

## Hyperousiology of Nāgārjunian Philosophy: A Hermeneutical Reading

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### Abstract

Nāgārjuna (ca. 150-250 CE) was a Buddhist philosopher and the founder of the Mādhyamaka school of Mahāyāna Buddhism. His philosophy is based on the Buddhist theory of ‘dependent origination’ (pratitya-samutpada) and its stance is that whatever exists, exists as being dependent on its causes and conditions. Nāgārjuna in his doctrine, negates all positive claims. The main research problem addressed in this study is whether Nāgārjunian negation establishes hyperousious. The research methodology employed in this paper is Hermeneutics. Particularly, Gadamerian Hermeneutics is used in this study, and reading in an open and inclusive character is protected. The understanding is taken as historical and a fusion of past and present horizons. When reading the Śūnyatā philosophy of Nāgārjuna, the notions of tradition and prejudice have also been considered in a Gadamerian sense. Negating propositional, linguistic or logical claims on the ultimate reality, Nirvāṇa, the Absolute, Paramartha, the Supreme reality, Nāgārjuna says in the Mula-Madhyamika-karika in Atma Pariksha that independently realized peaceful, un-obsessed Nirvāṇa is Aparapratyayam: the experience which cannot be imparted to any one by another. It has to be realized by everyone for themselves. It is shantam; it is an attitude unaffected by the empirical mind. Nāgārjuna reaches this teleological stance of Nirvāṇa through ultimate negation (sarva drishti prahanaya yah saddharmam adeshayet). When analyzing claims in Nāgārjuna’s Nirvāṇa, it is something ultimately negated and cannot be hypostasized, but it is affirmed as hyperousious. The conclusion is that Nāgārjuna’s philosophy is an attempt at establishing a “superessentiality”. This can also be identified as *causa sui* within the horizon of beings and remain as a ‘beyond’ being, a nonbeing (non-thing).

**Keywords:** *Nagarjuna, Hyperousious Nirvana, Madhyamaka, Sunyata*