**Madhyamaka, Ultimate Reality, and Ineffability**

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*1. Introduction*

Mark Siderits’ contributions to Buddhist philosophy, and to the enterprise he likes to call “fusion philosophy,” are legion. We write this essay in celebration and warm appreciation of his career and his impact on the area.

Philosophy is an odd subject: as Aristotle showed us in his discussion of Plato, the way one Western philosopher shows respect for other philosophers is to take their work seriously enough to disagree with it! So we will show our respect for Siderits in this time-honoured way. The subject concerns the interpretation of Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakārikā* (MMK) and the Madhyamaka tradition it inspired. We hold that according to this there is an ineffable ultimate reality/truth (*satya*). According to Siderits there is no ultimate reality, and *a fortiori*, no ineffable ultimate reality:[[1]](#footnote-1)

Madhyamaka holds that there is no ultimate truth, there is only conventional truth that is grounded in the exigencies of our worldly practice.

Indeed, in his (1979) he argues that this is a crucial difference between Madhyamaka and Advaita.[[2]](#footnote-2) In what follows, we will explain why we disagree.[[3]](#footnote-3)

We note that Siderits is well know for his slogan that “the ultimate truth is that there is no ultimate truth”, and one might well wonder how he can square this with what he says above. The answer is that he reinterprets the first reference to ‘the ultimate truth’, as we shall see later in this essay.

*2. The MMK*

Let us start with the MMK. Here, Nāgārjuna states MMK XXIV: 8-10:[[4]](#footnote-4)

The Buddha's teaching of the Dharma

Is based on two truths:

A truth of worldly convention

And an ultimate truth.

Those who do not understand

The distinction between these two truths

Do not understand

The Buddha's profound truth.

Without a foundation in conventional truth

The significance of the ultimate cannot be taught.

Without understanding the significance of the ultimate

Liberation cannot be achieved.

Now, with texts as difficult as the MMK, differences of interpretation are always possible. However, a plain statement to the effect that there is an ultimate *satya*, of the kind Nagarjuna makes here, leaves very little room for any interpretation according to which there is *not* (and, we might note, none of Nāgārjuna’s Indian or Tibetan commentators adopt any such interpretation)*.* Now, this is *not* to say that any Mādhyamika thinks that the ultimate is ultimately existent—no Mādhyamika thinks that *anything,* including emptiness, is ultimately existent. But as Nāgārjuna says, there is an ultimate, even if it exists only conventionally, and even if to say so is only conventionally true.

That the ultimate is ineffable requires more work.[[5]](#footnote-5) MMK XXV takes up the question (posed to the Buddha in some of the *sūtras*) of what happens to an enlightened person after they die. There, we find, MMK XXV: 17, 18:

Having passed into nirvāṇa, the Victorious Conqueror

Is neither said to be existent

Nor said to be non-existent.

Neither both nor neither are said.

So when the victorious one abides, he

Is neither said to be existent

Nor said to be non-existent.

Neither both nor neither are said.

And in MMK XXII, the matter is generalised to other predicates, MMK XXII: 11-12:

‘Empty’ should not be asserted.

‘Nonempty’ should not be asserted.

Neither both nor neither should be asserted.

They are used only nominally.

How can the tetralemma of permanent and impermanent, etc.,

Be true of the peaceful?

How can the tetralemma of the finite, infinite, etc.,

Be true of the peaceful?

The tetralemma (*catuṣkoṭi*) provides an exhaustive taxonomy of the statuses that a statement about some subject may have. It follows that nothing can be said of the status of the *post mortem* enlightened being (Tathāgata).

A few verses later, we are told that reality and a Tathāgata have the same nature, MMK XXII: 16ab:

Whatever is the essence of the Tathāgata

This is the essence of the world.

The world here is reality; and it is not conventional reality: there is much to be said about that. Hence, it is ultimate reality, and we are being told that it, too, is ineffable.[[6]](#footnote-6)

That nothing which language could express (mental fabrication) could apply to the ultimate is made quite explicit at MMK XVIII: 9, which says:

Not dependent on another, peaceful and

Not fabricated by mental fabrication,

Not thought, without distinction.

That is the character of reality.

If reality is without distinctions (and the context makes it clear that it is ultimate reality that is in question), one cannot say that it is thus or so, as opposed to thus and so. That is, it is ineffable.

Indeed, in all these matters Nāgārjuna is merely echoing what one finds in the P*rajñāpāramitā Sūtras.* In the *Astahaṣrika,* it is said:[[7]](#footnote-7)

When again Subhuti has said, “surpassing the world with its gods, men, and Asuras, that vehicle [Mahāyāna] will go forth,” what then is the world with its gods, men and Asuras? The world of sense desire, the world of form, the formless world. If the world of sense desire, the world of form, or the formless world were Suchness, Non-falseness, unaltered Suchness, if they were the Unperverted, Truly Real, True Reality, That which is as reality is, the Permanent, Stable, Eternal, Not liable to reversal, existence and non-existence, then that great vehicle would not go forth, after having surpassed the world with its gods, men, and Asuras. But because the world of sense desire, the world of form, and the formless world have been constructed by thought, fabricated from fictions and feigned, because they are not as reality really is, but entirely impermanent, unstable, not eternal, liable to reversal, and non-existence, therefore the great vehicle will go forth, after having surpassed the world with its gods, men, and Asuras.

And in the *Vajracchedikā Sūtra*, we have*:*[[8]](#footnote-8)

[The Buddha said]: Subhūti, words cannot explain the real nature of the cosmos. Only common people fettered with desire make use of this arbitrary method.

So, at least in the Madhyamaka tradition—both according to the sūtras that constitute its foundation and according to Nāgārjuna’s own treatise—there is an ultimate truth, and it is indeed ineffable.

*3. Paradox*

Given all this, the obvious next question is why Siderits does not accept this reading of Nāgārjuna. The answer is simple, but profound. The ultimate is ineffable, but, as we have just seen, both Nāgārjuna and the P*rajñāpāramitā Sūtras* say a good deal about it, and offer us a deep understanding of the ultimate; they do not shirk the burden of characterizing it as some mystics might. Now, talking of the ineffable is a contradiction. It is not a contradiction *in* the text, but it is a clear performative contradiction, as when someone says ‘I cannot speak’. Nor is this contradiction recondite: it is just plain obvious, and Nāgārjuna must have been aware of it. Nonetheless, nowhere does he do anything to suggest that he wishes to avoid it. Nāgārjuna, then, according to this understanding of the text, accepts this paradox. Perhaps this is hardly surprising; after all, Nāgārjuna deploys the *catuṣkoṭi*, a principle whichallows for the possibility of things that are both true and false. Nāgārjuna, we conclude, is a dialetheist.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Siderits is unhappy with the possibility that Nāgārjuna might accept a contradiction. After all, he argues, many verses of the MMK argue by *reductio* (albeit a four-case *reductio*, since each of the four cases generated by the *catuṣkoṭi* is considered); and, he asks, doesn’t a *reductio* argument depend on contradictions being false?:[[10]](#footnote-10)

But the more interesting question is what dialetheism [the claim that some contradictions are true] would do the Mādhyamika’s ability to argue for their claim that all things are empty. I think that the answer is that the result would be rather dire. Nāgārjuna’s strategy is to use only *reductio* arguments. He seeks to demonstrate that the opponent’s various theses concerning the ultimate nature of reality invariably lead to contradiction, and so cannot be maintained. Now suppose he took this to show that ultimate reality has a contradictory nature, for instance in having an inexpressible nature that is expressible, or in having as its nature that it lacks a nature. If he is willing to countenance true contradictions, then the opponent might insist on revisiting his *reductio* arguments…. [T]he Mādhyamika is not well positioned to claim that only those contradictions that favour their own positions are true, while the contradiction derived from the opponent’s thesis is false. In that case the *modus tollens* argument to the falsity of the opponent’s thesis cannot get off the ground. The Mādhyamika would be left without a way of showing that all things are empty.

Siderits points out correctly that Nāgārjuna and his Prāsaṅgika followers rely on, and explicitly endorse relying on, *reductio* arguments.[[11]](#footnote-11) And, he argues, dialetheism would make it impossible to advance these arguments, since they typically draw inconsistent consequences from the opponent’s conclusions. If contradictions can be true, Siderits argues, then there is no reason to believe that the consequences adduced are false, and so no force to the apparent *reductio*s.

There are at least two problems with this argument.[[12]](#footnote-12) First, in order for a *reductio* to succeed, it is not necessary (nor, we would add in the present context, is it sufficient) for the consequence adduced from the opponent’s thesis to be *contradictory*. It is necessary only that it be unacceptable. After all, the argument is *reductio ad absurdum*, not *reductio ad contradictionem*. And some things are more absurd than some contradictions. Thus, the claim that Mark Siderits is a frog—although it is assuredly not a contradiction—is more absurd than the claim that the liar sentence is both true and false, which is contradictory. So, as long as Nāgārjuna infers *unacceptable* consequences from the target of his *reductio*, his use of *reductio* arguments can succeed, whether or not those consequences are contradictions; moreover, the simple fact that a contradiction is inferred does not by itself constitute a *reductio ad absurdum*.

Second, Nāgārjuna’s (as well as other Mādhyamikas’) *reductio* arguments are often *ad hominem.* That is, they adduce consequences unacceptable to the opponent, showing the opponent that their position is unacceptable *by their own lights.*  This is the essence of a *prasaṅga* argument—the demonstration that the opponent must reject their own conclusion. In such a case, nothing follows about what Mādhyamikas themselves might think. So, even if a Mādhyamika accepted some contradictions as true, when arguing with an opponent committed to consistency, the demonstration that their thesis entails a contradiction—even a contradiction acceptable to a Mādhyamika—would be a successful *ad hominem* *reductio.* It follows that a commitment to *reductio* reasoning does not preclude dialetheism.[[13]](#footnote-13)

*4 Commentators on the MMK*

So much for Nāgārjuna and the MMK. Let us now turn to the Indian commentators on the text.[[14]](#footnote-14) Siderits holds that they reject the interpretation on the MMK which we have endorsed. The major argument for this is, again, that contradiction is unacceptable to them.

We begin with two preliminary points. The first is that to take how commentators some hundreds of years later interpret a text as evidence as to how the text should be understood, though it carries some weight, is hardly definitive. To see this, one has only to remember how the Neoplatonists interpreted Plato’s texts. As most would now agree, this is not Plato’s interpretation.

Next, we note that a sea change comes over Buddhist logic around the 6th Century, with the work of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. Under the influence of their debates with philosophers of the Nyāya school, they came to accept the Principle of Non-Contradiction, PNC (and the Principle of Excluded Middle). Subsequent Indian Buddhist philosophers followed them down this path. It is therefore unsurprising that after this time we find Buddhist philosophers endorsing interpretations of the MMK which do not commit it to contradiction. In exactly the same way, under the influence of the PNC, we find 20th Century philosophers advocating consistent interpretations of Hegel, against the patently obvious dialetheic interpretation of his texts.

So we may restrict ourselves to interpreters of the text before the influence of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti was felt. Let us look at two of these, Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti (whom history, codified in Tibetan doxography, came to regard as having different interpretations of the text, Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika, respectively).

Let us start with the former. Bhāviveka is clearly on our side. Siderits himself quotes him as saying:[[15]](#footnote-15)

[The nature of things] is cognized non-conceptually, and is entirely inexpressible, because of the fact that nothing is really arisen…

Here, Bhāviveka not only explicitly asserts the existence of an ultimate reality—he is obviously not talking about conventional reality—but also its ineffability, explaining that concepts cannot be applied to it. Siderits tries to reinterpret Bhāviveka’s words:[[16]](#footnote-16)

The point here is a subtle one that is easily overlooked: it is that the ultimate nature of reality is something that is inexpressible and only cognizable non-conceptually because there is no such thing as the ultimate nature of reality.

It hardly needs pointing out that to say that something is cognizable (only) non-conceptually (as Bhaviveka and Siderits both say) is hardly compatible with saying that it does not exist: it entails that it *does*.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Let us now turn to Candrakīrti.[[18]](#footnote-18) Candrakīrti is as clear as Nāgārajuna that there are two *satyas*. In his *Madhyamakāvatāra* he says:[[19]](#footnote-19)

6. 23: All phenomena are understood to have two natures,

As understood through deceptive and correct perception, respectively.

Reality is the object of correct perception.

The object of deceptive perception is the conventional truth.

Thus the transcendent buddhas understand without any error the nature of the two truths. All internal and external phenomena—such as cognitive dispositions and sprouts—are presented as having two natures: a conventional and an ultimate nature. Of these, the ultimate nature is the object of the distinctive insight of those who have achieved correct perception. Although it has no essence of its own, it is a nature. The other nature is that apprehended by ordinary people whose perception is clouded by the cataracts of ignorance, and who take things to have intrinsic existence. Thus, all things are seen to have two natures. (Candrakīrti 1992)

And Candrakīrti affirms that the ultimate truth is ineffable: in commenting on the homage verses of MMK, Candrakīrti writes:[[20]](#footnote-20)

And not the slightest word or combination of letters is apposite, since the way things are is beyond conceptualization.

Now, one might nonetheless argue that Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti are still no dialetheists, no matter how much it appears that they are committed to paradox. Thus, there are passages in the MMK in which Nāgārjuna might be thought to endorse the PNC explicitly. Thus, at XXV:14 we have:[[21]](#footnote-21)

How could both non-being and being pertain to nirvāṇa. Just like light and darkness, both are not present in the same place.

But this is hardly decisive. First of all, it is not obvious that light and dark being in the same place at the same time is a contradiction. (It is certainly not an explicit contradiction.) It may just be an appropriate *absurdum*. And even if it is a contradiction, it hardly shows that Nāgārjuna accepts the PNC. After all, *this contradiction* may indeed be absurd by Nāgārjuna’s lights, or by those of his opponent, and it is the absurdity, not the inconsistency that is the issue. Moreover, to conclude that Nāgārjuna rejects all contradictions because he rejects one is a patently fallacious inference. (Compare: Mark Siderits is not a frog, so nothing is a frog.)

In his gloss on this passage in *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti comments:[[22]](#footnote-22)

For being and non-being too, there is no possibility for the two mutually contradictory things (*parasparaviruddha)* to be present in one place—that is, nirvāṇa. Thus, “how could could both being and non-being pertain to nirvāṇa?” The point is, they could not at all.

As this comment makes clear, the point just made about contradiction is specific to the predicate of being/non-being as applied to nirvāṇa; it is not a general logical point about the unacceptability of contradictions. Indeed, we are in the midst here of an argument for the conclusion that nirvāṇa is *ineffable*; so on those grounds alone, neither being nor non-being pertains to nirvāṇa, let alone both of them.

Elsewhere in *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti says:[[23]](#footnote-23)

You do not accept that there is repeated arising, and you do not accept that there can be an infinite regress. Therefore your argument makes no sense. You have contradicted your own thesis. We have asked about our opponent's account of arising. When the thesis and example are presented together with what follows from them as the argument is set out, the opponent cannot accept them. *If the opponent is willing to contradict his own thesis*, we can't argue with madmen. Therefore, without any embarrassment, we can say that the thesis and example, being contradictory, cannot be advanced.

But this comes immediately after a passage where he has shown that the Sāṃkhya position is committed to an infinite regress. And the Sāṃkhya (‘you’) did accept the PNC. Hence what we have here can clearly be interpreted as an *ad hominem* argument. There is no need for Candrakīrti himself to accept the Principle.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Siderits cites this passage (without reference) to argue that Mādhyamikas regard as madmen those who endorse contradictions.[[25]](#footnote-25) But this interpretation is unwarranted. Candrakīrti calls *this* opponent a madman, and this is because the opponent takes himself to be advocating a consistent view, and yet contradicts himself; *that* is indeed mad (and this, perhaps, is an aberration which Siderits himself shares).[[26]](#footnote-26)

*5 Advaita Vedānta*

So much for the MMK and Madhyamaka. As we noted at the start, Siderits takes the non-existence of an ineffable ultimate reality to be a major difference between Madhyamaka and Advaita Vedānta, which certainly does endorse the existence of such a thing.[[27]](#footnote-27) And we agree that there is a difference between Advaita Vedānta and Madhyamaka. So, we might now ask, what is that difference?

The answer is simple. For a thing to be empty (*śūnya*) is for it to depend for being what it is on something else. The core thesis of Madhyamaka is that everything is empty. And the *everything* includes the ultimate. Thus, one of the most crucial verses of the MMK (XXIV: 18) says:[[28]](#footnote-28)

Whatever is dependently co-arisen

That is explained to be emptiness.

That, being a dependent designation,

Is itself the middle way.

Lines 3 and 4 tell us that emptiness (‘That’) is as ontologically dependent as anything else (and that the middle way consists in neither reifying it nor taking it to be non-existent). ‘Emptiness’ (*śūnyatā*) is frequently used in the tradition to refer to the ultimate. Thus, the *Heart Sūtra*, tells us:[[29]](#footnote-29)

Therefore, Śāriputra, in emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no perception, no dispositions, no consciousness; no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no visible object, no sound, no smell, no taste, no tactile sensation, no mental object; no sensory awareness; no cognitive awareness; no object of cognitive awareness.

It is clear that ‘emptiness’ is referring to some kind of reality, even if that reality is itself empty; and that is obviously not conventional reality; it is the ultimate.[[30]](#footnote-30)

How to understand the claim that the ultimate is empty is a delicate matter, but we can say some things about it (despite its ineffability!). Emptiness is not a self-standing thing*,* an independent reality standing behind the conventional, as Brahman is the reality standing behind the world of illusion in the Vedānta system. Emptiness, as the *Heart Sūtra* tells us (‘form is empty; emptiness is form’) is simply the emptiness of phenomena; no phenomena; no emptiness. Since emptiness depends on (other) empty phenomena, it itself is empty.

This is a very different account of the ultimate from the one we find in Advaita Vedānta, according to which the ultimate is *not* empty. The point that Brahman—the ultimate reality—has a nature, and is independent is made throughout the *Upaniṣads,* but we might point to the remarks that Śaṅkara quotes from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*:[[31]](#footnote-31)

Brahman cannot lack its true nature

or later in the same *Upaniṣad*:

the world originates from Brahman.

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad,* we find this remark:[[32]](#footnote-32)

That indeed is the Pure. That is *Brahman.*

That indeed is called the Immortal.

On it all the worlds do rest…

Śankara, in his commentary on the Vedānta sūtras, I.1.2 writes:[[33]](#footnote-33)

*Brahman* is that from which the origin of this world proceeds.

We could multiply citations endlessly, but the point is already clear: in the Vedāntasystem, it is important that Brahman is ultimately real, is the foundation of all other reality, and has its nature intrinsically. So, even though Siderits is correct that Brahman is as ineffable in Advaita as we have argued that *śūnyatā* is in Madhyamaka, Brahman is *not śūnyatā*. It is not even *śūnya.* And *that*—not the presence of an ultimate—is what distinguishes Advaita Vedānta from Mahdhyamaka (or at least is one distinction between these two schools).

*6 The Ultimate Truth is that there is no Ultimate Truth*

As we noted at the start of this essay,Siderits is well known for his slogan: the ultimate truth is that there is no ultimate truth. This was first formulated in Siderits (1989), but as that essay and subsequent essays make clear, Siderits himself does not intend this as a paradox. ‘There is no ultimate truth’ is meant literally enough; but ‘The ultimate truth is that…’ means something like ‘cogent philosophical analysis demonstrates that…’:[[34]](#footnote-34)

…the claim that all things are empty (in the Madhyamaka sense) is tantamount to the claim that the domain of ultimate truth is empty (in the ordinary sense). There can be no such thing as the one true theory that corresponds to the nature of reality. And since this claim is arrived at though the employment of philosophical rationality, it is meant to express the ultimate truth. Hence the Madhyamaka claim: the ultimate truth is that there is no ultimate truth.

And so the slogan should be read as the unparadoxical claim that “cogent philosophical analysis demonstrates that there is no ultimate truth.”

We prefer a more natural and straightforward—and paradoxical— understanding of the slogan. As we have argued, there *is* an ultimate reality,. Nonetheless, since it is ineffable, there are no truths about it (or falsehoods, for that matter: if there were falsehoods, their negations would be true). But that statement (that there are no truths about it) is itself ultimately true; so there are. Understood this way, Siderits’ slogan is a direct expression of the paradox of ineffability; so undertstood, it is faithful to the words of the P*rajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, to Nāgārjuna’s MMK, and to the readings of many of its influential commentators. Siderits’ slogan is therefore best understood as the paradox it appears to be, his own auto-commentary on it to the contrary notwithstanding. (As Gadamer pointed out, authorial intent is not the same thing as meaning, and authors may not be their own best readers!)

*7 Conclusion*

We do not, of course, expect Siderits to agree with any of this. He, and those like him who subscribe to the PNC, will struggle with the text to find an interpretation which does not commit it to a violation of the Principle. This, we think it simply a mis-application of the principle of charity: an attempt to read Nāgārjuna through the eyes of Western shibboleths. In the interest of making Nāgārjuna sound cogent because consistent, it renders him incoherent. Better to believe simply what the text says, and, indeed, what Siderits himself so elegantly said—even though he may not have meant it.

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1. Siderits (1979), p. 290 of Siderits (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See that essay for references to those who have taken different sides on the issue. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. We note that Jan Westerhoff (2018: 212), the editor of a volume of Siderits essays, holds that the existence of such a reality is the crucial difference between Madhyamaka and Yogācāra. Clearly, we cannot endorse this claim either, though the relationship between Madhyamaka and Yogācāra is not on the agenda here. Indeed, both Mādhyamikas and Yogācārins argue that there is an ultimate truth; all take it to be empty; and all take that emptiness to be a negation. The only difference between the proponents of these two schools is what they take to be the object of that negation. Mādhyamikas all take the object of negation to be intrinsic existence, or essence. Yogācārins, on the other hand, take the object of negation to be subject-object duality, or externality, and understand emptiness through the rubric of the three naturelessnesses adumbrated in the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra*. See Garfield (2015, chapter 3). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Unless otherwise noted, translations from the MMK are from Garfield (1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. What follows comes from Priest (2018: 4.7). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In Siderits and Katsura (2013, 302), Siderits says that none of the four *kotis* of the *cauṣkoṭi* applies to the status of the *post mortem* enlightened person, not because it is ineffable, but because to say anything about them presupposes that they exist, which they do not, and so we have a case of presupposition failure. The problem with this suggestion is that presupposition failure does not take us out of the *catuṣkoṭi.* On standard treatments of presupposition failure, things which have false presuppositions are either false or neither true nor false (second and fourth *koṭis*). Nor does it help to say that such a sentence fails to express a proposition. It does so, since it can occur in a propositional context (e.g., Mark believes that the King of France is bald). Indeed, the standard definition of presupposition is that *A* presupposes *B* iff *A* and ~*A* both entail *B*. Since we have an entailment, we must have propositions. Finally, and to drive the final nail in, in the case of ultimate reality, we cannot have reference failure, because, as we have seen, it does exist. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Conze (1979: 182). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Price and Wong (1990: 51). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Further, see Garfield and Priest (2003). There are many interpretations of Nāgārjuna’s Madhyamaka, and of his deployment of the *catuṣkoti* in particular, on offer, and not all are dialetheist. See, for instance Cotnoir (2015), Jones (2020), Robinson (1957), Ruegg (1997), Tillemans (2009), and Westerhoff (2006) for a few examples. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Siderits (2008: 118). In what follows, page references are always to reprints, where these exist. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Whether in fact all of their arguments are *reductio* arguments is another matter, but one that is beside the present point. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Oddly enough, essentially these points are made by Siderits himself (2008: 119). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. In (2008: 119), Siderits has a rather different argument against contradictions being true: they do not express propositions, and *a fortiori* do not express true propositions; but on the same page Siderits endorses classical logic. In classical logic, contradictions express propositions, uniformly false ones. Indeed, since contradictions enter into valid inferences (such as Explosion and Conjunction-Elimination), they must express propositions. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Chinese commentators are a quite different matter. But since these are not on Siderits’ horizon, we need not go into the matter here. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Siderits (2013: 383). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Siderits (2013: 383). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. For further discussion of Siderits’ paper, see Deguchi, Garfield, and Priest (2013b). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. In his (1994), Siderits agrees with us on what follows. However, he walks back from this in the postscript to (1979), as it appears in (2016: 299-300). He should have stuck to his guns. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Candrakīrti (1992: 98). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Gelugpa Students’ Welfare Committee (2003: 4). Translations from this are ours. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Tillemans (2009: 74). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Cited in Tillemans (2009: 75), who gives this as evidence that Candrakīrti endorsed the PNC. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Gelugpa Students’ Welfare Committee (2003: 10). This is also cited as evidence that Candrakīrti accepted the PNC by Tillemans (2013: 86). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. That is not to say that Candrakīrti ever explicitly *rejects* PNC, either. He is silent on matters of metalogic. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Siderits (2008: 118). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. For further discussion of these matters, see Deguchi, Garfield, and Priest (2013a). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. So we agree with Siderits at least here! [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. There is a vast literature on this verse, and we cannot do justice to it all here. But for a good sampler of readings, see Berger (2010), Garfield (1995), Huntington (2007), Nagao (1991), Westerhoff (2009), and Robinson (1957). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. For this translation, see Garfield (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. And even if Madhyamaka were not resolutely nominalist, it would clearly make no sense in the passage to take ‘emptiness’ to be referring to the property of being empty. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Potter (1981, Vol. III: 137-138). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Radhakrishnan and Moore (1973:48). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Radhakrishnan and Moore (1973), p. 511. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Siderits (1989), p. 27 of Siderits (20218). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)