

THE PHILOSOPHICAL METHODOLOGY OF IMMANUEL KANT AND THE KATHAVATTHU

M. RAJARATNAM

Department of Philosophy and Psychology, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya

This paper intends to explore the critical methodology of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) with special reference to the antinomies of his *Critique of Pure Reason* and the methodology of the *Kathavatthu* or *Points of Controversy* of Moggaliputta Tissa (Abhidhamma Pitaka) with special reference to its first chapter on the Existence of a Personal Entity. The *Kathavatthu* is a book of Method in Buddhist Philosophy. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Kathavatthu* deal with dialectical methodology to explore the epistemological limitations of metaphysics. Phenomenological hermeneutic methodology is being used in this research to understand the message of critical philosophy of Moggaliputta Tissa and Immanuel Kant. The study reveals that the critique of metaphysics in both systems has the message of reflective self-understanding of reason, which can be utilized in the field of social sciences.

Kant says in his preface to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, "Human reason has this peculiar fate that in one species of its knowledge is burdened by questions which, as prescribed by the very nature of the reason itself, it is not able to ignore, but which, as transcending all its powers, it is also not able to answer.... It is a call to reason to undertake anew the most difficult of all its tasks, namely, that of self - knowledge and dismiss all groundless pretensions...this tribunal is no other than the *Critique of pure reason*." The fundamental aim of his critical philosophy is to re-conceive the nature of reason with a view to exploring the practical understanding of the issues in philosophy. Kant's attempt concerning the unity of theoretical and practical reason influenced many post Kantian philosophers to show the relevance of self-understanding of reason in practical value oriented issues. The *Critique of Pure Reason* reveals the limitations of pure reason and explores the different levels of reason in the integral philosophical method.

The critique of metaphysics in Buddhist Philosophy as explored in the first chapter of *Kathavatthu* refutes the theoretical knowledge of metaphysical issues and reveals a practical aim. The *Kathavatthu* describes the method to be followed in conducting a critical discussion of an issue of doctrinal conflict. The *Kathavatthu* is the most important book of the Abhidhamma and the venerable Moggaliputta Tissa, who presided over the Third Council, in order to dispel all points of controversy regarding Buddhist Philosophy, compiled this in the form of dialogues in the dialectical method. Each chapter contains eight to twelve questions and answers by means of which the most diverse false views are presented, refuted and rejected. The *Kathavatthu* is a treatise that uses the method of expositions as given by the Buddha in anticipation of the controversies that would arise and by using the method of dialectics, criticizes the dogmatic metaphysics.