

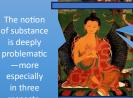
Jan Westerhoff

Nāgārjuna's central thesis

substance-) svabhāva = an other objects, human

...radical thesis!

We look for substances in fundamental physics, when looking for fundamental ontological categories... for something, else depends, and with reference to which we could provide true descriptions and explanations of the world in terms of



relation (3 their properties

Substances cannot relate as cause and effects.

P1: Substances are independent of other entities. P2: Effects depend for their existence on their causes.

Suppose: Substances can have causes. C1: Substances depend on their causes. [from Supposition and P2] → contradicts P1

C: Substances cannot have causes. (reductio)

Nāgārjuna against the Ābhidharmakas

P3: b) is not typical for causation (& wouldn't

substances must meet]

C: There is no acceptable account of how substances could stand in causal relations, so the

Ābhidharmakas' notion of substance is incoherent.



The processing of neurophysiologically encoded information is spread out across the brain. There is no place or unit where it comes all together that could function as the substantial self.



Daniel Dennett

Thomas Metzinger

self.

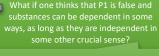


Nāgārjuna

can't be a [= doctrine of substantial self. anattā/anātman/no-self].



relation between two anyway existing substances, second substance <u>in our mind</u>. [contradicts the independence from the mind condition that



network, but neither depend on their parts nor on human concepts...

This was the **Ābhidharmakas'** position:

such changes). They'd



change (for they, or their

3



The human self-model is a neurocomputational weapon that ensures evolutionary success.

on such a view, is a

That there is a substantial, continuous, temporally extended

self is not reflected in how brain processes proceed, but a

view that is conceptually constructed. To acquire language is

to acquire the capacity to tell stories about us... our self (like

fictional selves) is the product of a narrative—of a tale that

isn't spun by us, but that—au contraire—spins us.

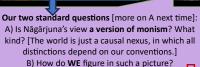
That such narrative selves are constructed is a product of

evolution.

Problems:

How to account for the unity of persons (and the

concern about its [???] future well-being?



Nāgārjuna's metaphysical anti-realism

independent of us] is sweeping [more

mathematical objects or moral values].

@B) My claim:

There are no substantial selves.



being wet.

have to be a property-less individual, a bare particular.

bare particular intrinsically (by itself, independent of whatever

Q: What is the individual that

A: A bare particular... and what is the individual that bears that

We don't ever arrive at a final characterization of what the putative substances are.

Consequence: Since in fundamental could not be substances.

unclear how such non-spatial combined, they yield the changing objects we are familiar with.

blocks of the world.

Alternative solution: Suppose there are no individuals, just free-floating property instances [=tropes] ... one instance of wetness here, one instance of wetness there, etc.

Problem: We can no longer distinguish one such property instance from another (again, we can't say what they are).

they relate to other property instances, but doing so would make what they are dependent on relations to other things. which are supposed to be independent.

I won't deal with these problems fully here because

b) I am concerned with Nāgārjuna here, and since these issues are not specific to him, but arise for all Buddhist schools, a prolonged discussion would lead us too far astray.

Two key concepts (from Siderits) one could use to address the two issues listed above:

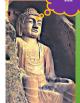


Mark Siderits

maximally causally connected sets of psychophysical events.

persisting self because of its consequences that are somehow better than the consequences associated with

Question: What, then, could be favorable consequence that would recommend the view of a persisting self?



morally good for all) to have evolutionarily good conseauences



is incompatible with the *doctrine of emptiness* [= there are no substances with intrinsic natures].

The idea that there is some object outside our

conceptual grasp is to be rejected as problematic.

conceptual framework. If we can't say what a

putative object is like, and, thus, what our putative

concept of that object would apply to, what we are

dealing with is not an acceptable or intelligible

On such a view, fundamental reality

One could still insist that substances unchanging. They just cannot be

