Without language there can be no thinking; thus in this paradigm when we utter a sentence this sentence has been constituted by our thinking.

Thus we see that both the cognitive and communicative paradigms explicitly, or implicitly articulate the idea that, 'thoughts,' 'images', 'impression', 'ideas', 'concepts' and thinking exist. In the linguist and cognitive paradigm thought is regarded as being constituted by language. Similarly for the imagists thought is regard as being constituted by images. In regard to the communicative paradigm the situation is a bit more complicated. Though they argue that thought is not constituted by language they don't tell us what it is in fact constituted by. They all regard thought as being a 'thing' in a mental realist manner and thus by default constituted by some*thing,* but they don't tell us what this some*thing* is. Scholars such as Lackoff and McGinn argue that language is not the basis or medium of thought but nevertheless maintain that concepts are. Similarly, G. Evans puts forward a philosophical theory outlining the priority of thought over language.

In the cognitive and psychological sciences there is also debate over what constitutes thought In these sciences we have a dichotomy in regard to the relationship of language to thought. One position maintains that thinking happens in language, the other claims thought and language are independent. Also there are a number of intermediary positions. Wundt and Humboldt claimed that language is the basis of thought. Vygotsky maintained that high level thought was the internalisation of speech. Sapir/Worf argued that language shapes thought.[89] Pederson and Nuyts note that "… the relationship question is crucial for further

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[89] E. Pederson & J.Nuyts, 1997, p.4.

development of our understanding of human cognition."[90] In these sciences in the contemporary setting theories about the medium or basis, or essence of thought range from propositional, or propositional like systems; to image based systems; to mixed propositional image based systems; through to abstract systems which transcend the former three. The propsitional type systems are most prevalent in the cognitive and psychological sciences. There is the system of Fodor which postulates an innate symbolic language 'mentalese'. Jackendorf, Dik and Schank outline language based views of thought.[91] Pavio Kosslyn and Marr outline imaged based systems.[92] Theories putting forward a more abstract idea, where thought is still image orientated are those of Johnson-Laird and Johnson-Laird & Byrne.[93]

Pederson and Nuyt point out that although debates are lively in regard to the relationship of language to thought "… there has been relatively little advance in settling the issue."[94] This thesis will seek to settle the issue by demonstrating that the mental realist idea that there is a content, or medium, or basis, or essence to thought is untenable because in terms of Aristotelian logic, all attempts to argue that thought is constituted by some*thing* end in reductios.

It must be pointed out that I am not saying like the anti-realists[95], such as the latter Wittgenstein[96] and Watson and Skinner[97] that there is no ontological stuff of the mental only that if there are thoughts then in terms of Aristotelian logic their content will always be hidden from us. This thesis differs from that of the anti-realists, like the latter Wittgenstein and Watson and Skinner, in that they claim there is no ontological stuff of the mind (i.e.thoughts). This thesis assumes the

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[90] ibid., p.5.
[91] R. Jackendorf, 1983, 1992, , S Dirk, 1987, 1989.
[92] A. pavio, 1972, 1991, S. Kosslyn, 1980, D. Marr, 1982.
[93] P. Johnson-Laird, 1982, P. Johnson-Laird & R. Byne, 1991.
[94] S. Pederson & J.Nuyt, op.cit., p.5.
[95] M. Dummett (1991, p.4) points out "Anti-realism in this case may take the form of behaviourism according to which to ascribe to someone a belief or desire, or even to attribute to him a pain or sensation, is simple to say something about the pattern of behaviour."
[96] H. L. Finch, 1995, pp. 73-84.
[97] Who argue that behaviour can be talked about with out reference to mental objects because there are no such things as mental objects. (A. O'Hear, 1991, p.215)

mental realist point of view that there is an ontological stuff of the mind (i.e. thought) and then seeks to demonstrate that this thought must have no content or essence.

METHOD

I demonstrate my thesis not by the use of another philosophical theory but using the very principles the mental realists use as criterion of truth for their arguments, against their arguments. The method of my argument in this thesis is to use my opponent's own epistemic criteria of truth, in this case the laws of Aristotelian logic, and a dialectical *reductio ad absurdum* form of argument. The schema of this argumentative pattern of refutation is "If P then Q; but not-Q; therefore not-P". In producing absurdities in an opponent's conclusions by using their own epistemic conditions of truth we cut all ground from beneath their position. Murti notes "self-contradiction is the only weapon that can convince an opponent. If he does not desist from his position even after his assertion has been proven to be self-contradictory, we must give up arguing with him."[98]The result, shows that such mental realist claims end via *reductio ad absurdum* in absurdities. In other words I use their own criteria to debunk their arguments. My method of the dialectic *reductio ad absurdum* yields minimal knowledge As Meyer notes, "dialectic, conceived as a questioning process yields but minimal knowledge..."[99] What the dialectic *reductio ad absurdum* does is show not that nothing can be known, or be true, but the inadequacy of logic in laying the foundation for the known, or truth. Meaning can be reduced to absurdity. Meaninglessness can be reduced to absurdity. For those who hold meaninglessness as a view there is no hope.

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[98] T.R.V. Murti, 1955, p.145.
[99] M. Meyer, 1986, p.104.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I seek to make this demonstration by dividing the thesis into four main chapters.. Chapter two will set out the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist demonstration that all views collapse into absurdity, or meaninglessness, if Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition of truth. Chapter three will demonstrate that Western philosophy, at least since the time of Aristotle, is logic-centric (i.e. it takes as a truth that Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition of 'truth'). Where the Madhyamika used the dialectic to reduce to absurdity or meaninglessness the views, in regard to the mind, of the Abhidharma and Cittarmatra chapter four will apply their methodology to a Western framework. Chapter four will show how the dialectic i.e. *reductio ad absurdum* can be applied to other philosophical issues by dealing with representative theories which argue that some*thing* is the medium, or basis, or essence of thought i.e. Carruthers, Sellars, Field, Fodor, the imagists, Frege, and McGinn.

I argue that the foundation of thought is not linguistic, or imagistic, or any*thing* else. The consequence of such arguments for a medium, or basis, or essence of thought is paradox. The logical paradox if thought was solely linguistic, or imagistic is that thought as. language or images could only discover an idea which it creates itself. However it must already know that which it creates before it creates it because its only content is itself (i.e. language).

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Thus the original contributions this thesis hopes to make are three:

1) In regard to Mahyamika studies this thesis takes their method of the dialectic i.e. *reductio ad absurdum* and applies it to a Western framework. In this regard the case study of the thesis is an original contribution to show how the dialectic might be further extended to other philosophical issues.

2) I seek to show that thought can have no 'thing', or essence as a necessary truth and as such show the utter untenability of a mentalist realist philosophy of mind by

using their epistemological criteria of 'truth', namely Aristotelian logic, to debunk their own arguments by showing they end in absurdity, or meaninglessness, thus

3) showing the untenability of the analytic philosophical tradition of Dummett and bringing to and end once and for all debates between cognitivist and communicative theorists as to whether thought has an essence such as language, or images, or concepts, and or any*thing* else (by arguing that if we take Aristotelian logic as an epistemic condition of truth then a *reductio ad absurdum* form of argumentation reduces all arguments for an essence of thought – as well as all essentialist thinkings, or ontologies - to absurdity, or meaninglessness). As a corollary to this I show the untenability of any program, like Newspeak, as instigated in Orwell's book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, to control thinking, by delimiting thought, by controlling the content of thought. These untenable results are thus meant as a case study to try and substantiate the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist demonstration that.

4) all products of human thinking end in absurdity, or meaninglessness. This means also nihilism. This is important as I go beyond nihilism. This thesis is not a case study to substantiate nihilism but a case study to substantiate even the absurdity of nihilism.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE

MEANINGLESSNESS OF ALL VIEWS

"... The Madhyamika rejects all views ... By drawing out the implications of any thesis he shows its self-contradictory character ... In a series of *reductio ad absurdum* arguments ..."[1]

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[1] T. R. V. Murti, 1955, p.131.

FRAMEWORK.

Aristotle in *The Metaphysics*, makes a distinction between 'Being' and 'being'. 'Being' is existence and according to Aristotle, metaphysics studies all the species of 'Being'.[2] On the other hand 'being' is a specific species of 'Being'.[3] According to Aristotle 'being' are substances (essences) and are what are studied by the particular sciences.[4] Philosophy and science have as many divisions as there are 'being' i.e. substances (essences).[5] The principle of the law of non-contradiction is, according to Aristotle the principle of 'being' and is the most certain of principles.[6] The principle of identity is a principle of 'being' by which the law of contradiction is proved.[7]

This thesis argues by way of a case study in 'being' and thought, such that if Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition for truth then it is caught within a performative paradox in that it negates the very thing it needs for its existence (i.e. an essence). In other words Aristotle's most certain principle (i.e. the law of contradiction) can be used to negate the very thing by which it proved (i.e. an essence). This thesis argues that what will be done here for 'being' and thought applies equally all species of 'Being' with the consequence that 'Being' collapses into absurdity.

This thesis is thus metaphysical in nature as it seeks to examine 'Being' by focusing upon a case study of a species of 'being' i.e. 'thought. This thesis argues that if we assume, as most Western philosophers do, that laws of Aristotelian logic are an epistemic condition of truth then all the products of human thinking ends in absurdity. As Murti succinctly notes "... the Madhyamika rejects all views ... by drawing out the implications of any thesis he shows its self-contradictory character

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[2] Aristotle, 1947, 1V 1, 2.
[3] ibid., 1V, 11, 6.
[4] ibid., 1V, 1, 3.
[5] ibid., 1V, 1, 10.
[6] ibid.,1V. 1v. 21.
[7] ibid., 1V. 1v. 26.

... in a series of *reductio ad absurdum* arguments ...[8] While I adopt this thesis as my self evident unquestioned axiom I don't couch my arguments in a Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist perspective. I adopt Murti's, and as will be seen Fenner's, Bugault's and Gangadean's, characterization simply to avoid the complexities and developments in the Madhyamika tradition and thus to start somewhere[9].   The thesis is not a study of Prasangika Buddihism. The main body of the thesis does not focus on an exegesis of the developments, or complexities of Madhyamika but instead focuses upon attempts in the West to establish, or identify an essence of thought and the logical absurdities, or epistemological nihilism that this entails.

 I am not constructing an ontology, I am only using a particular ontology as a case study to show that this particular ontology (i.e. thought) reduces to absurdity. Heidegger questions what is there and why is there something rather than nothing. He also wonders, if there is nothing then what is the status of the nothing.   To ask and answer these questions is to miss the point of my thesis. Any answer to Heidegger's questions will themselves reduce to absurdity. I postulate that there is no consistency in any thing, no order, no coherence only chaos and absurdity. I am using language to express my view and that is the crux of the issue, as I postulate that any attempt to use language to give meaning and order will reduce to absurdity.

This thesis is thus an epistemological critique of ontology. This epistemological critique uses a dialectical *reductio ad absurdum* form of argument as discussed in chapter one. The critique comes about because, as chapter four will show, Western knowledge and logic are based upon certain metaphysical assumptions such that Western epistemology is related to its metaphysics.

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[8] T. R. V, Murti, 1955, p.131.

[9] It should be pointed out that as there are differing interpretations in regard to what some Western philosopher said or meant, so there is differing interpretation amongst Western scholars as to what the Madhyamika said or meant. There are Kantian, Positivist, Wittgensteinian and Derridian interpretations. Tuck in his book *Comparative Philosophy an the Philosophy of Scholarship* describes these interpretations as isogetical " …they reveal far more about the views of scholarship and their scholarly eras than exegesis is said to do." (A Tuck, 1990, p. v)

PRASANGIKA MADHYAMIKA BUDDHISM

Nagarjuna the founder of Madhyamika examined the categories through which we understand the world via a *reductio ad absurdum* argumentation. His *reductios* showed that the all beliefs, or views about essences, individual identities, or essential natures reduce to absurdity. These *reductios* where to point to the sunyata [emptiness] of both the world and the absolute. The rejection of all views by the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhists includes both the thesis and its antithesis. In other words they would reject the view that thought has no content (i.e. essence) as well as it's antithesis namely that thought has an essence. The crux of a Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist analysis (prasanga)–a *reductio ad absurdum* argument -is that their demonstrations are non-affirming negations. They negate but don't put forward any conclusion to such negation. This is because their negations are what they call non-affirming negations, they don't affirm anything. What this means is that they exhaust all possibilities of the tetralemma without any affirming conclusion. Now even though they don't put forward a counter position to their negations they do believe nevertheless that all views reduce to absurdity, or meaninglessness via a *reductio ad absurdum* argument [Murti, Fenner, Gangadean Bugault]. According to the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhists there are four logical possibilities (the tetralemma) as to the nature of a subject. Namely something: 1) it is, 2) it is not, 3) it is and is not, 4) neither is nor is not. What this means in terms of my thesis is that there are four possibilities to the question has thought an essence 1) thought has an essence, 2) thought has no essence, 3) thought has an essence and has not an essence, 4) thought neither has and essence nor has not an essence. The Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhists would demonstrate that each of these alternatives is self-contradictory. In other words the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhists would reject all these claims without making any affirming conclusion. The point of this negation, Dean argues[10], is to send the meditator into a state of cognitive dissonance, a state of mental turmoil where the only way out of the mental angst generated by the mental effort to solve the conundrums is a yogic

intuitive insight or vision. Western philosophy regard Aristotelian logic as the epistemic conditions of truth and alternatives 3) and 4) violate these conditions. As such I will not in this thesis demonstrate the viability of 3) and 4) in regard to the content of thought. I will attempt to demonstrate that there is no content to thought as all arguments that seek to claim this end in self-contradiction or absurdity.

The method which the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhists use in these self-contradictory demonstrations is what they call the prasanga, or as some call it in the West, consequential analysis. The prasanga is no more than a *reductio ad absurdum*. Murti, Bugault, Gangadean and Fenner argue that, in consequential analysis (prasanga), the logical axioms of the laws of thought (i.e. the Aristotelian law of contradiction, excluded middle and the law of identity) are used to discover logical inconsistencies within all philosophical arguments. While demonstrating these absurdities the Prasangika Madhyamika do not put forward a thesis. As Hsueh-Li Cheng notes:

> " Madhyamika (Prasangika) dialectic is not intended to establish a
> thesis but merely to expose the absurdity or contradiction implied in
> an opponent's argument. It is purely analytic in nature there is no
> position to be proved. The Madhyamika [Prasangika] is said not to
> have his own logic. The contradictory or absurd consequences
> revealed by the dialectic are unintelligible in light of the opponent
> logic only." [11]

 It should be pointed out that some Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist scholars argue that the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhists do not accept the law of the excluded middle, notably Bugault.[12] The self-contradictions in an argument arise according to the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhists, because of reified thinking.

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[10] C. Dean, 1993, p.58-85.
[11] Hsueh-Li. Cheng, 1991 , p.37.
[12] G. Bugault, 1983, pp. 26-38.

That is thinking that assumes that 'things' exist intrinsically, or in other words have an essence.

 The contradictions are generated in order to negate their adversaries' ontic, epistemological, or metaphysical claims, stemming from the belief in essentially existing 'things', by demonstrating the insubstantiality or emptiness (sunyata) of the reified entities making up the arguments.[13] This method of generating internal contradictions to a thesis is also called consequential (prasanga) analysis. Fenner argues that consequential analysis (prasanga) is meant not to perpetuate, or proliferate itself but rather to dissolve itself by reversing the conceptual process and thus bringing about the complete attrition of conceptuality itself.[14]

This attrition of conceptuality (sunya consciousness) is achieved by what Gangadean calls transformational dialectic (T D).[15] Gangadean maintains that T D "... can bring about the radical transformation to sunya consciousness only by seeing through the formal structures which condition any view of the world or experience."[16] Gangadean says that the "... prerelational, prelinguistic, preontological consciousness which can never be objectified, never constituted in anyway, never referred to or described is called sunya."[17] According to Gangadean, this "... radical transformation is affected through analytical meditation in which the formal conditions of all discourse or any possible world are themselves shown to be conditioned and not independent, absolute, or self existent."[18]   Under T D, Gangadean argues, "... the student's world begins to collapse and dissolve and static consciousness begins to be dislodged ... [With] the collapse of predictive structure, the world becomes an unintelligible flux: without categorical structure or form ...

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[13] P. Fenner, 1990, p. 103.
[14] ibid., p . 103.
[15] A. K Gangadean, 1979, pp.22-23.
[16] ibid., p.24.
[17] ibid., p.22.
[18] ibid., p.37.

rationality and judgment becomes silenced and paralyzed. This is the level of unintelligibility and meaninglessness."[19]

My understanding of consequential analysis is that consequential analysis (prasanga) was meant to have a cathartic effect upon the mind. It was meant to purge the mind of conceptualisation and dissolve the process of reification by demonstrating the emptiness (sunyata) of the 'things' signified by the concepts. Through consequential analysis (prasanga), the practitioner stripped back the layers of the conceptualization process to lay the ground for the direct experience, or yogic vision, of the ultimate (paramartha). The soteriological function of consequential analysis (prasanga) is seen clearly in the words of Chandrakirti, from his *Supplement to the Middle Way (Madhyamakavatara)*:

"When things are [conceived to intrinsically] exist, then conceptuality (kalpana) is produced. But a thorough analysis shows how things are [in fact] not [intrinsically] existent. [When it is realized] there are no [intrinsically] existent things. The conceptualizations do not arise, just as for example, there is no fire without fuel."[20]

ABSURDITY IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

The idea that all our views end in self-contradiction is not new to Western philosophy, Hume claimed that reason ends in its own self-destructiveness.[21] Similarly Kant believed that reason ends in its own self-destruction. O'Neill notes that "... Kant's initial diagnosis is that human reason leads to catastrophe [because it ends in darkness and contradiction]."[22] O'Neill goes onto state "... Kant [might] just as well have conceded quite explicitly that he was undertaking neither critique

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[19] ibid., p.39.
[20] P. Fenner op. cit., p. 266, verse 6.116.
[21] D. G. C. MacNabb, 1991, p.141.
[22] O, O'Neill, 1994, p.188.

nor vindication of reason and recognised that he is a skeptic.[23] Hegel claimed that " all our concepts, and not just the generated infinities of the Antinomies, are embroiled in antinomic arguments."[24] With Kant's transcendental idealism, according to Hegel, we get the idea that the contradictions in the world are put there by the categories of the 'Understanding'.[25] In other words it is thought or reason that create the contradiction in the world not the world itself. Hegel claimed instead that the contradictions had their seat in the very nature of the world.[26] In his book, *Beyond the Limits of Thought*, G. Priest claims that the three aspects of thought conceptualisation (definition), cognition (relationships of knowledge, truth and rational belief), and expression (language characterising reality) all end in self-contradiction; because, following Hegel, "… contradiction is inherent in the nature of [these] subjects."[27] On these issues Hume believed that reasoning ends in its own destruction[28] with the result that all the products of reason and sense experience lead to the consequence that all is uncertain.[29] Whether they intended it or not Hegel, Priest, Hume and Kant show the complete bankruptcy of a philosophy which makes logic the locus of truth and an epistemic condition of truth–a bankruptcy Dean did intend to make in his book *The Nature of Philosophy*.[30]

The notion that contradictions are inherent in thought is also found in that paragon of thinking namely mathematics. In 1930 the mathematician Hilbert began a program to prove that mathematics was consistent. With the discovery of such mathematical paradoxes as the Burli-Forti paradox, Russell's paradox, Cantor's paradox and Skolem's paradox by early 1930's as Bunch notes, Hilbert's program did not succeed such that "disagreement about how to eliminate contradictions were replaced by discussions of how to live with contradictions in mathematics."[31] Attempts to avoid the paradoxes led to other paradoxical notions but most

[23] ibid., p. 303.
[24] G. Priest, 1995, p. 115.
[25] ibid., p.114.
[26] ibid., pp.113-114.
[27] ibid., pp. 249-250.
[28] E. Mosner, op.cit, pp. 327-328.
[29] ibid., pp. 231-268.
[30] C. Dean , 1998.

mathematicians rejected these notions.[32] Thus the present situation is that mathematics cannot be formulated, except in axiomatic theory, without contradictions with out the loss of useful results. With regard to axiomatic theory, this cannot be proven to be consistent with the result that paradoxes can occur at any time. As Bunch states:

"None of them [paradoxes] has been resolved by thinking the way mathematicians thought until the end of the nineteenth century. To get around them requires some reformulation of mathematics. Most reformulations except for axiomatic set theory, results in the loss of mathematical ideas and results that have proven to be extremely useful. Axiomatic set theory explicitly eliminates the known paradoxes, but cannot be shown to be consistent. Therefore, other paradoxes can occur at any time."[33]

With all these paradoxes and inconsistencies Bunch notes that it is "… amazing that mathematics works so well."[34] Since the mathematical way of looking at the world generates contradictory results from that of science,[35] such as the mathematical notion of the continuum, and quantum mechanical concept of quanta. A mystery arises here, which I mention later in regard to instrumental results from logic and language, in that mathematics with a different ontology to science is used by science to generate 'truths' for that science. As Bunch notes "… the discoveries of quantum theory or the special theory of relativity were all made through extensive use of mathematics that was built on the concept of the continuum…[the mystery is] … that mathematical way of looking at the world and the scientific way of looking at the world produced contradictory results."[36] In this regard a measure of faith is required for us to accept the truths of mathematics and science;

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[31] B. Bunch, 1982, p.140.
[32] ibid., p.136.
[33] ibid., p.139.
[34] ibid., p.209.
[35] ibid., p.210.
[36] ibid., pp.209-10.

the same faith I argue later is the basis of our trust in logic and language. This can easily be seen in regard to the inventors of calculus namely Newton and Leibniz, who knew their methods gave results. But as Bunch notes the "mathematicians did not have a rigorous explanation of why their methods worked until the middle of the nineteenth century."[37] Without an explanation of how their methods work the mathematical truths must as such be based upon faith rather than logic. Without a proof of the consistency of mathematics, the 'truths' and the logical, or rational basis of mathematics must be based upon a faith in the logical basis of mathematics (i.e. on irrationality rather than rationality). Thus what is held up to be the most rational of the sciences is itself in terms of its own logic inconsistent, paradoxical and irrational.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL NIHILISM

 Where Wittgenstein's skepticism amounts to the views, as Kripke notes, that "… all language, all concept formation, to be impossible, indeed unintelligible", the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist demonstrations would reject this claim since it would end in absurdity, because the very words Wittgenstein uses, imply that they have fixed determinate properties (essences) If the words i.e. their meaning were in flux they would have no fixed meaning and thus would not be able to signify over time to the same 'things'. Thus it is within this epistemological nihilistic framework that this thesis is embedded. I take the mental realist's claims that there is a 'thing' as thought and this thought has an essence or basis/medium as a case study to demonstrate the validity of this epistemological nihilism.

It should be kept in mind that the Prasangika Madhyamika, Buddhists like myself, don't put any epistemic value on the laws of logic. They, like myself, only use the criterion of truth which their adversaries take to be epistemic conditions of truth. Also to be noted is that this absurdity, or meaninglessness is not metaphysical –like Sartre's- but epistemological.

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[37] Ibid., p.110.

Logic and language will upon investigation generate contradictions within any system, or views. So long as one uses logic and language ones reality will end in a chaos of contradictions. In terms of the logic one uses to generate absurdity within ones worldviews, there remains no residue from which one can justify any action or thought. All 'isms', all ideology, all philosophy collapse. One is imprisoned in a perpetual inertia of 'nothing', no epistemological justification, no non-justification, no support or non-support for anything and no way to distinguish between anything. Immobility locked into a straight jacket by logic from which logic cannot help to escape. Psychologically ones world begins to collapse and dissolve, consciousness begins to be dislodged and predictive structure collapses. This case study is an attempt to begin the collapse the dissolving of logic and language into absurdity. To break the tyranny of logic and open up other ways of constructing ones world view. This thesis embraces Camus' crisis of the absurd in *The Myth of Sisyphus* and while pointing out that even Camus and Nietzsche's absurd is absurd–because they tried to make the illogical logical - unlike Camus and Nietzsche it offers no solution and leaves one imprisoned within ones own reasonings. So long as one uses logic and language the absurd will always be discovered. Nietzsche's catch cry "… nothing is true, nothing is permitted" is an attempt to find a logical solution to the illogical consequences of his negations–nihilism. Nihilistic logic would say " nothing is true, thus nothing". Nietzsche's nihilism is an affirmation and thus to be negated by his own method. Nietzsche and Camus have over reached themselves; since they have no where to go at the end of their negations. Their offered solutions are no more than their using logic and language to generate some order, system, amongst their nihilism. Yet under their own nihilist terms this is not allowed. With nihilism there are no solutions and no propositions–propositions are no more than other truths. Logic is not the life jacket which will save them, they, like the systems they negate, are negated as well.

Nietzsche and Camus, like other Western philosophers, argue their positions via the principles of Aristotelian logic. Even nihilism is meant to be logically proven. The

axiom of the laws of logic, which chapter three shows, is the grand narrative of Western philosophy and is the foundation upon which it bases the validity of arguments. This foundation in fact, leads to the consequence that all views which use these laws of logic will end in absurdity, or meaninglessness. Chapter four will show how arguments for an essence of thought collapse into absurdity. Thus giving weight to the demonstrations of the   Prasangika Madhyamkia Buddhists, and the claims Hegel and Priest.

CHAPTER THREE

LOGIC-CENTRISM

"… Boole and Frege, like Leibniz before them, presented logic as a system of principles which allow for valid inference in all kinds of subject-matter … also the greatest logicians of modern times have taken … as the central theme … the classifying and articulating the principles of formally valid inference."[1]

Thus we see that at least since Aristotle the laws of logic have been regarded as being an epistemic principle in regard to what is a valid argument and in regard to how reality is to be investigated. In other words the west has been logic-centric in regard to its preoccupation with the laws of logic. It is in terms of these laws of logic those principles of inference, as well as other logics, or rationalities are accessed.

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[1] W. Kneale & M. Kneale, 1978, p.739.

LOGIC-CENTRISM

Why must a philosophical tract obey the laws of Aristotelian logic? Why can't a philosophical tract violate the law of the excluded middle or the law of non-contradiction? Why can't a philosophical tract be written such that it obeys the laws of some other logic such as intuitionist logic . The answer is because Western philosophy is logic-centric. At least since the formulations of Aristotle, the history of Western philosophy has been the worship of logic. Logic and conclusive argumentation have since Plato been considered the means to discover true knowledge.[2] Since Aristotle's formulations of the syllogism, the West has been obsessed with laying down the principles of valid argument. Western philosophers have been concerned with being consistent and coherent in their arguments because they have felt that if their arguments were logical they were then by default 'true'. By logical I do not mean the abiding by some law of inference but instead the non violating of the laws of Aristotelian logic. In regard to the law of identity Perelman claims that "… if P, then P" far from being an error in reasoning, is a logical law that no formal system can fail to recognize."[3] These laws have been the baseline for any valid inference, or characterisation of reality–freedom from contradiction is accepted in the West as a necessary condition of truth. In this regard the West is logic-centric. The laws of Aristotelian logic steers Western cognition and what is to be considered valid objective knowledge as well as determining the aspect by which valid argument is to be accessed.

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[2] M. Meyer, 1986, p.100.
[3] C. Perelman, 1989, p.11.

What representation is for Rorty, logic is for me. Where Rorty sought to show the bankruptcy of the notion of representation I seek to show the bankruptcy of logic. Where Rorty sought to show the West's pre-occupation with representation and the mirroring of nature I seek to show the West's pre-occupation with logic and the logic-centrism of Western thought. If representation is at the heart of Western philosophy logic-centrism is at the heart of this heart; it is the leitmotif, the quintessential foundation of Western thought. Where Rorty sought to undermine by logical argument, and thus demonstrate his own foundation and commitment to logic-centrism, (attempts at foundations); I seek to undermine Rorty's foundation itself, to collapse the whole of Western logic–centrism and with it Western philosophy into absurdity, or meaninglessness.

Rorty, in the *Philosophy and Mirror of Nature*, has shown how Western philosophy has been pre-occupied with providing timeless foundations for its truth claims. At the core of these foundations has been logic. Logic has been the final arbitrator of truth. The narrative of Western philosophy, its essential baseline, has been and is the belief that logic is an epistemic condition of truth. The narrative of Western philosophy has been, as Rorty points out, a search for secure foundations to its 'truth' claims. But the axioms upon which this narrative have been based are the laws of Aristotelian logic (i.e. the law of identity, law of non-contradiction, law of the excluded middle). These laws are the grand narrative of Western philosophy and what make it logic-centric. From its beginnings Western philosophy has used these laws of logic as its baseline from which it starts it investigations, even into its search for foundations to its knowledge. For the West these laws of logic have been what determined what form of acceptable argument is to be considered valid, and the only way in which reality was to be investigated-until recently with the advent of quantum mechanics. Even philosophers' who questioned this viewpoint about the laws of logic nevertheless constructed their arguments in terms of the laws Aristotelian logic. Philosophers' may argue that the law of non-contradiction is not valid but they can't–if they want to be taken seriously-contradict themselves in saying this. Philosophers' may argue for non-Aristotelian logic but if they want to

be taken seriously, they will couch their arguments for non-Aristotelian logic in terms of the Aristotelian laws of logic. Similarly philosophers' may argue for irrationality but they will try and avoid contradicting themselves.   Thus Western philosophy is logic-centric in that the only valid argument it will accept is one that obeys the laws of Aristotelian logic. Meyer notes that since Aristotle "… progress in knowledge has been considered as a matter of logic and conclusive argumentation."[4] Similarly Kneale notes, that the successors to Aristotle "… often connected logic with the theory of knowledge and the psychology of reasoning."[5] These laws of logic have up until modern times been the authority upon which arguments were accessed for validity. If a philosopher's arguments did not obey these laws then his peers would call his arguments invalid.[6] At least since the time of Aristotle, and even now, the Western tradition has crystallised rationality into the 'argument'. To argue is to provide grounds for the argument and these grounds have been and still are the laws of Aristotelian logic. Aristotelian logic for the West renders arguments valid; it provides both the proof and justification of the arguments. Perelman claims that "… one must appeal to informal logic … which allows a controversy to be settled and a reasonable decision to be made … while formal logic is the logic of demonstration … it is either correct or incorrect and binding …"[7] In both these cases the laws of Aristotelian logic are the criteria for the argumentation.

In order to prove my claim in regard to Western logic-centrism I will give three examples. 1) This philosophy thesis will, in an ideal world where ego, bias and prejudice don't exist, be assessed on whether it is consistent and coherent. In other words on whether it does not violate the laws of logic.   2) There are non-Aristotelian logics. J. Lukasiewicz invented a three-valued logic. Now Lukasiewicz has left us an account of his reasoning which arrived at this system. This reasoning

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[4] M. Meyer, op. cit., p.100.
[5] W. Kneale & M. Kneale, op.cit., p.738.
[6] Again look at any introductory book on logic to see these this.
[7] C. Perelman op. cit, p.11.

totally obeys the laws of logic and indicates that even in the formulation of non-Aristotelian logic the method of reasoning and criteria for validity is that they obey the laws of logic. As Lukasiewicz states:

> "I can assume without contradiction that my presence in Warsaw at a certain moment of time next year … is not settled at the present moment either positively or negatively. It is therefore possible but not necessary that I shall be present in Warsaw at the settled time. On this presupposition the statement "I shall be present in Warsaw at noon … " is neither true nor false at the present moment. For if it were true at the present moment my future presence in Warsaw would have to be necessary which contradicts the presupposition, and if it were false at the present moment, my future presence in Warsaw would have to be impossible which again contradicts the presupposition … this is the train of thought which gave rise to the three-valued system of propositional logic." [8]

1) David Hume argued for scepticism and the bankruptcy of reason (i.e. its fallibility). But the assessment of Hume's arguments against reason are based upon reason itself (i.e. the laws of logic). Mossner in his edition of Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* claims that in the eighteenth century there was no "… attempt at reasoned rebuttal ..."[9].   A French attack upon Hume criticises him for his illogicality as it maintained that he "… advances the most unheard of paradoxes."[10] Similarly MacNab claims that Hume's arguments for the self-destructiveness of reason are fallacious.[11]   Hume himself criticises his work on the grounds of inadequate reasoning. As he states, " [m]ost of the principles and reasonings contained in this volume [Essays and Treaties] were published in a work in three volumes, called *A Treatise of Human Nature* … in the following

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[8] W. Kneale & M. Kneale, op. cit., p.570.
[9] E. Mossner, 1987, p.16.
[10] ibid., p.16.
[11] D. G. C. MacNabb, 1991, p. 141.

piece (Essays and Treaties), where some negligences in the former reasonings and more in expression are … corrected".[12] So even though Hume attacks reason, he uses the principles of reason to do so; and bases the validity, or invalidity upon the very principles of reason he attempt to prove are inefficient.

Thus we see that the laws of logic are the baseline upon which scepticism and even non-Aristotelian logics are argued for and accessed for validity. It is this assessment of argument which is logic-centric and characterises Western philosophy.

Though there is evidence of pre-Aristotelian philosophers investigating logic, we can take Aristotle as a starting point.[13] There are two trends stemming from Aristotle which flowed into Western philosophy 1) An interest in logic as a means to ascertain valid argument–*The Topics*[14] and 2) as a means to investigate 'being' – the *Organon*.[15] With Aristotle we get a systematic elucidation of the rules of logical argument in order to undercut the arguments of the Sophists[16]. Aristotle in his *The Topics* lays out rules for conducting disputes by means of valid arguments[17]. In regard to 'being' Aristotle in *The Metaphysics* laid out the logical principles by which 'being' could be investigated (i.e. the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction, the law of the excluded middle). The consequence of the work of Aristotle has been, as Kneale notes, that the successors to Aristotle "often connected logic with the theory of knowledge and the psychology of reasoning."[18] These laws of logic have up until modern times been the authority upon which arguments were accessed for validity. If a philosopher's arguments did not obey these laws then his peers would call his arguments invalid.[19]

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[12] E. Mossner, op. cit., p.19.
[13] W. Kneale & M. Kneale, op. cit., p.12.
[14] ibid., p.33-44.
[15] Ibid., p.23-32.
[16] ibid., p.13.
[17] Again look at any introductory book on logic to see this.
[18] W. Kneale & M. Kneale, op. cit., p.738.
[19] Again look at any introductory book on logic to see this.

In modern times, as Kneale points out, philosophers such as "… Boole and Frege, like Leibniz before them, presented logic as a system of principles which allow for valid inference in all kinds of subject-matter … also the greatest logicians of modern times have taken … as the central theme … the classifying and articulating the principles of formally valid inference."[20] According to Frege the laws of logic were not the laws of nature, but the laws of the laws of nature.[21] In this regard logic is regarded as the science of sciences–a view Kneale claims Frege advocated. Now though there have been advances in principles of inference, in syllogistic logic, symbolic logic, and predicative logic, all the arguments used to support these logics cannot violate the laws of Aristotelian logic. There are non-Aristotelian logics but the arguments which support these logics are framed in terms of the laws of Aristotelian logic.

Thus from Aristotle to the Stoics to Medieval philosophy through the Renaissance to Frege and modern times, philosophers have been logico-centric in their endeavors to formulate principles of valid argument.[22] Again from Aristotle to the Stoics to Medieval philosophy through the Renaissance to modern times the laws of logic have been the tools by which 'science' has investigated reality.[23] Beginning with Bacon, philosophers have tried to lay out the method of science, the principles by which scientific arguments were framed and the principles upon which reality was investigated. Prior to quantum mechanics, those laws were comprised of Aristotelian logic. Thus we see that at least since Aristotle the laws of logic have been regarded as being epistemic principles in regard to what is a valid argument and in regard to how reality is to be investigated. It is in terms of these

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[20] W. Kneale & M. Kneale, op. cit., p.739.
[21] ibid., p.739.
[22] See W. Kneale & M. Kneale, 1978 .
[23] In modern times the investigation of reality has involved the use of other logics because Aristotelian logic was found not to be adequate. Such logics are quantum logic in quantum mechanics and inutitionist logic in mathematics.

laws of logic that principles of inference, as well as other logics or rationalities are accessed.

Beginning with Aristotle there has been a tendency to argue that there are different types of rationality.[24] Kant argued that there were the rationalities of pure reason, practical reason and judgment.[25] Apel argues, in his *Types of Rationality Today,* that different rationalities exist. Some of these are ethical rationality, hermeneutical rationality, transcendental-pragmatic self-reflection as the philosophical type of rationality and scientific-technological rationality. Heidegger argues, according to Lovitt that "[w]e are trapped and blinded by a mode of thought that insists on grasping reality through imposed categories".[26] Gadamer likewise argues that there are forms of rationality that are "... subordinated to an instrumental ideal of knowledge."[27] Foucault similarly claims that there are different types of rationalities. But for Foucault the problem with thinking is, as he notes "... not to investigate whether or not they conform to principles of rationality, but to discover which kind of rationality they are using."[28] The question raised by Foucault's statement is, why is it that when a philosopher adopts a particular rationality this rationality has to conform to the laws of Aristotelian logic? Why must a philosophy thesis, or argument have to conform to the laws of Aristotelian logic? The answer is because, as we saw above, Western philosophy is logic-centric.

 When it comes to characterising just what logic is Western philosophers adopt an Aristotelian perspective. This Aristotelian perspective implies an ontology behind logic. Hookway points out three ways in which Western philosophers see logic. Some philosophers see logic in term of deduction.[29] Others see logic as contributing to an understanding of why valid arguments are valid (here we have the continuing influence of Aristotle), as well as an understanding of how meaning

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[24] D. Horster, 1992, pp.43-45.
[25] Ibid., p.46.
[26] M. Heidegger, 1977, p. XVL.
[27] H. Gadamer, 1993, p.165.
[28] M. Foucault "1981, p.226.
[29] C. Hookway, 1988, p.77.

is generated in sentences.[30] Others see logic as saying something about the structure of reality. This view of logic sees logic mirroring reality. Building upon this view some philosophers believe that, as Hookway notes, "... if we know what sorts of logical structures must be used to describe reality, we know something about the abstract structure of reality."[31] These principles of inference, or characterisation of reality by logic cannot violate the laws of logic. In this regards the laws of logic are seen as being some objective epistemic condition giving access to objective truth and reality.

This logic-centric view has manifested itself through out Western philosophy in regard to epistemology, ontology and the philosophy of mind. Western philosophy as Rorty notes, has been pre-occupied with finding foundations to knowledge. Where the laws of logic are the baseline upon which these foundations have been accessed, philosophers have attempted not so much to give a grounding or a foundation to these laws, but a kind of self-serving justification for them. Philosophers have in order to maintain the epistemic validity of the laws of logic argued that they are 1) the laws of thought (Descartes, Kant or Boole for example), or 2) that they are the laws of reality (Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, Wittgenstein etc). In other words it is taken for granted that the laws of logic are epistemic conditions of truth and philosophers then attempt to explain and justify why they are so. In this way it could be argued that in trying to justify the laws of logic they in fact create logic-centric ontologies, epistemologies and philosophies of mind. Philosophers' logic-centered acceptance of the laws of logic in fact pre-determine them to particular epistemologies, ontologies and philosophies of the mind, since contained within the laws of logic are particular epistemologies, ontologies and philosophies of mind. It is clearly seen that these attempts to justify the laws of logic are circular in that they beg the question (i.e. they use the laws of logic to argue that these laws are an epistemic condition of truth). They use these laws to argue for psychologism,

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[30] ibid., p.79.
[31] ibid., p.80.

or the mirroring of reality by logic, and base the validity of such arguments on the very laws of inference that are in need of justification. This logic-centrism can be seen in the philosophies of Descartes, Hume, Kant and Wittgenstein.

Dean points out, in his *The Nature of Philosophy*, that for Descartes, Hume and Kant the principles of logic are *a priori* and that they are necessarily true is a psychological fact due to the nature of the human mind.[32] Hume and Descartes argue that the world is structured by the laws of logic independent of the mind. The world is logically independent of the perceiving mind, because in the case of Descartes God made it so.[33] Kant disagrees because he argues that logic is not a description of the world independent of the perceiving mind because the logical ontology of the world is only due to the mind.[34] Descartes argues that God could have made the world to violate the laws of logic[35], even though the human mind operates logically. Kant regarded this as absurd, as Putnam points out for " Kant's logical laws hold not only in 'the actual world' but in all other 'possible worlds' as well."[36] Kant's idea is reminiscent of Leibniz's argument that "... the truths of reason [are] true in all possible worlds."[37] Thus that logic holds in 'all possible worlds' for Kant is because the forms of logical coherent thought make it so. We cannot think other than logically and thus because we structure the world of appearances, the world of appearances must obey our logical principles.

In the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein argues that the aim of philosophy is "... to shew the fly the way out of the bottle."[38] In the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* Wittgenstein argues that "the limits of my language means the limits of my world."[39] Now the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is the fly in the bottle where the limits of Wittgenstein's world is logic. Wittgenstein in

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[32] C. Dean , 1998, pp.X11-X11X
[33] ibid., pp.X11- XLV11.
[34] Ibid., pp.X11-X111
[35] ibid., p.X11V.
[36] Putnam, 1995, p.247.
[37] W. Quine, 1971, p.20.
[38] L. Wittgenstein, 1953, 309, p.103.
[39] L. Wittgenstein, 1976, 5.6, p.56.

fact says this when he states "logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits."[40] Now in this world pervaded by logic, Wittgenstein argues that "... the only necessity is logical necessity."[41] And "just as the only necessity that exists is logical necessity, so too the only impossibility that exists is logical impossibility."[42] Now the cause of this logical necessity is, as for Kant, Hume and Descartes, the psychological nature of man (i.e. the inner necessity of us being only able to think logically). That logic is an inner or psychological necessity Wittgenstein states clearly when he argues in regard to causality "... we could know them only if causality were an inner necessity like that of logical inference ..."[43] This psychological necessity to think logically has the consequence that, as Wittgenstein argues, "... the truth is that we could not say what an 'illogical' world would look like."[44] And again thought can never be of anything illogical, since if it were, we should have to think illogically."[45] These thoughts of Wittgenstein are very much like the views of Kant. Now it is this inability to think illogically that makes logic for Wittgenstein an *a priori*, as for Descartes, Hume and Kant. As Wittgenstein argues "... what makes logic *a priori* is the impossibility of illogical thought."[46]

Finch notes that all regard the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* as being about "… what is the essential nature of the world presupposed by a purely logical language."[47] What the world and language have in common that makes language able to mirror the world is logical form. Wittgenstein states this when he argues "propositions show the logical form of reality"[48] and again " … propositions can represent the whole of reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in

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[40] ibid., 5.61, p.56.
[41] ibid., 6.37, p.70.
[42] ibid., 6.375, p.71.
[43] ibid., 5.1362, p.39.
[44] ibid.,3.031, p.11.
[45] ibid., 3.03, p.11.
[46] ibid., p.47.
[47] H. L. Finch, 1995, p.18
[48] Wittgenstein op. cit., 4.121, p.26.

common with reality in order to represent it-logical form."[49]   Thus the world is logically independent of language, but is nevertheless the logical equivalent of language.

 Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations* succinctly captures all of the above, when he states "… thought is surrounded by a halo-Its essence, logic, presents an order in fact the *apriori* order of the world: that is, the order of possibilities, which must be common to both the world and thought."[50]

Thus we see in the above views a continuation of the Aristotelian influence with regard to the idea that Aristotelian logic is the valid tool to investigate 'being' Similarly the above philosophers all attempt to be logical in their arguments. In other words they try and apply valid principles of argument in their arguments. Things having an essence is the central reason why the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist claim that all views collapse into absurdity. We will see below that the nature of logic and language require that they have an essence. Hookway points out three ways in which philosophers see logic. In some cases logic is seen as being used in regard to deduction.[51] Some see logic as contributing to an understanding of why valid arguments are valid as well an understanding of how meaning is generated in sentences.[52] Others see logic as saying something about the structure of reality. Hookway makes the point that Kant argued that our language with its subject-predicate statements and conditional statements leads us to see reality as substances standing in a causal relationship with each other.[53] These substances we will see must turn out to be essential in order for logic and language to work.

[49] ibid., 4.12, p.26.
[50] L. Wittgenstein, op. cit., p.44.
[51] C. Hookway, 1988, p.77.
[52] ibid., p.79.

THE ONTOLOGY OF LOGIC

Western knowledge is based upon certain metaphysical assumptions such that its epistemology is related to its metaphysics. Aristotle sought to investigate 'Being' by investigating the species of 'being' via the tool of logic. But embedded in this tool is the very thing this tool seeks to investigate (i.e. 'being' itself). In this regard there is circularity and it needs justification. Namely the logic Aristotle uses to investigate 'being' must assume an ontological object a 'being' in order to investigate 'being'; but this ontological object 'being' is itself in need of investigation or justification itself. The most certain of all principles is the law of non-contradiction with its corollary the law of identity. As he states "… the principle which the student of any form of Being must grasp is … it is impossible for the same attribute at once to belong and not belong to the same thing …"[54] Thus we see at the very heart of Aristotelian logic is the notion of an ontological object with an essence which itself is in need of investigation or justification. In this regard Aristotelian logic does not so much as reveal reality as constitute it by its reliance upon an ontological object with an essence. Thus logic affirms what it needs for its existence, what it affirms is in fact in need of justification. Philosophy consists in rediscovering the very thing upon which logic was made to depend. Logic in affirming an essence, which in fact needs to be justified, continually rediscovers what it initially affirmed without justification and this rediscovery is then used to justify the initial unjustified assumption-a circularity of logic The consequence of this circularity and ontological assumption is that logic in its resolution of problems and discoveries transforms the answers into a pre-ordained form due to its underlying ontological commitment and circularity. As we saw with Perelman's claims (that ' if P, then P' far from being and error in reasoning, is a logical law that no formal system can fail to recognize"[55]) at the heart of any formal system of logic is a metaphysical or ontological entity This P is an ontological entity and as such pre-ordains the form of any answer at the beginning of any

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[53] ibid., p.80.
[54] Aristotle, 1947, 1V.111. 8-9.
[55] C. Perelman, 1989, p.11.

question. This is because Aristotelian logic creates ontology, an ontology that the logic uses but which is itself in need of justification.

There are three laws that are essential to Aristotelian logic: the law of identity 'A = A'; the law of self-contradiction 'not p and not-p'; the law of the excluded middle 'p or not-p'. Putnam notes that amongst philosophers there is disagreement and controversy about the "correct interpretation of these principles i.e. what does '=' mean, what does 'p' stand for."[56] Putnam says that what all logicians agree upon is that if there is a thing as the "Eiffel Tower, then the Eiffel Tower is identical with the Eiffel Tower and if there is such a thing as the earth then the earth is round or the earth is not round."[57] Putnam notes that the 'S' and 'M' and 'P' in the inference 'All S are M All M are P therefore All S are P' refer to classes. According to Putnam although "classes" are non-physical they nevertheless exist and are indispensable to the science of logic.[58] The nominalist logician on the other hand believes classes are make believe and don't exist.[59] Now even if classes don't exist they still need to have an identity to distinguish them from other classes

Gibson claims that of the three laws the law of identity is the more fundamental as it is implied in any proposition and presupposed by the law of non-contradiction. As Gibson notes "… the principle of identity is logically the more fundamental. It is implied in the stating of a proposition and is therefore presupposed in the very enunciation of the principle of non-contradiction." [60] In this regard the law of identity is the ultimate foundation upon which logic rests, without an 'identity' (for the symbols of logic) logic is overthrown and collapses-as Dean argues.[61] The law of identity makes no ontological claim about the existence of 'A' only that 'A = A' –'A' could be an existent or just a definition. The law of identity is 'A is A' or 'A

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[56] H, Putnam, 1972, pp.4-6.
[57] Ibid., p.6.
[58] Ibid., p.23.
[59] ibid.,. p.9, 23.
[60] W. R. B, Gibson, 1908, p,95.
[61] C, Dean, op. cit. p. XXV-XXXV.

is not non-A'. What this means is that A has some defining characteristic (i.e. essence (identity)) which distinguishes it from other non-A's a characteristic (essence identity) without which it would not be A. The law of non-contradiction to quote Aristotle states " the same attribute (characteristic essence) cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect."[62] In terms of propositional calculus ' it is not the case both p and not p'. In this regard we see that if there is no essence to characterise a subject in distinction from other subjects there can be no law of non-contradiction and thus no logic at all. In other words if there is nothing to distinguish a 'horse' from a 'non-horse', either ontological or nominal, in the proposition P 'there is a horse' then we can not apply the law of non-contradiction because we have no distinguishable subject for the subject of the proposition.

The laws of logic enable us to make inferences from one statement to another, (i.e. to be able to see that some statements are incompatible with other statements). They allow us to conclude that some statements imply other statements and to see that other statements are ruled out. In the logical equation 'P . Q' the Ps and Qs obviously refer to something. In modern philosophy they are said to refer to propositions (i.e. 'the horse is running'). But also these propositions refer to things as well (i.e. the 'horse'). O' Hear notes that the terms in a proposition or sentence must have a unique reference or else the meaning of the proposition or sentence is lost. As he notes "[b]oth generality of the predicate and the uniqueness of reference are essential for the meaning of the sentence."[63] Without fixed determinate properties the properties of an object or reference (i.e. 'horse') thus float and as such the meaning of a sentence or proposition is uncertain. Thus there is always a measure of uncertainty in regard to any inference about the object (i.e. 'horse'). Take any concept such as that of a horse. If a horse has no fixed determinate properties which fix it and identify it across time then there will be a measure of uncertainty about just what I am talking about whenever the word 'horse' appears

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[62] A, Flew, 1979, p.75.
[63] A. O'Hear, 1991, p.155.

in a statement. Thus the sentence or proposition loses meaning without a unique reference. This uniqueness of the reference is in fact an ontological object (i.e. it has some sort of property that makes it what it is and nothing else (i.e. a 'horse') not a 'cow'). In this regard without determinate fixed properties we can never be certain of just what an object's property may be. Consequently we cannot fix and identify an object as the same across time because its identity itself is not fixed. Hookway notes that in regard to identity "... it is often claimed that we understand the nature of objects of a particular kind, and we can talk about them intelligibly, only when we can understand identity statements involving terms referring to the object."[64] Thus without a reference–be this ontological or nominal-for our Ps and Qs we are left with the problem that we are uncertain as to the meaning of our sentences and propositions. This thus generates an incoherence in our concept of the object of reference and our sentences and propositions. Consequently, any inference drawn from our system of sentences and propositions will lack any precise meaning without fixed determinate essences for our objects of reference (i.e. our Ps and Qs). Meyer captures the essence of these arguments when he states:

> "… whatever the circumstances of writing and speaking, being understood is what counts. Intelligibility depends on the unequivocality of the terms used. Syllogism would be impossible if the sense of the predicate e.g. "being a human being", should change during deduction … the unequivocality the preservation of one meaning, authorizes formalization; thus, one can symbolize the concept "human being" by one letter, for instance a. A symbol represents a thing, a type of entity, a category of individuals and it is on condition of referring to the same thing, the same type of entity, the same category of individuals that the symbol is operational in logical description."[65]

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[64] C. Hookway, 1988, p.14.
[65] M. Meyer, 1986, p.4.

Thus as O' Hear notes, logic is not ontologically neutral it implies an ontology. Again as he notes "[l]ogic, indeed is not metaphysically neutral but may well reveal the types of things various forms of thought and argument commit us to."[66] Putnam similarly claims that logic derives from metaphysics the belief in substances. As he notes, "[w]e get at the very beginning of logic, a metaphysics accompanying it and conditioning it."[67] Heidegger argued that "logic [is to] be investigated on the ontological level. Symbolic logic also requires such a "founding" or ontological interpretation."[68] Now this idea of an ontological substance had the consequence that the substance had to have properties. As Putnam points out "… the picture of substances and their predicates became the standard metaphysical picture of a world with fully determinate particulars characterised by their fully determinate properties. Dummett argues "… that an object either determinately has or determinately lacks any property P which may be significantly predicated of that object."[69] It could be argued that the notion of an object with an essence or determinate property is central for human thinking; it is an epistemological foundation for all thought itself. Without the notion of an object with an essence thinking would have nothing to think with. As Adorno notes "identity is inherent in thought itself ... to think is to identify.[70] This can be seen with the laws of classical logic such as the law of identity and non-contradiction, which requires an object with an essence to work with. Thus the metaphysical presupposition upon which logic is built is the notion that the object has an essence or identity. Aristotle claims that the law of self-contradiction requires an object with an essence (identity) for it to work. This object with an essence can be either an ontological existent or a word (i.e. its nominal definition being its meaning or essence). As Aristotle states "… for if he does not [signify some*thing*], a person of his sort has no argument, either with himself or with any one else … when words do not signify, our dialogue with each other is destroyed, and, really, so with

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[66] ibid., p.154.
[67] C. Hookway, op. cit., p.272
[68] T. Flay op. cit., p.8.
[69] H. Putnam, 1985, p272.

oneself: for it is not possible to think without thinking one thing …"[71] The distinction between ontological existent and words each with an essence is made by Locke also. As Locke states:

> "… it may not be amiss to consider the several significations of the word essence. First, Essence may be taken for the very being of anything, whereby it is what it is And thus the real internal, but generally (in substance) unknown constitution of things, where on their discoverable qualities depend, may be called their essence … Secondly,… it being evident that things are ranked under names into sorts of species, only as they agree with certain abstract ideas, to which we have those names, the essence of each genus, or sort, comes to be nothing but that abstract idea which the general, or sortal … name stands for … These two sorts of essences, I suppose, may not unfitly be termed the real, the other nominal essence"[72]

Pragmatism claims that under some situations and conditions words are pragmatically useful. In other words it may be pragmatically useful to claim that 'language', 'image, or 'concept' is the medium, or basis, or essence of thought. Nevertheless the pragmatic use of words only works if words have meaning and, as we saw above the meaning of words is their essence i.e. that thing, which if the word lacked it would not be the same word. Consequently it argued that pragmatism will collapse into absurdity, or meaninglessness even though the pragmatic use of words does not entail any ontological claim to the existence of the thing the word signifies. Nevertheless the word does entail a grammatical essence and this, like ontological essence, it is postulated reduces to absurdity via a *reductio ad absurdum* argumentation. If pragmatism argues that the meaning of words, though not fixed, nevertheless have locally and temporally determined meanings,

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[70] T. Adorno, 1973, p5.
[71] R, M, Dancy, 1975.
[72] Ibid., p.135.

then it is postulated these locally temporally fixed meanings [essence] will collapse via a *reductio ad absurdum* argumentation into absurdity, or meaninglessness like any other fixed determinate essence thus making language absurd, or meaningless. Also if the pragmatic meaning of words is in flux, thus they lack fixed meaning over time and thus over time are meaningless i.e. the word 'horse' could signify horse today but tomorrow the same word could signify what we call a 'cat' today – this thus indicates that the pragmatic use of words over time makes language incoherent, inconsistent and thus   meaningless.

Putnam claims that if "the metaphysical picture that grew up with and conditioned classical logic is wrong, then some of the tautologies of classical logic may have to be given up."[73] The consequence for logic, in terms of this thesis, is that if there are fixed determinate essences (i.e. thought, thinking, 'mind') then logic and language will reduce to absurdity our entire system of sentences and proposition.

In philosophy there are two opposing perspectives in regard to the notion of an object and its essence. They are essentialists and anti-essentialists arguments. The essentialists argue that an object possess an essence (i.e. characteristic properties). Conversely the anti-essentialists deny this. The essentialist Kripke argues that proper names are 'rigid designators' (i.e. apply in all possible worlds).[74] These 'rigid designators' or proper names refer to essential properties of the object. These properties are based upon the composition and causal continuity of the objects.[75] In the case of a person the rigid designator refers to the person born of a particular sperm and egg.[76] In the case of a material object Kripke refers to gold as being defined by its scientific properties.[77] Putnam notes that Kripke suggested that "... the old idea that science discovers necessary truths, that science discovers the

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[73] ibid., p.273.
[74] S .Kripke, 1980, p.48.
[75] ibid., pp.112-115.
[76] Ibid., p.113.
[77] ibid., p.p. 117-118.

essence of things was, in an important sense, right not wrong ...”[78] Against this essentialist view are the anti-essentialist arguments of Ayer. Ayer argues that assigning necessary properties to objects is an arbitrary exercise.[79] Ayer argues that the “... ways of identifying individuals by descriptions of their appearances, or their functions, or their behavior, or their spatio-temporal positions ...[don't] pick out necessary propertie[s]”[80]. This anti-essentialist argument is a fallacy when it comes to the nature of language and the object themselves. For if there are no essential properties that fix objects and words our logic and language become useless as a tool for uncovering regularities. On this point O'Hear, in *What Philosophy Is*, states “…without our terms and our logic being firm and clear at the outset, it will be unclear just what is meant by any statement at all [consequently without fixed terms our system of language will] collapse into an incoherent and featureless pile of statements, the sense of any one of which is indeterminate and perpetually shifting because of changes he may decide to make in other beliefs.”[81]

As Aristotle noted without an essence, or 'identity' ontological, or nominal i.e. definitional, the law of self-contradiction is useless.[82] If the law of self-contradiction is useless then our logic breaks down and becomes useless as an epistemic condition of truth. Thus if the anti-essentialists are right then logic become useless since there is no essence for the law of self-contradiction to work. The only way that logic could be an epistemic condition of truth is that it does not break down, and for this to be, there must be an ontological or a nominal definitional one. The problem with this consequence is that the notion of essence reduces to absurdity (according to my thesis). There can be no final deductive demonstration that proves the thesis that all view reduce to absurdity only an on going series of case studies pointing inductively to the fact that all views end in self-contradiction. This is so because any deductive argument that attempts to prove that logic and language end in self–contradiction, must itself be self-

[78] H. Putnam, 1985, p.55.
[79] A. J. Ayer, 1991, p.197.
[80] ibid., p.197.
[81] A, O'Hear, op.cit., pp.109-110.

contradictory because it is using and assuming the very things it is denying–a paradox from the start. Similarly any deductive argument that seeks to prove logic and language are epistemic conditions of truth is incoherent; since any proof that logic and language are epistemic conditions of truth would be circular and thus, in terms of logic, not a proof since any proof would have to assume, and use, the very thing it was seeking to prove (i.e. logic and language). In this regard rationalism is self-referential and thus incoherent. In other words no direct proof can be offered, as this would mean that at least one view did not collapse into absurdity, but only an indirect proof based upon the totality of *reductio ad absurdum* case studies.

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My belief is that all philosophical premises-essentialist or anti-essentialist-can be reduced to absurdity because their linguistic expressions hide essentialist habits whether, ontological or grammatical. This can be no more clearly seen than in the anti-essentialist writings of the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations.*

Wittgenstein states "… that because a word may be used, we should not get carried away with philosophies about essences and the like."[83] According to Wittgenstein "…When philosophy uses a word–'knowledge', being' 'object', 'proposition', 'name'–and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language game which is its original home. What we do is bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use."[84] For Wittgenstein "… the meaning of a word is its use in the language."[85] And "… this language like any other is founded on convention."[86] In Wittgenstein's view, like that of Nietzsche, "… essence is expressed by grammar …"[87] "Grammar tells what kind of object something is (Theology as grammar)."[88]

[82] Aristotle, 1947, 1V, 13-32.
[83] N, Katz, 1981, p.311.
[84] L. Wittgenstein, 1953, p 116.
[85] ibid., 43.
[86] Ibid., 355.
[87] Ibid., 371.
[88] PI, 373.

In this system words derive their meaning from their use in the language game. There are no semantic correlates (essences) outside of the words. Wittgenstein denies that there are any ontological essences ("representations") that ground meaning. Wittgenstein rejects accounts of meaning based upon referring essential objects (semantic correlates). A words meaning for Wittgenstein is its use in a language game. For Wittgenstein language makes no metaphysical assertion about the world and what metaphysical assertions are made, are due to wrongly projecting, and conceiving, word meaning as ontological. In other words ontology is nothing but objectified meanings. Wittgenstein's philosophy rejects the projection of these objectified meanings upon the world.

Now if meaning were in a state of flux then we could not express any meaning at all. Thus 'meaning must be static with a determinate sense. The determinate meaning of a word for Wittgenstein is generated by its use in the context of the language game. In other words a language game fixes the meaning of words. Consequently the fixing of a word's meaning by the language gives the word a fixed characteristic which distinguishes it from other words. This distinguishing characteristic is an essence. Thus a word's essence is not some representation in reality of some ontological essence, but rather the words essence is its meaning and its meaning is derived from its context of utterance. Thus Wittgenstein has only shifted the problem of essence from ontology to use. Wittgenstein has in fact shifted essence as 'representation' to essence as meaning. In this way Wittgenstein, and the player in a language game, are still "identity" thinking (i.e. finding fixed meaning (essence)) and as such proves Adorno's claim that "identity is inherent in thought itself ... to think is to identify."[89]

Now as the notion of ontological essence collapses into self-contradiction so does the notion of meaning (essence) as use. Even though a word may not have a fixed meaning through time, and across language games, it nevertheless has a fixed meaning for the time of a particular language game. Consequently a *reductio*

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[89] T. Adorno, 1973, p5.

argument can then be applied to any word in this particular language game and reduce it to absurdity. To give two examples, Kripke and Priest point out that Wittgenstein's argument entails a skepticism about meaning, namely that all language is meaningless.[90] This places Wittgenstein in a self-contradiction. Wittgenstein writes a book, in a language game, in order to convey some meaning. If the meaning is that all language is meaningless, then the meaning has been conveyed. Thus all language is not meaningless in this particular language game. Priest, in his book *Beyond the Limits of Thought,* has pointed out these self-contradictions in Wittgenstein's views. As he states "… none the less the point remains, the conclusion that results from the skeptical argument and that Wittgenstein wishes us to grasp, is beyond expression (Transcendence). Yet it is possible to express it; I have just done so and so does Kripke (Closure). Hence we have a contradiction at the limit of expression."[91] Wittgenstein is still inside the bottle the only way out for the fly is not via logic and language but by their complete demolition.

The Chinese scholar Hsueh-li Cheng, in his book on Madhyamika called *Empty Logic,* notes the self-contradiction in the notion of meaning as use. As he states:

> "From Nagarjuna's standpoint, the view that " the meaning of a
> word is its use in language" really involves a contradiction or
> absurdity. Wittgenstein's thesis indicates that the meaning of a word
> is "fixed" or "determined" by its particular use in the particular
> situation. This implies that each word has its own or particular use in
> the language and that that particular use is its meaning. But

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[90] A, Kripke, 1998, p.71, G, Priest, op. cit., pp.232-233.
[91] G, Priest op. cit., p.235.

language, Nagarjuna might point out, is an organised system of signs where words are inter-related and hence are devoid of their own use. So, the thesis that the meaning of a word is its use in language would be to say that a word has its own use in an organised system of signs where every word is devoid of its own use. That is contradictory."[92]

Thus we see essences are central for logic to work. Also we see that even though anti-essentialists argue that there are no fixed determinate properties in words they need these fixed determinate properties to exist such that the words they use in their arguments are themselves fixed with determinate meanings and definitions across time or for a particular language game. It is because mental realism believes in these essences or reified concepts that their arguments for an essence of thought collapse into absurdity. With the consequence that so long as we use language and logic any attempt isolate the essence of thought will end in absurdity and only demonstrate that thought must be contentless–without an essence or medium or basis.

Logic and language are thus not metaphysically neutral. They both commit us to the implicit belief in the essential entities they both need for their applications. O'Hear makes this point, implied by Putnam above, about logic when he states, "logic, indeed, is not metaphysically neutral but may well reveal the types of thing various forms of thought and argument commit us."[93] Similarly in regard to language O'Hear notes "both the generality of the predicate and the uniqueness (essence) of reference are essential for the meaning of the sentence."[94] It is in this way that Nietzsche can say, with the Prasangika Madhyamika, that the I (soul) is

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[92] Hsuech-Li Cheng, 1991, pp.118-119.
[93] A. O'Hear., op. cit., p.154.
[94] ibid., p.155.

no more than a product of grammar.[95] With the dissolving of the reified entities (i.e. thought, thinking etc) which language and logic require as necessary and sufficient conditions for their existence into absurdity or self-contradiction our conceptual schemes break down from the inside. The success of our scientific or philosophical theories thus remains, for the realist, totally mysterious. Rather than order they are left with chaos and anarchy. The Madhyamika puts all this negation to a soteriological use, but to the logic-centered Westerner all that is left is some sort of Camusian existential angst where people are"… spinning in vast darkness. It's inside me. My conscious self shatters under this dilating darkness." [96]

Now this thesis argues that whether the laws of Aristotelian logic are universal, immutable, ahistorial, objective principles mirroring reality, or the thinking process, or just arbitrary conventional laws, these laws will reduce all views to meaninglessness, or absurdity. In other words any argument using these laws will by these very laws end in absurdity. This will be seen in chapter four where I reduce to absurdity, or meaninglessness certain arguments which posit an essence to thought.

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[95] F, Nietzsche, 1990. P.55.
[96] G Flaubert, 1980, p.212.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDY
THOUGHT

A priori objections to *a priori* arguments for the linguistic or imagistic or conceptual or any*thing*[1] else being the medium or basis, or essence of thought

"… thought, in itself immaterial, clothes itself in the material garment of the sentence and thereby becomes comprehensible to us. We say a sentence expresses a thought."[2]

When one 'thing' such as thinking is analysed in terms of another 'thing' such as an image, or 'language' or 'concept' etc we end up with absurdities since the other 'thing' itself requires mental activity in order to be processed.

The logical paradox of thought being some*thing* is that thought (i.e. some*thing*) can only discover some*thing* which it creates, but it must already know that which it creates before it creates it because its only content is itself, (i.e. some*thing*).

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[1] This chapter takes as a working assumption the mental realist paradigm. As such 'thing' refers to an existent object.
[2] G. Frege, 1918, p.20.

THESIS

This chapter will seek to prove that if we assume the cognitivist and mental realist paradigms, as well as the analytic philosophical tradition of Dummett, and take Aristotelian logic as an epistemic condition of truth, then as a necessary truth there can be no 'thing' which constitutes, or in other words is the medium, or basis, or essence of thought. I will show that theories which claim that thought is constituted by, or synonymous with, language, or an image, or a concept are inconsistent and end in paradox, regress, circularity and contradiction. As a consequence of these absurdities, I argue that the content of a thought is not constituted by language or an image or a concept. From this demonstration I conclude that there can be no 'thing' object which is the medium, or basis, or essence of thought. Language, or an image or a concept or some*thing* else may express, or be the vehicle of a thought. A thought may become comprehensible to us via language, or an image or a concept, or some*thing* else. But language, or an image, or a concept, or some*thing* else does not constitute, or is synonymous with a thought; or in other words is the medium or basis, or essence of thought. I don't argue that thought cannot be possible without language or images or any*thing* else, only that these 'things' are not the medium or basis, or essence of thought. The medium of thought will always remain hidden from us as long as we use language to discover it. This is because when one 'thing' such as thinking is analysed in terms of another 'thing' such as an image, or language etc we end up with absurdities; since the other 'thing' itself requires mental activity in order to be processed. Frege posits thought as a material existent or an immaterial existent. Similarly Aristotle says thought is an immaterial existent (i.e. the 'form of forms'). Nevertheless either way we end up with absurdities when we use language and logic to find the medium or basis, or essence of thought. We will see that there is no problem with the idea that language, or images, or mentalese, or any*thing* else can be used as a vehicle to express the thought. The problems arise when the claim is made that they are the medium, or basis, or essence of thought. This is not to say that some*thing* may be

the medium or basis, or essence of thought but only that when we use language and Aristotelian logic to find what this 'thing' is we end up with absurdities.

METHOD

Thus I shall take some key arguments in regard to the content of thought and use them as a foil against which to present my arguments. The thrusts of my argument are totally negative. I will not be presenting a new system instead I shall take some key existing systems and show that they end in paradox and regress circularity dilemmas and contradiction. To escape these absurdities I shall argue we need to abandon the idea that any*thing* is the medium or basis, or essence of thought. By 'thing' I mean an object. This chapter will be divided into three parts. The first part will critique the conclusions of Carruthers, Sellars, Field and Fodor with regard to the view that language is the medium or basis, or essence of thought. Part Two will critique the view that images are the medium or basis, or essence of thought. Part Three will critique the conclusions of Frege and McGinn with regard to the view that concepts are the medium or basis, or essence of thought. The final part shall critique the views of Davidson and the early Wittgenstein to show that there cannot be any*thing* as the medium or basis, or essence of thought.

In his book "*Language Thought and Consciousness*", Carruthers argues that language is the medium or basis, or essence of conscious thought. To support his argument Carruthers takes as true two central ideas: Sellar's idea that thinking is inner speech; and Field's arguments that language is encoded in sentence-like ways in the brain. Field claims that natural language sentence-like structures are encoded in the brain and are the medium or basis, or essence of thought. Fodor argues that natural language is only the vehicle for the innate mentalese language. I critique Fodor's account because as Preston notes, Fodor:

"… set out, for the first time, the philosophical and methodological presuppositions of this kind of psychology, arguing powerfully that contemporary cognitive theorising clearly presupposes not only that there must exist a language of thought, but also that cognition consists in computational operations upon sentences of that language."[3]

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In this chapter I do not critique the arguments put forward by the above philosophers. What I do instead is investigate their conclusions. I maintain that if the conclusions of philosophers collapse into absurdity, or meaninglessness then there is no use investigating the arguments that led up to these conclusions. There may be something wrong with the above philosophers premises or something wrong with their inferences. On these points this thesis is silent as it maintains that if the conclusions collapse into absurdity then this is sufficient to make untenable the conclusions-it is irrelevant to investigate further. Thus this chapter takes the conclusions arrived at by the cognitivists: Carruthers, Sellars, Field, Fodor, the imagists and McGinn, in regard to language or images or concepts being necessary for thought. I draw out the absurdities via *reductio ad absurdum* of these conclusions. By reducing the conclusions to absurdity, using the very principles the philosophers use in constructing their arguments, I show that there cannot be any*thing*, which is the medium or basis, or essence of thought. At this point all that is shown is that the conclusions which put forward the claim that there is a medium or basis, or essence of thought are inconsistent. From this negative analysis I shall then infer that there cannot be any*thing* which can be the medium or basis, or essence of thought. As these inferences are derived by logic and expressed in language then in terms of my assumption that all arguments presented in language end in paradox or contradiction, these arguments will themselves end in paradox or contradiction.

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[3] J. Preston, 1997, pp.6-7.

A PRIORI ARGUMENTS AGAINST *A PRIORI* ARGUMENTS FOR A NATURAL LANGUAGE BEING THE MEDIUM OR BASIS, OR ESSENCE OF THOUGHT: INNER SPEECH

Carruthers claims that it is only by language being necessary for thought that the study of language will also be the study of cognition.[4] Nevertheless Carruthers admits that there are some sorts of 'thoughts' in which language is not implicated.[5] Carruthers maintains that cases of aphasia and wolf children indicate that there can be thought without natural language.[6] Carruthers claims that there is no conceptual necessity of language for thought.[7] Nevertheless Carruthers claims that there is a natural necessity of language for some thought namely conscious thought. On this point Carruthers states that "all thoughts are conceptually independent of language ..." [8] and that there is a natural necessity that "… some kinds of human thought involves language ..."[9]

Although Carruthers claims there can be thought without language, he nevertheless claims that conscious thought involves natural language; and in his book seeks to

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[4] P. Carruthers, op. cit., p. 18.

[5] ibid., p. 19.

[6] ibid., p. 17-19.

[7] In rejecting the claim of conceptual necessity of language for thought Carruthers offers a number of arguments to prove that thought can be independent of language: empirical; thought experiment; intuitive. Firstly based upon cases of "wolf-children" Carruthers argues that "… their behaviour was still interpretable as displaying thought, in the same way and at least to some degree that behaviour of animals may be taken as displaying thought." (P. Carruthers, 1998, p. 18) Consequently Carruthers concludes "that language may be involved in certain types of levels of thought, not that language is necessary for thinking as such." (ibid., p. 18) Secondly Carruthers offers an argument rejecting conceptual necessity of language for thought based upon R. Stalnaker's thought experiment of the intelligent Martians who lack any form of public language, but nevertheless engage in a sophisticated technology. Carruthers claims this thought experiment shows "..we surely have the strongest possible grounds for saying that they must be thinking something and something highly sophisticated." (ibid., p. 21) Thirdly Carruthers rejects arguments for the conceptual necessity of language for thought *solely from an intuitive feeling that it is not tenable.* (ibid., p. 21)

[8] ibid., p.11.

[9] ibid., p.17.

prove this. This chapter will take it as given that Carruthers' arguments, that some 'thoughts' do not involve language, are basically correct. I do this not to avoid engaging in his debates but in order to start somewhere.   I have no issue with Carruthers's idea that conscious thought involves language. What this chapter will show is that the involvement of language in conscious thinking can only be in regard to it being the vehicle or expression of thought and not the medium or basis, or essence of the thought.

Carruthers claims firstly our private 'thoughts' consist in natural language sentences and secondly inner thinking is mostly done in inner speech. In order to put forward his arguments Carruthers takes two things as proven: that thinking is inner speech and Fields's materialistic claim that sentence like structures are part of the living structure of our brains. Though conscious thought may involve language I will show that this involvement cannot be in regard to language being the medium or basis, or essence of this thought. Language may be the vehicle of expression of this thinking but language cannot be the medium or basis, or essence of this thought. If language is the medium or basis, or essence of conscious thought then Carruthers's claim that inner thinking is done in inner speech leads to absurdities. By demonstrating these absurdities I show that language is not the medium or basis, or essence of conscious thinking and as consequence there can be no natural necessity of language for thought.

INNER SPEECH

 In equating inner thinking with inner speech Carruthers is in agreement with a number of other philosophers.[10] Plato in his *Sophist* identifies thought with inner

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[10] Hobbes, as we saw, argues that thinking is a dialogue in the soul using verbal images, or mental words. Behaviorists argue thinking is thoughtful speech. Ryle puts forward a theory of thinking which rejects the idea that thinking is *done foro interno*. Ryle argues that verbal behavior is done in accordance with certain principles of inference, evidence and so on. For Ryle thinking is an overt process not done in silence. There is the analogy theory which sees thinking as analogous to speech. Sellar's claims that "… thinking at the distinctly human level … is essentially verbal activity." (W.

speech[11].   Carruthers' claim that thinking is inner speech is based on two arguments. Firstly the research of Hurlburt. Secondly the argument in regard to introspection. Carruthers notes that the research of Hurlburt showed that between 7% and 80% of subjects reported experiencing inner speech when thinking. Nevertheless between 0% and 50% of subjects reported visual images and emotional feelings when thinking.[12] According to Carruthers introspection indicates that we think with inner speech. He claims that when he writes, his 'thoughts' are in natural language sentences. Sentences appear in his imagination in an auditory and perhaps kinaesthetic manner.[13] Carruthers claims that his "…thoughts will consist almost entirely of inner dialogue."[14] If language is the medium or basis, or essence of conscious thought or inner dialogue we end up with the absurdities of circularity, dilemma, regress and self-contradiction.

 If I hear a person speak I assume, following Carruthers claim, that his speech is giving expression to a thought. McGinn points out that this leads to circularity. It is only by the assumption that his verbal sounds express a thought that the sounds cease to be meaningless. But as McGinn states we have circularity because "… language can be seen to explain thought only because speech is to be understood as the expression of thought."[15]

This circularity generates a dilemma; a dilemma in which both horns mean that we must abandon the notion that the medium of thought is language. As McGinn notes, "… either we say that the inner sentence expresses a thought in which case the theory is circular; or it does not express a thought …"[16] Either we have circularity

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Sellars, 1973, p. 83) Davidson claims that thought depends on speech. But is important to bear in mind that Davidson is not saying that language is the basis/medium of thought but only that thoughts are expressed via speech.

[11] W, Kneale, & M, Kneale, 1962, p.18.
[12] P. Carruthers, op. cit., p.50.
[13] ibid., p. 50.
[14] ibid., p. 50.
[15] C. McGinn, 1996, p.94.
[16] ibid., p.95.

or self contradiction i.e. The notion that an inner sentence expresses a thought leads to the conclusion that it does not express a thought

If speech is the expression of an underlying thought what of the underlying thought itself? If this thought is processed by thinking then this thinking is inner speech, but as pointed out this idea of inner speech leads to an infinite regress. If the underlying thought is inner speech then, according to McGinn, "… it seems that the conjectured internal utterance must in turn express some thought … but of course this launches us on an infinite regress."[17] If this internal speech is an expression of the inner thought what then of this inner thought? It in turn must require speech *ad infinitum*, an infinite regress, i.e. the thought must always be one step away from the speech. Because of this infinite regress it would seem that inner speech cannot express 'thoughts'.

To avoid the horns of the dilemmas, that Carruthers' conclusions lead to, we must give up the notion that language is the medium or basis, or essence of conscious 'thought. McGinn comments "… language can be seen to explain thought only because speech is to be understood as the expression of thought."[18] The only way to escape these dilemmas and regresses is to argue that the underlying thought is not in language. If the medium of conscious thought is not in language it must be pre-linguistic.

The second claim Carruthers makes to support his argument that language is involved in conscious thought, is that sentence like structures are hard wired into the living brain. As with the idea that inner thinking is inner speech I will show that this claim is inconsistent. With the undermining of both of Carruthers assumptions it will be shown that language cannot be the medium or basis, or essence of conscious thought.

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[17] ibid., p.95.
[18] C. McGinn, 1996, p.94.

A PRIORI ARGUMENTS AGAINST *A PRIORI* ARGUMENTS FOR A NATURAL LANGUAGE BEING THE MEDIUM OR BASIS, OR ESSENCE OF THOUGHT: FIELD

Carruthers asks how 'thoughts' are carried in thinking? He answers this question by suggesting that the content of propositional attitudes are related to each other in a systematic manner. Any one who believes or can think a given content can also believe or think any number of closely related contents.[19] Likewise, because propositional attitudes are productive then any one who can think can also think an unlimited number of 'thoughts'.[20] Also he states "propositional attitudes interact causally with one another in ways which respect their semantic contents … Beliefs and desires interact to cause intentions, and beliefs interact with other beliefs to generate new beliefs, in ways which are closely responsive to the contents of those states, and by means of transitions which are generally rational ones."[21] As a result of these claims Carruthers questions how this is possible by asking how propositional attitudes can "… have causal powers which reflect their relatedness to the world, as well as their logical relations with one another, that are distinctive of their possessing a semantic content." [22] In other words how can beliefs and desires (i.e. propositional attitudes) interact in causal relationships with respect to the semantic content of the propositional attitudes? The central question Carruthers tries to answer is "how can patterns of causality respect semantic relations of entailment and evidential support?"[23] He concludes that sentence like structures are encoded or inbuilt in the brain like some form of hard wiring. As he states "the

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[19] P. Carruthers, op. cit., p. 134.
[20] ibid., p. 134.
[21] ibid., p. 134.
[22] ibid., p. 133.
[23] ibid., p. 134

most plausible solution to these problems[24] is that beliefs are … relations of internal sentences, as Fodor argues … if beliefs and desires consist of sentences or sentence like structures, encoded in some distinctive way in the brain then there will be no difficulty in explaining how beliefs and desires can be causes."[25] Carruthers adopts the materialist argument of Field in support of his claims that the medium of conscious thought must be language. He agrees with Field's views because, according to Carruthers, Field claims that "... any adequate theory of belief would have to have assumptions about internal representations explicitly built into it."[26]   As Carruthers takes Field's claims for granted, in outlining his arguments for the necessity of language for conscious thought,[27] I will use Field's claims to demonstrate that the materialistic conception of thought and language ends in paradox circularities and regress.

Field claims that there are two ways to give a materialistic account of belief: non-dispositional and dispositional. In a non-dispositional account of belief Field claims we must have the assumption that a person can believe a sentence only if that sentence is stored in the brain.[28] Field rejects this assumption on the grounds that it would mean a person would have to store an infinity of sentences in the brain.[29] To avoid this consequence Field claims that we must resort to a dispositional account of belief. In putting forward his arguments for a dispositional account Field adopts Dennett's claim that we have core beliefs. In this regard Field argues "… one believes a sentence if and only if that sentence is an obvious consequence of sentences [core beliefs] that are explicitly stored …"[30]

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[24] ibid., p. 134. i.e. "How can patterns of causality respect semantic relations of entailment and evidential support"
[25] ibid., p. 134.
[26] H. Field, 1978, p. 27.
[27] P. Carruthers, op., cit., pp. 34-35.
[28] H. Field, op. cit., p. 16.
[29] ibid., p. 16.
[30] ibid., p. 17.

In order to tell whether a sentence is a consequence of a core belief I must search my memory to find the core belief (i.e. I must think). The fact that I search my memory for the core belief indicates that there must be a thought prior to the core belief itself, which thinking finds in my memory. If this thought prior to the core belief was a sentence,we end with two consequences; paradox or infinite regress. These consequences result from Field's claim that sentences are consequences of core beliefs. Thus this thought prior to the core belief being a sentence must be, according to Field, a consequence of some core belief stored in memory. In this regard we have two outcomes. Firstly, if the thought prior to the core belief (sentence) is a consequence of the core belief it is searching for this will lead to paradox. Secondly if the thought prior to the core belief is a consequence of some other core belief this leads to an infinite regress.

A way to avoid these reductios is to claim that the thought prior to the core belief is pre-linguistic. This sets up a dilemma for those who argue like Field that there is a thing called memory in which sentences are stored. The dilemma is: either 1) we retain the notion of memory and concede thought must logically be pre- linguistic- thus negating Field's whole thesis, or 2) we abandon the idea of memory and likewise the notion of thinking[31], again negating Field's thesis.

As an example I generate a core sentence which is constructed out of words that results from my searching my memory for the words I need. The fact that I search my memory indicates that there must be a pre-linguistic thought, prior to the word itself, which finds in my memory the right word to express itself. If we accept the idea that our lexicon is stored in memory and this memory is accessible then some*thing* which is not part of that memory must access it. This leads to a dilemma either the user of the word is a passive vessel for language or the user of the word is a creator of his words. In the first instance language throws up the word not the

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[31] Under the sententialist account thinking implies a process that selects and structures elements. Thinking requires a place (memory) from which it selects the elements it requires. If there is no such place then there can be no thinking.

active involvement of the user. Here the word is not created by the user but is generated automatically from the user's lexicon as a response to some stimuli. In the second instance the user of the word is a creator of meaning a producer of words who must grasp the meaning of the word before it is thought; so that the word can then be used to express the thought. Therefore there must be a thought prior to the word.

In the first instance we cannot explain how new words are generated. If sentences are encoded in our brains and we are non-thinking passive agents responding to stimuli then our core ideas must be set. Consequently we should have the same ideational make up of our Neanderthal ancestors. The linguistic determination of thought would mean that there was a fixed immutable number of meanings and we would still be at the ideational stage of the cave man. In the second instance if we argue that humans are active agents in their language use and that thought is linguistic we end in a paradox. thought can only discover a core idea which it creates but it must already know that which it creates before it creates it; because its only content is itself.

Field's views about internal representations and core beliefs creates circularities and dilemmas respectively. The claim that internal representations, (i.e. sentence or sentence-like structures) are encoded in our brains generates circularity. To have an internal representation is to think about the internal representation. This means that the explanation of thought has moved in a circle. Field's adoption of the notion of core beliefs generates two dilemma 1): either 1) the inner core sentences have their content determined by themselves in which case we end up in self referential circularity; or 2) the content of the sentences are determined by facts which are independent of their formal properties In the latter case these facts will be what really constitutes the content of sentences and thus 'thoughts'. The problem with the first scenario is that the self-referential core sentences will be just meaningless bits of syntax which cannot give content to the sentences independent of the sentences themselves. If we argue for a meaning holism in regard to core beliefs

we end up with the second dilemma: either 1) core beliefs derive their meaning from other core beliefs around them in which case they cannot be core beliefs, or 2) the core beliefs derive their meaning from more fundamental beliefs in which case this ends in an infinite regress.

This dilemma has two consequences. Core sentences need things independent of them to confer significance on the internal sentences. The second horn of the dilemma indicates that such independent things render the internal sentences as being theoretically superfluous for thought; because we can go straight to those things that give meaning to the sentence. In other words we can just drop the sentences as being necessary for thought and go straight to the things or conditions that are brought in to interpret them.

Field's claim that an adequate theory of belief must have assumptions about internal representation explicitly built into it leads to circularity. If we think in beliefs then thinking is the manipulation of words which express those beliefs. But words have content only because they express beliefs; so the theory presupposes what it set out to explain. Also the inner representation theory must tell us what it is for an inner sentence to express a particular belief. However, this can lead to a dilemma. If the inner representation theory appeals to the meaning of words in the sentence, or the sentence itself this leads to circularity. As stated previously, words express these beliefs; but words have content only because they express beliefs; so the theory presupposes what it set out to explain or if the inner representation theory appeals to extra linguistic conditions to give meaning to the sentences then this will negate the claim that language is necessary for thought; since a belief being some kind of non-linguistic internal representation makes language non necessary for thought. Another dilemma following from the internal representation claim of Field is that either. The internal representation expresses a thought, in which case we end in circularity because, according to Field's claim, a thought can only be expressed by

the internal representations, or it does not express a thought, in which case the claim that internal representations are necessary for thought is made redundant.

Field claims that a materialistic account of belief requires a dispositional approach to belief. Now a dispositional account of belief leads to the consequence that thought must be prior to belief; which contradicts Field's argument. According to Field believing, is a relation between core beliefs encoded in the brain.[32] Thus there can be no 'thoughts' prior to these core beliefs. Here there is a contradiction in that to have a dispositional attitude is to have a the disposition to use a belief, but this disposition must be prior to the belief, (i.e. I must have the thought about the belief prior to the belief I use to express the disposition).

In a similar manner a dilemma arises with regard to Field's account of disposition: either the person is an active agent in the generation of beliefs and thus dispositional attitude requires thought to be prior to these beliefs, or the person is a passive vehicle to forces outside of their control and we abandon dispositional attitudes in which case we must abandon thinking and thought as well.

Two alternatives stem from Field's arguments. Firstly humans are active agents in the generation of 'thoughts'. Secondly humans are only passive responders to external stimulus and thus under the control of forces which are not in their control. As we have seen these two alternatives lead to the consequence that language cannot be necessary for thought.

With regard to the first alternative humans as acting as agents in the generation of thought, Field uses a hierarchical structure. For Field language is necessary for thought (beliefs) where these beliefs are generated by a dispositional attitude. If we accept the notion of dispositional attitude and thus humans as active agents in the generation of 'thoughts'; along with the idea of language being necessary for

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[32] Ibid., p. 17.

thought we end in a paradox. The paradox is that thought, (i.e. language) can only discover an idea, belief, word or concept which it finds by way of a dispositional attitude but it must already know what to find before it finds it because its only content is itself, (i.e. language). The only way to avoid the paradox and maintain that humans are active agents with dispositional attitudes is to abandon the idea that language is necessary for thought. This is because, as I have stated above, to have a dispositional attitude is to have the disposition to use language, but this disposition must be prior to language, (i.e. I must have the thought about language prior to the language I use to express the disposition). The common theme in Field's argument is that he analyses the mental act of thought in terms of a type of 'thing', (i.e. language). And as O'Hear notes if humans are active agents then this type of thing i.e. language itself, requires mental activity in order to be dealt with.[33]

In regard to the second alternative, if we abandon dispositional attitude and thus the claim that humans are active agents in the generation of 'thoughts', we turn humans into passive vehicles for forces outside of their control. In which case we must abandon thinking and therefore thought as well. This is because the user of language becomes a passive vessel for language. Language throws up the word not the active involvement of the user. In this regard the word is not created by the user but is generated automatically from the users lexicon as a response to some stimuli. So thinking and thought become redundant. Thus we have seen that absurdities resides in the notion of words or language being the essence of thought.

In my discussion it is apparent that Field regards language as innate and hard-wired into the brain. Another theory which sees a language as being hard-wired into the brain is that of Fodor. The difference is that Fodor regards natural language as being only relative to a particular culture. What Fodor regards as innate, as well as culturally universal, is the language mentalese. As we saw with Field his arguments of an innate natural language in the brain in facts shifts the problem of what the medium of thought is one step lower than natural language. A theory that shifts

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[33] A. O'Hear, 1985, p.225.

another step lower than Field's innate natural language theory is that of Fodor's idea of an innate mentalese. But because, as we shall see, mentalese is both the content and process of itself, his model reduces to absurdity.

Fodor, as well as Chomsky, Levelt and Pinker, regards the brain as being composed of isolatable modules of which one such is language.[34] For Fodor the module of mentalese is innately structured and specialised for the interpretation and construction of natural language sentences. In Field's theory natural language was the basis or medium of thought but in Fodor's theory natural language is only a vehicle for mentalese; since mentalese is in fact translated into whatever natural language we may happen to use. Just as Field's ideas lead to paradox and regress so do Fodor's ideas. Field shifted the problem one step deeper than natural language where as Fodor shifts the problem one step deeper than mentalese. Cognitive science has abandoned the stimulus-response model of behaviourism and replaced it with a model of internal processing. But as we shall see this model is no more than another version of behaviourism in that 'thoughts' are what is generated from the algorithm of mentalese processing. The algorithm of mentalese then just throws up the programmed result. In his book *The Character of Mind*, McGinn likewise notes that the idea of an innate algorithmic process leads to a passive responder because such models leave out consciousness and the realisation that humans are active creators of meaning.[35] It will become apparent that the idea of a language of thought leads to paradox, regress and dilemmas irrespective of whether humans are passive responders or active creators.

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[34] J. Fodor, 1978, 1983, 1987, N. Chomsky, 1988, W, Levelt, 1989, S, Pinker 1994.
[35] C. McGinn, 1996, pp. 107-116.

A PRIORI ARGUMENTS AGAINST *A PRIORI* ARGUMENTS FOR LANGUAGE OF thought BEING THE MEDIUM OR BASIS OR ESSENCE OF THOUGHT: FODOR-- MENTALESE

Fodor rejects the claim that natural language is the medium of thought on the grounds that nonverbal and preverbal animals and children do think.[36] According to Fodor the arguments of Ryle and Wittgenstein against the sort of psychology he is advocating "… depend on a complex of assumptions about the nature of explanation, the ontological status of theoretical entities, and the *a priori* conditions upon the possibility of linguistic communication …"[37] Fodor claims that all these assumptions are in fact unwarranted.[38] According to Fodor, Ryle argues that mentalistic models give mechanistic accounts and orgies of regrettable hypostasis.[39] Nevertheless Fodor states that "… It will be the pervasive assumption of my discussion that such explanations, however often they may prove to be empirically unsound, are in principle, methodologically impeccable."[40] This is because Fodor believes that Ryle and Wittgenstein have given no *a priori* reasons why his mentalist approach will not prove fruitful.[41]

Fodor claims that one cannot learn a language unless one already knows a language i.e. a meta-language. On this point Fodor identifies a regress, namely that learning the meta-language must involve prior knowledge of a meta-language in which its

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[36] J. Fodor, 1976, p. 56.
[37] ibid., p. 3.
[38] ibid., p. 3.
[39] ibid., p. 5.
[40] ibid., p. 6.
[41] ibid., p. 9.

truth definitions are couched - and so on ad infinitum.[42]   But Fodor claims he avoids this regress by claiming that this meta-language is in fact innate.[43] Fodor compares the brain to a computer where natural languages are input output sequences for a central cognition process that operates like the machine language of a computer. A system like a compiler transforms the machine language into the natural language.[44]   This innate internal meta-language is rich enough "… to express the extension of any plausible natural language predicate that can be learned."[45] The complexity of 'thoughts' results from the natural language incorporating itself back into the computational process of the meta-language by a process of abbreviatory definition.[46] What allows this incorporation and thinking are memory mechanisms. According to Fodor these memory mechanisms are sensitive to the complexity of the form in which the 'thoughts' are couched.[47] The meta-language is made up of mental representations very much but not quite like natural language and not quite a linguaform.[48] As Fodor states:

> "… the available models of cognitive processes characterize them as fundamentally computational and hence presuppose a representational system in which the computations are carried out. This representational system cannot itself be a natural language although: the semantic properties of any learnable language predicate must be expressible in the representational system."[49]

 The logic of this meta-language is Aristotelian logic.[50] Incorporated in Fodor's account is a relational view of propositional attitudes in which the propositional attitudes are encoded in mental representations. Beliefs are propositional attitudes

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[42] ibid., p. 65.
[43] ibid., p. 65.
[44] ibid., p. 66.
[45] ibid., p.82.
[46] ibid., p. 85.
[47] ibid., p. 85.
[48] ibid., p. 156.
[49] ibid., p. 99.
[50] ibid., p. 65.

and are mental states[51]. These propositional attitudes interact in causal relations, because "… propositional attitudes are… relations to internal sentences."[52] Why propositional attitudes are mental representations is, according to Fodor, because of the fact of 'intentionality'.[53] Intentional states have intentional objects. As Fodor notes "… the intentional objects of mental states are complex. I think they constitute a language; roughly, the syntactic structure of mental states mirrors the semantic relations among intentional objects."[54] In The *Modularity of the Mind* Fodor outlines a modular model of the mind in which the structure of the mind is considered to be made up of interlocking modules in functional interrelations. These modules can contain such things as: natural language; mentalese, the innate meta-language and memory.[55]

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 Fodor claims that beliefs and desires, etc are to be understood as relations to sentences. These sentences belong to an innate universal language of thought called mentalese, encoded in a module, one of many modules that make up the human brain. Thinking is considered to be the manipulation of a symbolic system by a limited number of Aristotelian logical rules.[56] Fodor claims that the feature of propositional attitudes known as intentionality leads to the fact that these internal sentences are mental representations some linguaform or abstract symbolic system. Thus the contents of mentalese are mental representations, a symbolic linguaform, upon which is performed Aristotelian logical operations. As Preston succinctly notes:

> "… the fully fledged language of thought hypothesis is that thinking consists, quite literally, in computational operations performed upon sentences of mentalese, an internal language with which thinkers are innately endowed. For a creature to think, on this view, is for it to have

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[51] J. Fodor, 1981, p. 202.
[52] ibid., p. 202.
[53] ibid. pp. 200-203.
[54] J. Fodor, 1987 , p. 138.
[55] J. Fodor, 1983.
[56] J. Fodor, 1976, p. 121.

rational symbol-manipulations occurring in its mental medium … The mind is conceived of a set of interlocking 'modules' characterised not in terms of structure, or of the material they are realised in terms of their functional interrelations. Their functioning consists in the processing of information encoded in linguaform mental representations."[57]

Natural language is no more than the vehicle through which mentalese expresses itself. Mentalese is translated into whatever natural language one uses. Thus with Fodor's theory the content of thought has been shifted one step lower than natural language into mentalese. But as we shall see this does not solve the problem because mentalese under Fodor's characterisation needs processing as well. Fodor's theory has not gone unchallenged. As we shall see Glock, McGinn, Searle, Dennett, and Davidson to name a few have offered arguments against mentalese.

While acknowledging that we can have an inner speech in some language Glock rejects the idea that there is a medium of thought. According to Glock the idea of a language of thought has the absurd consequence that the thinker may be mistaken about his own 'thoughts'. Glock argues that there is no need to assume that we think in some symbolism. As he states:

"… arguably, the question of what language I think in arises only with respect to a foreign language. And boils down to questions such as these: Do I speak that language hesitantly? Do I have to decide first what I want to say and then try to remember the equivalent in the foreign tongue, or can I simply say it? But there is no need to suppose that I must think in some symbolism … and then transpose my thoughts into utterances of a different symbolism. That picture - enshrined in Fodor's idea of a language of thought-has the absurd

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[57] J. Preston, 1997, p. 7.

consequence that I must always be mistaken about even the most simple of my own thoughts." [58]

McGinn sees cognitive science, with its preoccupation on computer models for the brain, as fundamentally wrong in regard to the idea of thinking as being like a computer programme. McGinn claims thinking requires meaning and understanding of the symbols manipulated by the mind; and a programme does not have understanding or know the meaning of the symbols it manipulates. For McGinn the fundamental problem with the idea of an innate mental processing algorithm is "… how can we model what requires understanding on what does not."[59] Searle, as we shall see, critiques mentalese by putting it in opposition to another model of language. Davidson claims there are simpler models. Dennett likewise agrees with Davidson that there are other models to explain thinking namely one based upon biology. What I am aiming to do in this chapter is not critique mentalese by juxtaposing it with a model, as other have done, but instead critique it in terms of its own characterisation. It is by undermining the theory in terms of its own criteria that to my mind end the debate.

Glock and Preston claim that the phenomenon of 'the tip-of-tongue' can be explained by the idea of a language of thought namely mentalese.[60] Dennett likewise acknowledges this phenomenon, but claims that this does not involve mentalese because tip of the tongue take place at the consciousness level and because of this the idea of mentalese just leads to regress and the invention of more and more 'modules'. Dennett, like McGinn, sees the model as forgetting consciousness. As Dennett states:

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[58] Hans-Johann, Glock, 1997, p.164.
[59] C. McGinn, op. cit., p. 111.
[60] J. Preston, 1997, p. 8 & H-Johann Glock, 1997, p.165.

"Unconscious cognitive processes are granted on all sides, and if it is conducted in Mentalese (as is commonly asserted or assumed by theorists of language of thought persuasion), getting some content translated into Mentalese cannot be sufficient for getting it into consciousness, even if it is sufficient for getting understood. There must be some further translation or transduction into an even more central arena than central processing, into some extra system-Ned Block's postulated consciousness module." [61]

According to Dennett, Fodor's theory is a poor model because it is unbiological and a sort of DNA code for language.[62] Searle similarly claims that the computational model of mentalese leaves out consciousness. Searle sets out the features that he thinks characterise rule-governed, intentional behaviour and argues that too few of them are respected under the mentalese model.[63] While acknowledging that we some times cannot find words for our 'thoughts' Davidson claims that the language of thought theory is a feeble argument. According to Davidson it is enough to know that we can think new things as well as to realise that we sometimes cannot find the words which we already know. On these points Davidson states:

"… the arguments for the existence of a language of thought prior to, or independent of, a socially engineered language are feeble. The fact that we sometimes cannot find words for what we want to say has simpler explanations than the postulation of a pre-exiting internal but wordless message striving to find translation into a spoken idiom. It is enough to suppose that we sometimes cannot access words or phrases

[61] D. Dennett, 1997, p. 222.
[62] ibid., p. 222.
[63] J. Searle, 1997, p. 108-110.

we already know, or even that, already having a language, we are able to think of new things that need saying."[64]

It is a curious fact that some aspects of Davidson's theory of interpretation meaning and truth have led some interpreters to argue that his theory implies a mentalese language of thought. For instance Vermazen argues:

"Davidson would have it that speakers understand English in virtue of knowing the truth conditions of English sentences. Thus Dudley understands 'Snow is white' in virtue of knowing via his finite theory that the sentence is true iff snow is white. In order to accomplish the latter epistemic achievement, Dudley must have (somehow) represented to himself that 'Snow is white' is true iff snow is white. But this requires an internal representation, say a 'language of thought' capable of expressing the proposition that snow is white; and so the problem of meaning has only been put off. To suggest a truth-theoretic semantics now be provided for the Mentalese language launches an obviously vicious regress cognate with what D.C. Dennett has called "Hume's Problem" of self-understanding representations."[65]

These criticisms of the language of thought are to my mind sound, but they all have one fundamental flaw. Each critique attacks Fodor from the perspective of some other theory, be it a theory of meaning consciousness or biology. In his book *The Language of Thought* Fodor makes his claims by generating paradoxes, regresses and dilemmas. I feel that it is by generating similar flaws in Fodor's theory that we pull the rug from under his feet and lay to rest the debate. All that opposing other theories does is create arguments over key terms, as we saw in the case of Ryle and

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[64] D. Davidson, 1997, p. 20.
[65] B. Vermazen, 1989, p. 248.

Wittgenstein. All that Fodor can or could say in response is, as we saw, that he disagrees with their assumption. By undermining his arguments in terms of his arguments alone we in fact render his views untenable.

The creator of a linguaform sentence must know, or be conscious of the meaning of the sentence before it is created. This is because if the essence of mentalese is linguaform we have a paradox. The paradox being that thought being solely in linguaform then thought, can only discover an idea which it creates but it must already know that which it creates before it creates it; because its only content is itself. This is because a thinker can only use linguaform to search for the linguaform he is looking for but the linguaform he uses to search for the linguaform he is searching for, implies that he already knows the linguaform he is looking for.

This paradox only results if the thinker is an active agent in the generation of linguaform; in other words if the human 'thinks'. If we assume that the human is only a passive responder to stimulus then the paradox does not arise. This is because if the human is a passive responder then all that happens in his brain is that the algorithm of mentalese throws up the linguaform needed for the completion of the program. The human is activated by a stimulus and the algorithm produces the logical result; all that the human is, is a capsule to house the algorithm. In this regard we must give up the idea that the human 'thinks' and thus that he has any 'thoughts' apart from innate content and pre-programmed algorithms. As we saw with McGinn's and Dennett's critique of the language of thought model what is missing from this is 'consciousness' But if we bring in consciousness then we end up with the paradox above. Thus we have a dilemma either the human is a passive responder to stimulus, a container for an algorithmic process, and we give up the notions of thinking and thought or the human is an active creator of linguaform and we end in paradox if linguaform is the basis or medium of thought and thinking.

If we claim that there are modules in the brain and one of these is our memory we end up with a regress and dilemma as above. This is because either the human actively searches his memory for the meanings his consciousness requires or it is the algorithm that searches the memory bank for the word it needs to complete the program independent of any volition on the part of the host for the algorithm. I must search my memory i.e. some 'module' to find the linguaform to give meaning to my consciousness, (i.e. I must 'think'). The very fact that I search my memory i.e. some 'module' for the linguaform indicates that there must be a pre-linguaform thought prior to the linguaform itself, which thinking finds in my memory. If this pre-linguaform thought is itself some sort of mental representation-sentence, we end with an infinite regress. If this pre-linguaform thought is a mental representation, then it would require a language of thought capable of processing the mental representation; but now this 'language of thought' launches us on a regress.

This regress only results if we claim the human is an active thinker or finder of linguaform. If the human is only a responder then it is the algorithm that searches out in memory the linguaform it needs, but here we must abandon the notion of 'think' because the human does not find the linguaform from thinking, the algorithm finds it independent of the volition of the human. On the other hand, if the human is a thinker and finds the linguaform which gives meaning to his consciousness then we end in regress. Thus we end up with a dilemma. Either the human just responds to stimulus and the algorithm accesses in memory, via an algorithm, the required linguaform and we give up the notions of 'think' and 'thought.' Or the human is an active agent that finds in memory the required linguaform to give meaning to his consciousness and we end with a regress.

We have looked at Sellars, Field, Carruthers and Fodor's arguments that the medium of thought is propositional, (i.e. in language). In their accounts, if the

thinker is an active agent in the generation of a thought then their models end in paradox, regress and dilemma. On the other hand if the thinker is a passive vehicle for some output,   (i.e. they are simply controlled by stimuli through a mental mechanism or algorithm) again their models end in paradox, regress and dilemmas. In this alternative we saw that we must give up the notions of thought and 'memory' if language is the medium of thought. In the former alternative if we are to accept their accounts in regard to a language playing a role in thought we must give up the notion that a language is the basis or medium of thought. In Fodor's, account natural language is only a vehicle for thought. If we are to avoid the absurdities of Field, Sellars and Carruther's accounts then language could only be a vehicle and not the medium of thought. Sellars, Field and Carruther's accounts in fact shift the problem of the medium of thought one level lower than what they address. It is at this level that Fodor offers his model, but even this ends in absurdities and in fact shifts the problem one level lower again. What we can draw from the above reductios is that the medium of thought cannot be a language. This is simply because the logical paradox of thought being a language is that thought (i.e. a language) can only discover some aspect of language' which it creates but it must already know that which it creates before it creates it; because its only content is itself, (i.e. language). In these propositional models a language is both the content and process of itself and as such there is no way to avoid the absurdities. Thus we see that absurdities resides in the notion of language being the essence of thought. There are non-propositional, or non-language models namely imagism, but as we shall see the idea that 'images' are the medium or basis, or essence of thought likewise reduces to absurdities.

A PRIORI ARGUMENTS AGAINST *A PRIORI* ARGUMENTS FOR IMAGES BEING THE MEDIUM OR BASIS, OR ESSENCE OF THOUGHT: IMAGISM

About 2,300 years ago Aristotle claimed that the soul never thinks without images. In the recent philosophical period imagist arguments have been put forward by Locke, Hume, and Russell. Their basic arguments summed up by Carruthers, is:

> "… that thoughts consist entirely of mental (mostly visual) images, and that thoughts interact by means of associations (mostly learned) between those images … thought is independent of language on the grounds that possession and manipulation of mental images need not in anyway involve or pre-suppose natural language."[66]

Lakoff, Johnson and Lakoff & Johnson claim that image schemata are crucial for categorisation and lexical semantics.[67] Lakoff prefers image models to propositional ones. He claims that propositional thinking is rooted in visual images. Johnson claims that abstract reasoning should be modelled upon images derived from bodily representations (i.e. motor and motor-based visual schemata).[68] Imagist claims in regard to the medium or basis, or essence of thought ends up with similar problems as do the claims that language is the medium or basis, or essence of thought. These problems have as their source simply the idea that the creator of the image must know the significance of the image before it is visualised.

Einstein when asked by J. Hadamad about his thinking when engaged upon some inventive work stated that words and language did not play a role. Einstein noted that images were used in his thought. As he states "the words or language, as they are written or spoken, do not seem to play any role in my mechanism of thought. The psychical entities which seem to serve as clear elements in thought are certain

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[66] P. Carruthers, 1998, p. 31.
[67] G. Lakoff, 1987, M. Johnson, 1987, G. Lakoff & M. Johnson, 1980.
[68] M. Johnson, 1987.

signs and more or less clear images which can be "… voluntarily reproduced and combined."[69]

There are two classic objections to imagistic theory. Firstly many of our words and concepts stand for things that have no image. As Carruthers points out, "… it seems plain that no image, or sequence of images, can, of itself, carry the content of even a simple thought such as [that all grass is green] let alone of a complex proposition such as [that life may be discovered on Mars in the next ten or twelve years]." [70] Secondly Wittgenstein argued that if the meaning attached to an uttered thought was an image then it would be possible to peel away the utterance to leave just the image. As Carruthers notes, " … say aloud, and mean 'It is windy today', just as you would in normal conversation. Then do what you did again, only just with the meaning remaining without effecting any utterance …"[71] Carruthers claims that studying the nature of imagery is less useful than studying the nature of language in regard to understanding the nature of thought.[72] He claims this because when we use an image the content of the thought is in fact conveyed by a natural language sentence. As he states, "… it is images of natural language sentences which are the primary vehicles of our conscious thoughts … For it is not the image, as such, which carries the content of the thought, but rather what is imaged-namely, a natural-language sentence."[73] We shall see below that Carruthers is wrong on this point. In reference to the research of Keller & Keller, we will see that there can be images in the mind in which the content of those images ('thoughts') are not conveyed by language.

It would seem that there is ample philosophical argument rejecting the notion that images are the medium of thought. I partly agree with this argument but I disagree on the method upon which the rejection is based namely the countering of imagism in terms of 'things' or theories, (i.e. meaning which imagist theorists do not bring

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[69] I. Matte-Blanco, 1988, p.97.
[70] P. Carruthers, op. cit., p. 32.
[71] ibid., p. 32.
[72] P. Carruthers, op. cit., p. 51.

into their models). What I will do is take some examples from cognitive science and show how they lead to the fact that images cannot be the basis of thought because in their own terms they reduce to absurdities. I take examples from cognitive science for two reasons. Firstly as philosophy discuses the working of the mind then empirical investigations into the mind should be a test place for the philosophical investigations. Secondly if the empirical investigations leads to theories which end up in absurdities then we cut the ground from beneath 'scientific' rejections of the philosophical arguments and thus end the debate.

Pinker and Bloom claim that "… language is a poor medium to convey certain forms of information such as emotions or Euclidean relations …. a picture is worth a thousand words."[74] Wallace in investigating the working of a machinist argues that imagery is the primary medium in which the machinist's thinking activity takes place. As he argues:

> " … the machinist thought with his hands and eyes and when he wished to learn to communicate he made a drawing or a model; the manufacturer and manager thought with his larynx, as it were, and when he wished to learn or communicate did so with words, in conversation or writing …"[75]

Kosslyn maintains that imagery is needed for the communicating of positions and shapes, as well as when finer distinctions in shape are required.[76] Ferguson claims that the thought processes involved in engineering design do not take place in language descriptions but are "… dealt with in the mind by a visual, nonverbal process … it rests largely on the nonverbal thought and nonverbal reasoning of the

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[73] ibid., p. 51.
[74] S. Pinker & P Bloom, 1990, p. 715.
[75] A. Wallace, 1978, p. 212.
[76] S. Kosslyn, 1981.

designer who thinks with pictures."[77] These examples show that Carruthers is wrong about the content of imagistic 'thoughts' being conveyed by language. In the cognitive sciences the most preferred model to explain the mind's functioning is a Fordorian one. Athough the workings of this modular approach are not fully understood, Fodor's account is the preferred one. On this point Gumperz and Levinson state "… although those properties are only dimly understood, still it is generally presumed, as Fodor has influentially put it, that the mind is 'modular'".[78]

Keller and Keller adopt a modualaristic approach to the mind. They claim that mental activity takes place within diverse and discrete modes. Language, imagery, emotion, and sensorimotor representation are distinct cognitive modalities involving multiple information-processing components independently operating but interactively.[79] According to Keller and Keller the visual and linguistic modularities act independent of each other.[80] Keller and Keller claim that visual imagery and evolutionary vision are prior to language and that "… even after the appearance of language in evolution, alternate forms of conceptual representation remain structurally and functionally independent."[81] According to Keller and Keller, aphasic patients indicate that while language is affected the visual imagery is not impaired.[82] In Keller and Keller's account the thinking can be both in images and language, but imagistic thought is the more primal. In this regard they would reject Carruthers' argument that the content of imagistic thought is conveyed by natural-language sentences.

Keller and Keller claim that imagistic modes of thinking interact with linguistic modes. In examining the working of a blacksmith they claim that language is of minimal importance in the production process of the blacksmith.[83] The blacksmith claims that he has to "… get a concrete visualization of the knife going, because I'm

[77] E. Ferguson, 1977, p. 827-828.
[78] J. Gumperz & S. Levinson, p. 22.
[79] C. Keller & J. Keller, 1997, p. 115.
[80] ibid., p. 117.
[81] ibid.,. p. 116.
[82] ibid., p. 116.

going to be out there shaping it with a hammer …"[84] Keller and Keller maintain that a dynamic interaction takes place between the material developments and imagery once the production of the blade begins.[85] A complex process of image thinking takes place as the blacksmith goes about creating the object. The blacksmith uses images in diverse ways to produce his object, a thinking which does not, it is claimed, take place in the medium of language. The design of the product takes place through images. According to Keller and Keller, this involves the positioning of schematic images of segments since the blacksmith notes that he is dealing with dimensions.[86] In the production of the object, abstract referential schemata such as straightness, perpendicularity and balance are used to gauge the progress of the production.[87] According to Keller and Keller the set-up images integrate visual and sensorimotor information "… in representation which combine a simultaneous visual arrangement with sequentially ordered procedural knowledge."[88] Keller and Keller conclude, from the investigation of how a blacksmith thinks when producing an object that imagery and language interact; but that imagery is a basic form of mental activity. As they state:

> "Based upon evidence above, we argue that imagery and sensorimotoer representation constitute basic forms of mental activity which may predominate in certain human activities such as design of material artifacts. These systems of information processing constitute distinct forms of conceptual thought and reasoning which may be integrated at various points with linguistic representation, but which are not thereby determined by linguistic structures."[89]

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[83] ibid., p. 119.
[84] ibid., p. 119.
[85] ibid., p. 119.
[86] ibid., p. 121.
[87] ibid., p. 121.
[88] ibid., p. 121.
[89] ibid., p. 121.

In contradistinction to Carruthers' claims, the examples and arguments of Keller and Keller, Wallace, Kosslyn and Ferguson give powerful support to the idea that 'thoughts' do not have to involve language. While indicating that 'thoughts' can be in images their arguments do not indicate that images are the medium of the 'thoughts' in images. All their argument indicates, just like the arguments about language, is that images can be the vehicle of thought. That there must be something prior to images in the thinking process that involves images can be easily seen by the way the idea that images are the medium of thought reduces to absurdity.[90]   Now the idea of a memory crops up with Keller and Keller's account since they argue that these images are learned over a period of time.[91] Consequently they must be stored in a memory. It is this memory requirement which turns the idea that images are the medium of thought into absurdity, as it did for Field and Fodor.

If the medium of thought is imagistic then we have the paradox that thought must know the image before it knows what images to use to express it self. This is seen clearly if we assume the image is stored in memory. Since if the medium of thought is imagistic then an image must be used to access the image in memory. But if the image in memory is the same as the one used to access it then we have the paradox that the thinker already knows the image before he accesses it. If the image used to access the image in memory is different from the one in memory we have a dilemma. If the thinker uses a different image to access the one in memory then there is the problem of where this image comes from. Either it is prior to the one in memory, if this prior image is the basis of the thought we have a paradox. Thought' must know the image before it knows what images to use to express itself.

Therefore it becomes apparent that if the thinker is an active generator of their 'thoughts' then images cannot be the basis or medium of thought. This is because

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[90] Ibid., p. 119.
[91] ibid., p. 121.

the regresses have shown that there must be something prior to the image. An image, like a natural-language sentence or mentalese can be a vehicle for thought but not its medium, or basis. In other words the above arguments show that a thought must be present without images and is independent of images. Thus we have shown that absurdities resides in the notion that an image is the essence of thought.

A PRIORI ARGUMENTS AGAINST *A PRIORI* ARGUMENTS FOR CONCEPTS BEING THE MEDIUM OR BASIS, OR ESSENCE OF THOUGHT

 I have tried to demonstrate that the content of thinking, must be prior to natural language or a linguaform, or an image. My conclusion arrived at is that a thought must be independent of any of these 'things'.   So if neither natural language, or a linguaform, or an image can not be the medium or basis of thought what some*thing* else could be? Aristotle's answer was that concepts, or beliefs could be the medium or basis, or essence of thought.[92]   Philosophers who argue for the notion that concepts are the basis/medium of thought are Frege and McGinn.

Frege initiated a philosophical language tradition that was to last seventy five ears and was concerned with how language hooks onto the world. With Frege's image of the telescope, in his article *On sense and Reference*[93], we get a philosophical interest in how language hooks onto the external world. With this image seems to go the assumption that the thought shapes our language because the categories of language are the categories of thought. In other words language mirrors our thought process such that it is seen that language is the visible manifestation of thought and that thought is language. As Dummett notes, "... Frege was able to claim that the

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[92] On these point Sokolov notes Aristotle poses the question "what are the attributes that distinguish primary concepts from images? Or [let] these concepts be not images but [at any rate, they cannot manifest themselves] without images." (A. Sokolov, 1975, p. 13)

structure of the sentence reflects the structure of thought".[94] For Frege there was the outer world (material objects) the inner world (psychological phenomena) and a 'third realm', "… whose contents cannot be grasped by the mind until they are dressed in language."[95] Frege claimed that thought and language were independent. As he states, "… thought, in itself immaterial, clothes itself in the material garment of the sentence and thereby becomes comprehensible to us. We say a sentence expresses a thought."[96] Nevertheless as Preston points out "… the view is linguistic not because it represents thoughts as linguistic (it need not), but because it construes thinking as coming to stand in relation to 'objects of thought' these being the senses of the sentences, those things which are true or false."[97] The contents of this third realm in regard to thought are concepts. These concepts are what Frege called the sense of words[98] or sentences.[99] Concepts or senses are the objective content of 'thoughts' existing independent of the individual thinker or any thinker but available to each thinker in the third realm.[100]

Dummett the advocate of a certain type of analytical philosophy seems himself to move towards a Fregeian view of thought.   Dummett argues, that thoughts exist and that language is the medium of our thoughts[101]. As he states "… the philosophy of thought can be approached only through the philosophy of language."[102] For Dummett language is prior to thought.[103] Any attempt to explain thought independently of its expression in language is according to Dummett overturning the fundamental axiom of all analytical philosophy.[104] He states "… as Frege insisted concepts, or what he called 'senses'-the senses of words considered

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[93] G. Frege, (1892), 1960, p. 60.
[94] M. Dummett, 1991, p. 3.
[95] J. Preston, 1997, p. 3.
[96] G. Frege, 1918, p. 20.
[97] J. Preston , op.cit, p. 3.
[98] M. Dummett, op.cit, p.111.
[99] J. Preston, op.cit., p.3.
[100] ibid., p.3.
[101] M. Dummett, 1991, p.3, 103.
[102] Ibid., p.3.
[103] ibid., p.3.
[104] ibid., p.3-4.

independently of their being expressed by words–are not contents of the mind."[105] As we saw Frege saw thoughts as inhabiting a third realm with no linguistic content. This account by Dummett gives him some problems since according to Dummett "… we cannot therefore explain what it is for a subject to understand a certain sense as attaching to a word by means of a simple associationist model …"[106] Dummett claims that though there may be a prior grasp of sense one does not have to presuppose it. For to presuppose it would according to Dummett undermine the assumptions of analytical philosophy.[107]

McGinn, after arguing that there is no cogent argument "…for the thesis that thought is possible only in the presence of language"[108], argues that concepts could be the medium or basis, or essence of thought.[109] McGinn notes that concepts will be some sort of internal representation in the mind of the thinker.[110] Nevertheless McGinn notes that the idea that concepts are mental images is discredited.[111] Similarly I have shown above that images cannot be the basis of thought. With regard to the idea that concepts are some sort of language of thought (i.e. mentalese). McGinn concludes that such a theory is inadequate or circular. As McGinn points out:

> "… the hypothesis of the language of thought is in the same business, substituting words for images as the basis of the mental capacities conferred. The trouble with this theory of concepts is, fundamentally, that it is either inadequate or circular: it is inadequate if it tries to generate concepts from mere uninterpreted syntax; but it is circular once it concedes that inner words need interpretation, since this is

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[105] Ibid., p.111.
[106] ibid., p.111.
[107] ibid., p.111-112.
[108] C. McGinn, 1996, p. 105.
[109] ibid., p. 105.
[110] ibid., p. 106.
[111] Ibid., p. 106.

precisely for them to express concepts-and it will be those concepts that are doing the work the inner saying theory arrogates to itself."[112]

So what is a concept? McGinn claims that there is no single answer and that it will depend on the concept.[113] All that we can be assured of, according to McGinn, is that "… they [concepts] contribute to the content of thought."[114] Even though just what a concept is in doubt, as we will see, concepts such as natural language, 'linguaform' and 'images' cannot be the medium or basis, or essence of thought as like the former alternatives, this idea ends up with absurdities.

If the medium of thought is a concept then we have the paradox that thought must know the concept before it knows what concept to use to express it self. This is seen clearly if we assume the concept is stored in memory. Since if the medium of thought is a concept then a concept must be used to access the concept in memory. But if the concept in memory is the same as the one used to access it then we have the paradox that the thinker already knows the concept before they accesses it. If the concept used to access the concept in memory is different from the one in memory we have a dilemma. If the thinker uses a different concept to access the one in memory then where did this concept come from. Either it is prior to the one in memory but then where did the prior concept come from. Thus we are on a regress, or if this prior concept is the basis of the thought we have a paradox as above namely thought must know the concept before it knows what concept to use to express itself. Thus the logical paradox of thought being some*thing* is that thought (i.e. some*thing*) can only discover some*thing* which it creates but it must already know that which it creates before it creates it; because its only content is itself, (i.e. some*thing).*

We can take McGinn's dilemma against the idea that the medium or basis, or essence of thought could be a language of thought and turn it back onto his idea

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[112] ibid., p. 106.
[113] ibid., p. 106.
[114] ibid., p. 106.

that concepts are the medium or basis, or essence of thought. The idea that concepts are the basis of thought is circular because once we concede that concepts are in need of interpretation, then either 1) the concepts do the interpretation and we have circularity, or 2) something else does the interpretation and we have a regress because, since then concepts then express these other things-and it will be other things that are doing the work the concepts theory arrogates to itself. Thus we see that absurdities resides in the notion that a concept is the essence of thought.

Since all attempts to ascribe a medium or basis, or essence to thought end in inconsistencies. These inconsistencies indicate that there cannot be a medium or basis, or essence to thought. If we keep the notions of thinking, 'memory' and and humans as active generators of their thought, we must abandon the idea that thought has a 'thing' as its foundation *sui generis* (i.e. a medium or basis, or essence). From these above examples we could inductively infer that *any* attempt to put forward some*thing* as a medium or basis, or essence to thought will likewise end in inconsistencies. Now as we know the inductive method of inference is no guarantee of certainty, as in the future some such attempt may disprove the induction. Consequently I shall offer a deductive argument derived from the findings of the above arguments to establish that there cannot be any*thing* as the medium or basis, or essence of thought.

A PRIORI ARGUMENTS FOR THE IDEA THAT THERE CANNOT BE ANY*THING* AS THE MEDIUM OR BASIS, OR ESSENCE OF THOUGHT

Davidson, as a powerful modern exponent of the communicative paradigm, puts forward cogent arguments for the idea that language is needed for thought as a vehicle. Nevertheless he does not tell us what the basis or medium of thought is. Davidson though implicitly claiming that 'thoughts' exist only claims that language is only the vehicle which conveys the 'thoughts'. In presenting these

communicative arguments he leaves, blank any claim about the content, basis or medium of these 'thoughts'. Similarly Wittgenstein of the Tractatus believes that there are 'thoughts' but is unable to say just what the essence of thought is.

 Davidson, as a powerful modern exponent of the communicative paradigm, puts forward cogent arguments for the idea that language is needed for thought as a vehicle. Nevertheless he does not tell us what the basis or medium of thought is. Davidson in a number of articles sets out to argue, in his words, "[w]hat is chiefly needed is to show how thought depends on speech."[115] Davidson claims that "… a primitive behaviorism, baffled by the privacy of unspoken thoughts, may take comfort in the view that thinking is really 'talking to oneself'-silent speech."[116] But he claims his "… thesis does not imply the possibility of reduction, behavoristic or otherwise, of thought to speech; indeed the thesis imputes no priority to language, epistemologically or conceptually. The claim also falls short of similar claims in that it allows that there may be thoughts for which the speaker cannot find words, or for which there are no words."[117] Thus he maintains that some 'thoughts' are non-linguistic. In his article, *Rational Animals,* Davidson claims that language is necessary for thought. As he states " a creature cannot have a thought unless it has language."[118]   In other words without language there can be no 'thoughts'. Davidson points out that he is not reducing thinking to linguistic activity, or arguing that 'thoughts' have a physical or neurological existence or that 'thoughts' can only exist if there is a sentence that expresses that thought.[119] Davidson's main claim is that"… the attribution of thought depends on the interpretation of speech.".[120] The central thrust of Davidson's argument is that we can only attribute a thought to someone if that person expresses it via speech or language. As Davidson states it is "… by the use of language [that we] attribute thoughts."[121] Davidson is not saying that language is the basis/medium of thought but only that

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[115] D. Davidson, 1984, p. 156.
[116] ibid., p. 155.
[117] ibid., p. 157-58.
[118] D. Davidson, 1992, p. 477.
[119] ibid., p.476-77.
[120] D. Davidson, op. cit., pp. 163.

they are expressed via speech, Davidson is clear on this point as he notes that there may be 'thoughts' for which there are no words available or for which the speaker can find. (i.e. tip of tongue). In regard to the issues of 1) whether 'thoughts' are independent of language or 2) thinking is inner speech. Davidson claims that there is interdependence between them. He states the ideas that "thoughts are primary, a language seems to serve no purpose but to express or convey thoughts ... [and] as Sellars puts it "… thinking at the distinctly human level … is essentially verbal activity. But clearly the parallel between the structure of thoughts and the structure of sentences provides no argument for the primacy of either, and only a presumption in favor of their interdependence."[122] Thus, while Davidson believes 'thoughts' exist and outlines why language is needed for thought as a vehicle he leaves blank just what the basis or medium of this thought is. Davidson is one of the most sophisticated philosophers in the communicative paradigm yet he nevertheless does not tell us just what the basis or medium of 'thoughts' are.

It should be noted that N. Block, C. Peacocke, and G. Evans have outlined theories of thought that although denying that language is the medium, basis, or essence of thought nevertheless claim that thought is constituted by some*thing*. [123] Why I don't focus upon these theorists is because the method of my argument is by default applicable to any theory that postulates a 'thing' as constituting a thought and thus by dealing with these theorists would just create unnecessary redundancy.

With Wittgenstein in the Tractatus we get the view that language shapes thought for according to Wittgenstein language is thought where the logical structure of language is the logical structure of the external world.[124] Nevertheless in a letter to Russell, Wittgenstein claims that thoughts are constituted by something which he knows not what. As Wittgenstein states:

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[121] ibid., p. 165.
[122] ibid., p. 158.
[123] N. Block, 1986 , C Peacocke, 1986, 1992, C. McGinn, 1996, pp. 83-106.
[124] H. L. Finch, 1995, p. 19.

"I don't know what the constituents of a thought are but I know that it must have such constituents which correspond to the words of language. Again, the kind of relation of the constituents of thought and of the pictured fact is irrelevant. It would be a matter of psychology to find out."[125]

Similarly in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* we get the idea that thought is separate from language. In terms very similar to Frege, Wittgenstein argues that " language disguises thought. So much so that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the form of the thought beneath.[126] In this phase of Wittgenstein we have his concluding idea that any understanding of the mental world lies beyond the limits of language. We cannot make use of the words our language provides us with to understand the world.[127] In other words according to Wittgenstein we can ask how language shapes our thoughts but because of language this question is impossible to answer. Hacker has argued that this perspective undermines the whole of cognitivist theorising and the philosophical picture that is entailed in it.[128] I would argue communicative as well. O'Hear succinctly notes why this is so when he points out that "… neither philosophy of language nor anything else can transcend or stand outside our words and thoughts, and show us how these words and thoughts connect with an epistemologically uncontaminated world."[129] Because "… the objects we get to or envisage as causing our words are already objects conceptualized by us through language."[130]

Now though these philosophers don't tell us what the essence of thought is I will now show that there cannot be any*thing* as the essence of thought, since this idea reduces to absurdity. This is because if thinking uses a thought which is some*thing*

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[125] J. Preston, 1997, p.5.
[126] L. Wittgenstein, 1953, 4.002.
[127] H. L. Finch, op. cit., p.73-84.
[128] P. M. S. Hacher, , 1993, chp.1X.
[129] A. O' Hear, 1985, p.172.
[130] ibid., p.183.

(i.e. language or linguaform or images or concepts or any*thing* else, there must be some*thing* else that is prior to this some*thing).* The central thrust of the above arguments is that if we maintain such 'things' as thinking and 'memory' we must either abandon the notion that there is some*thing* which is the medium or basis, or essence, thought, or we abandon the notions of thinking and 'memory' and thus keep the idea that some ''thing' is the medium or basis, or essence of thought.

Therefore we have a dilemma. Either we give up the notion of thinking or the idea that thinking uses a 'thing'' to think with. In other words either we give up the notion of thinking and then our inquiries are redundant or we give up the notion that thought is a 'thing'. Obviously we cannot give up the notion of thinking for then the notion of an object or 'thing' of thinking, (i.e. a thought) is irrelevant. The question as to what sort of 'thing' a thought is also become irrelevant. But if we claim that there is a medium or basis, or essence to thought we end in paradox. The paradox of thought being some*thing* is that thought (i.e. some*thing*) can only discover some*thing* which it creates but it must already know that which it creates before it creates it; because its only content is itself, (i.e. some*thing).* The conclusion I draw from the above arguments is that there can be no medium or basis, or essence of thought. thought must be independent of any*thing.*[131] All these 'things' must in fact be prior to the no 'thing' which is thought.

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[131] Aristotle, who as we saw claimed that thought must be in images, likewise claimed that there must be something prior to the image. This prior something was a concept, or belief. According to Aristotle though an image is required as an object [a thought] of thinking] this image [object] is only a manifestation of something prior. On these point Sokolov notes "Aristotle makes it quite clear that an image (imagining the particular) and a thought (common sensible) are not the same. He poses the question 'what are the attributes that distinguish primary concepts from images? Or [let] these concepts be not images but [at any rate, they cannot manifest themselves] without images.'" (A Sokolov, 1975, p. 13) To account for this something prior to the image Sokolov notes that Aristotle had recourse to an incorporeal existent the "form of forms (ibid., p.13). Likewise even though Frege claimed that language gave expression to a thought a thought nevertheless was prior to the language and like Aristotle claimed the thought was immaterial. As Frege states "… thought, in itself immaterial, clothes itself in the material garment of the sentence and thereby becomes comprehensible to us. We say a sentence expresses a thought." (G. Frege, 1918, p. 20) J. Preston notes that Frege distinguished between the objective content i.e. thought and the subjective performance of thinking (J. Preston, 1997, p. 3). Similarly Wittgenstein argues that "… language disguises thought. So much so that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the thought beneath …" (L Wittgenstein, 1953, 4002) Thus to paraphrase Frege, in terms of Aristotle's claim, we get, a thought, in itself immaterial, clothes itself in the material garment of the image and thereby becomes comprehensible to us. We say an image expresses a thought. Nevertheless if

A corollary of the idea that something is the medium or basis, or essence, or essence of thought is namely if some*thing* were the medium or basis, or essence, of thought then we can never acquire new knowledge about anything. This is because we would be perpetually and for all eternity locked in with our set baggage of some 'thing'. Pylyshyn cogently captures the problem as he states:

> "… if ones intellectual apparatus consists of a set of concepts or conceptual schemata [images, linguaform, natural language] which are the medium of thought, then one can only learn (or apprehend) what can be expressed in terms of these concepts[images, linguaform, natural language]. On the other hand, if it were possible to observe and to acquire new 'knowledge' without benefit of these concepts [images, linguaform, natural language], then such knowledge would not itself be conceptual [images, linguaform, natural language], or expressed in the medium of thought, and therefore it would not be cognitively structured, integrated with other knowledge, or even comprehended. Hence it would be intellectually inaccessible."[132]

In conclusion we have seen that, in contradistinction to Dummett, an understanding of thought comes about by taking into account the process of thinking. This is because a thought comes into the mind via thinking. We can only understand thought by considering the psychological process of thinking . When we consider the process of thinking we have seen that there is no problem with the idea that language, or images, or Mentalese or concepts can be used as a vehicle to express the thought. The problems arise when the claim is made that they are the medium or basis, or essence of thought. This is not to say that one of these

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thought is an immaterial thing, an existent 'form of forms' or a material existent the situation is that either way we end up with absurdities when we use language and logic to find the basis or medium of thought.

[132] Z. Pylyshyn, 1998, p.544

'things' may not be the medium or basis, or essence of thought but only that when we use language and logic to find what this 'thing' is we end up with absurdities.[133] The above arguments show that any attempt to ascribe a medium or basis, or essence to thought ends in inconsistency. Thus as a necessary truth there can be no 'thing', or essence of thought. As a corollary it was shown that if we are to assume that a person is an active creator in their thinking then the only way to maintain the notions of thinking and 'memory' is to argue that there cannot be any*thing* which is the medium or basis, or essence of thought. Thus I have demonstrated the untenability of the mental realist position and thus consequently the untenability of the cognitivist paradigm, the analytic philosophical tradition of Dummett (where it is assumed, like Ingsoc, that "… thought is dependant on words"[134]), and as a corollary any program, like Newspeak, as instigated in Orwell's book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, to control thinking by delimiting thought by controlling the content of thought.[135] This untenability thus puts to an end the debates between the cognitivists and communicative paradigms. And as a case study it gives weight to the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist demonstrations that all our concepts, all our categories, all our ideas, all theses, all antitheses all philosophies all epistemologies, all ethics, all ontologies, all metaphysics, nihilism, anti-nihilism,

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[133] The above demonstrations lead to my conclusions only if we use and assume Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition for truth. We cannot say that no 'thing' can be the basis of thought because this would mean that Aristotelian logic was an epistemic condition for truth. Thus even though Aristotelian logic shows that the notion of some 'thing' being the basis of thought ends in absurdities this does not prove that some 'thing' could not still be the basis of thought. It only proves that in terms of Aristotelian logic this cannot be. There are other logics (i.e. quantum logic) and which one is applicable to the structure and nature of "reality" is open to debate. In this regard the choice of logic to use makes the characterisation of our problem epistemologically contaminated. In this regard philosophy cannot use words uncontaminated by an epistemological position. It cannot stand outsides the words it uses and assume that they are not connected to an epistemological point of view. In regard to language there is an in built flaw which hinders us in giving a consistent characterization of 'reality' namely a circularity in which the objects i.e. thought, "thinking", "mind" etc are already conceptualised by us through language. As O'Hear notes, "…. the objects we get to or envisage as causing our words are already objects conceptualized by us through language (A. O'Hear, op. cit. p. 183). What these aspects of logic and language do is make any understanding of 'reality' problematic because logic and language place limits upon our investigations of the "world"; such that we must always end up with the skeptics uncertainty. Nevertheless in terms of language and Aristotelian logic there can be no 'thing' which can be the basis of thought.

[134] G. Orwell, 1974, p.241.
[135] ibid., pp.241-242.

foundationalism, anti-foundationalism, in other words all views, are meaningless, as they all collapse into absurdity, or meaninglessness via a dialectical *reductio ad absurdum* form of argumentation.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This case study thus attempts to give weight to the full blown epistemological nihilism which claims that all products of human thinking collapse into absurdity, or meaninglessness- including this thesis itself-if Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition of truth.

This thesis has been a case study of an epistemological investigation into a species of 'Being' (i.e. thought). This case study has shown that any a *priori* argument that claims that the medium or basis, or essence of thought is language, or images, and or concepts,   or any*thing* else collapses into absurdity, or meaninglessness if Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition of truth. As a necessary truth it was shown that thought cannot be constituted by any *sui generis* medium or basis, or essence. Thus the search for the essence of thought is invalidated and becomes untenable. The necessary truth that 'thoughts' are not and cannot be constituted by language (or any*thing* for that matter) means the cognitivist and mental realist paradigms becomes untenable along with the whole of analytical philosophy in the Dummett tradition.

In philosophy the problem of explaining the nature of thought goes back to the ancient Greeks. This case study took a number of contemporary theories that attempt to explain the essence of thought, and showed that any attempt to ascribe a *priori* an essence to thought collapses into absurdity, or meaningless via a *reductio ad absurdum* form of argumentation. This is so if Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition of truth.   This case study is meant to give weight to the Prasangika Madhyamkia Buddhist demonstrations that all concepts, all categories, all theses, all antitheses and all philosophies, in other words all views, collapse into absurdity, or meaninglessness if we assume that Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition of truth. 'Being' is beyond our comprehension. Reality, inner and outer, all existence, is totally incomprehensible–we can never know the world. This case study thus attempts to give weight to the full blown nihilism which claims that all products of human thinking are meaningless-including this thesis.

Chapter two set out the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist demonstrations that all views collapse into absurdity, or meaniglessness, which is the working assumption for this thesis. It was shown that philosophers such as Hume, Kant, Hegel, and Priest have argued that the products of human thinking end in inconsistencies. Nietzsche and Camus have argued for the absurdity of the products of human

thinking as well. An example from mathematics was given to show that paradox and inconsistency is at the heart of mathematics. It was argued in this chapter that if we take Aristotelian logic as an epistemic condition of truth then the consequence is that all views are meaningless as they collapse via a *reductio ad absurdum* form of argumentation into absurdity. It was shown that some philosophers such as Heidegger have not regarded Aristotelian logic as an epistemic condition of truth. Nevertheless Aristotelian logic has been regarded by most Western philosophers as an epistemic condition of truth. This standard of Aristotelian logic is accepted as an epistemic condition of truth by the philosophers' who are discussed in this thesis. In producing absurdities to their conclusions by using their own epistemic conditions of truth we cut the ground from their positions. The only weapon that can convince an opponent is to reduce their arguments to absurdity by their own epistemic conditions of truth. To paraphrase Murti, if opponents do not desist from their position even after their assertions have been proven to be absurd, based upon their own standards, we must give up arguing with them.

Chapter three asked the question "why a philosophical tract must obey the laws of Aristotelian logic?" The answer was that the grand narrative of Western philosophy has been the belief that Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition of truth. This logic-centrism has its roots in Aristotle and flows through to Frege and to the present. Western philosophy, has been preoccupied with finding laws of inference, and as such trying to ground their views in some epistemologically valid foundation. All philosophers have assumed that their arguments and those of others are only valid if they don't violate the laws of Aristotelian logic. Any violation of these rules means that the arguments cannot count as truth claims. At the heart of this epistemological foundation is in fact a metaphysical ground; an ontology of essence. In other words the grounding of the epistemology, and what gives it existence, is an ontological ground namely an essence. This essence is what makes Aristotelian logic possible, for without an essence laws of Aristotelian logic cannot operate. Consequently this chapter argues that all Western philosophy has at its heart the notion of essence. This chapter argued that Aristotelian logic does not so

much reveal reality as constitute it by its metaphysical assumptions. Logic implies ontology. An ontology where the object of the Ps and Qs have a determinate and unique property or essence. It is this essence that is examined in the case study, in chapter four. By using the philosophers own criteria of truth namely Aristotelian logic I showed, in chapter four, that their arguments for an essence of thought end in absurdity or meaningless.

In chapter four I showed that, in contradistinction to Dumment, an understanding of thought involves taking into account the psychological process of thinking. Chapter four showed that the conclusions of Carruthers, Sellars, Field and Fodor with regard to language being the essence of thought collapse into dilemmas, regresses and paradox. Also this chapter showed that the conclusions of the imagists, the conceptualists, such as Frege and McGinn, as well as those who argue that some*thing* is the essence of thought, such as Davidson and the early Wittgenstein, similarly collapse into absurdity. These demonstrations showed that as a logical necessity thought must be contentless.

The demonstration of the contentless of thought is a case study based upon the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist demonstrations that all views end in absurdity. So long as the mental realist insists that such terms as thought are not abstractions but existents then due to language and Aristotelian logic these terms, and the world generated by these terms will collapse into absurdity. What can be done for the 'being' thought, it is hypothesised, can be done for all species of 'being' and thus 'Being' itself. The 'Being' built up of 'being' collapses into inconsistency and absurdity, or meaninglessness. Aristotelian logic derives from Aristotelian metaphysics. This metaphysics is based upon the existence of an essence of 'being' The former negates the latter thus collapsing both into absurdity. 'Being' and its off spring 'being' and logic collapse taking with it the whole foundation of Aristotelian metaphysics; thus the realist ontology and epistemology with it. In other words the case study demonstrates indirectly that the notion of essence collapses into absurdity. This demonstration will thus add weight to the proof that, Aristotle's

metaphysics itself collapses into absurdity in terms of its own epistemology (i.e. Aristotelian logic). The demonstration of this particular absurdity in turn is part of the totality of demonstrations to prove the complete absurdity, or meaninglessness of all views.

This case study substantiates the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist demonstrations that all products of human thinking collapse into absurdity or meaninglessness. It was argued that the only way to prove the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist demonstrations was inductively. In other words by a sequence of case studies which encompass all the products of human thinking. This was because the claim that all views reduce to absurdity cannot be proven deductively. In other words no direct proof can be offered, as this would mean that at least one view did not collapse into absurdity, but only an indirect proof based upon the totality of *reductio ad absurdum* case studies Thus only inductively can it be demonstrated. When all the case studies have been completed the result will be to substantiate the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist demonstrations and thus demonstrate that all concepts, all categories, all theses all antitheses and all philosophy and all views, including the views of this thesis, end in meaninglessness if Aristotelian logic is an epistermic condition of truth. In other words all is meaningless. We are left with the nihilistic void of meaninglessness. The total absurdity, or meaninglessness of all views means that 'Being' is beyond our comprehension. Reality, the inner mind and the external world are totally incomprehensible. We can never know the world, or existence so long as we use language and regard Aristotelian logic as an epistemic condition of truth. This case study is thus one element in the totality of demonstrations indirectly demonstrating that all is meaningless. With the meaninglessness of all our concepts, all our categories, all our ideas, all theses, all antitheses, all philosophies, all epistemologies, all ethics, all ontologies, all metaphysics, nihilism, anti-nihilism, foundationalism, anti-foundationalism, all views, there is no way *a prior*i that anything can be proved, or disproven. With the collapsing into meaninglessness of all views due to the nature of language, and Aristotelian logic being an epistemic condition of truth, all views thus become

equally *a priori* possible and impossible with no way *a priori* to determine between the two. This means that belief and knowledge are not based upon rationality, as rationality only leads to absurdity. Belief and knowledge can only then be grounded on faith. If something turns out to be 'true' this is only fortuitous; as language and Aristotelian logic leads to the absurdity of any *a priori* 'truth' claim. This means that we are free to choose our own metaphysics, ontology, ethics, philosophies, because there is no *a priori* way to disprove, or prove them. Our choice in the long run is based on faith. Thought may have an essence, but any attempt to *a priori* prove it collapses into absurdity. Like wise the thesis that thought has no essence *a priori* collapses into absurdity; an essence of thought can only be based upon faith. This case study in regard to thought is thus an example, in the totality of inductive demonstrations, which gives weight to the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist demonstrations that all views are meaningless and as such our freedom to choose any meaningless view we like. But then this being a view will collapse into meaninglessness if Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition of truth. This leads to the absurdity of all views; total negation, full blown epistemmological nihilism, the negation of the negation, and the meaninglessness of meaninglessness–the void (emptiness). For those who hold meaninglessness as a view there is no hope.

If we are to retain the notion of thought with a constituted medium, or basis, or essence, we must then abandon the notion that Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition of truth. If we wish to retain the notion of thought with content we then have only three unpalatable choices available to ourselves. We can abandon the idea that humans are active autonomous generators of their own 'thoughts'. But then we must abandon the notion of thinking and thus with it the idea of 'thoughts' as well. Or we abandon the notion of memory in which case we must abandon the notions that somet*hing* can be accessed to be the content of our 'thoughts' or the vehicle to communicate or convey our 'thoughts'. If we are to retain the notion that Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition of truth then we must abandon the notion that thought has a constituted medium or basis, or essence. This places the readers of this thesis in a dilemma. Either they maintains that Aristotelian logic is

an epistemic condition of truth in which case they must accept that their 'thoughts' are contentless, or they deny that Aristotelian logic is an epistemic condition of truth in, which case thought can have content; but they must accept that because my arguments are in Aristotelian logic they thus prove nothing, consequently this thesis is worthless—it can neither proves nor disproves that thought is contentless.

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Thus the original contributions this thesis makes are four:

Firstly in regard to Madhyamika studies this thesis takes their method of the dialectic i.e. *reductio ad absurdum* and apply it to a Western framework. In this regard the case study of the thesis is an original contribution to show how the dialectic might be further extended to other philosophical issues. Secondly I show that thought can have no 'thing', or essence as a necessary truth and as such show the utter untenability of a mentalist realist philosophy of mind by using its own epistemological criteria of 'truth', namely Aristotelian logic, to debunk its own arguments by showing it ends in absurdity, or meaninglessness. Thirdly I show that what follows is the untenability of the analytic philosophical tradition of Dummett and bringing to and end once and for all debates between cognitivist and communicative theorists as to whether thought has an essence such as language, or images, or concepts, and or any*thing* else. As a corollary to this my cases study shows the untenability of any program, like Newspeak, as instigated in Orwell's book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, to control thinking by delimiting thought by controlling the content of thought. This untenability is because if is language is not the essence, or content of thought then controlling language cannot control thought; since thought is independent and different from language. What ever the constituent, or content thought is it is not language therefore controlling language cannot control thought. Fourthly these untenable results are thus meant, as a case study, to try and substantiate the Prasangika Madhyamika Buddhist demonstrations that all products of human thinking thought'–all essentialist thinkings, or ontologies - end in absurdity, or meaninglessness. This means also nihilism this is important as I go beyond nihilism. This thesis is not a case study to substantiate nihilism but a case study to substantiate even the absurdity of nihilism. The utter epistemological

meaninglessness of all views even the view of meaninglessness so long as we take Aristotelian logic as an epistemic condition of 'truth'.

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