

**BACHELOR'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT**  
*PPE – Bachelor's in Politics, Philosophy and Economics*  
*Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University*

<b>Thesis title:</b>	Buddhism in Nietzsche's Critique: A Reassessment of Nihilism
<b>Student's name:</b>	Neha Dahal
<b>Referee's name:</b>	Janusz Salamon

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	<b>50</b>	38
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	<b>15</b>	12
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	<b>15</b>	13
<b>Total</b>		<b>80</b>	63
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources, literature	<b>10</b>	8
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	<b>5</b>	5
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	<b>5</b>	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>	18
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	81

**Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score: 10%**

*[NB:] If the plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score is above 15%, the reviewer has to include his/her assessment of the originality of the reviewed thesis in his/her review.*

**Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria** (min. 1800 characters

including spaces when recommending a passing grade, min. 2500 characters including spaces when recommending a failing grade):

Neha Dahal attempted a scholarly thesis on what turned out to be a challenging project. The challenge consists in no small part in the fact that the thesis is devoted to Nietzsche's negative characterisation of Buddhism as nihilistic – a charge which Nietzsche directs also towards Christianity – but Neha's research led her to realisation that Nietzsche's comments on Buddhism are not only scarce (that was clear right from the start) but also resulting from his very limited acquaintance with Buddhism (while Nietzsche's criticism of Christianity as nihilistic as very extensive and grounded in a thorough knowledge of Christian theology). Working under these constraints (the discovery of which can itself be considered a valuable outcome of a well-intentioned research project), Neha did her best to produce a number of imaginative arguments that would invalidate Nietzsche's claim that Buddhism is nihilistic. The two main lines of Neha's argumentation that can jointly be treated as a 'cumulative argument' directed against Nietzsche are the following. The first one identifies reasons for thinking that Nietzsche's criticism lacks scriptural basis (he knew

something only about Theravada Buddhism and it was a second-hand knowledge based on Schopenhauer's writings on Buddhism which were also – judged by our contemporary scholarly standards - of dubious reliability). The second line of Neha's argument tries to show that Mahayana Buddhism (adhered to by much greater number Buddhists than to Theravada) is not nihilistic in the sense presupposed by Nietzsche (indeed, as in the case of Zen Buddhism, which is a tradition within Mahayana Buddhism, a remarkable convergence between Buddhist and Nietzschean axiological postulates). On the face of it, these arguments have considerable plausibility. Moreover, in the first chapter, Neha succeeds in confirming her initial intuition that the research question implied in the title of the thesis is not trivial for the Nietzsche studies is that breaking with Schopenhauer as the philosopher who initially more than anybody else influenced Nietzsche's early philosophical development was a turning point in Nietzsche career and, as Neha documents, Nietzsche's rejection of Schopenhauer was caused by the realisation that Schopenhauer considered his final views on metaphysics and axiology as identical with the views espoused by the classical Theravada Buddhist sources. Having said all that, both lines of arguments could be executed significantly better if accompanied by a deeper study of such Buddhist philosophical luminaries as Nagarjuna and Nishida (both mentioned but briefly), in the case of the second line of argument, and a greater attention to both primary and secondary Nietzschean sources on nihilism, in the case of the first line of argument. As things stand, Neha's project comes across as well-planned but imperfectly executed.

**Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): B**

**Suggested questions for the defence are:**

Given the centrality of the concept of 'Sunyata' (typically translated into English as 'emptiness'), how shall one understand the metaphysical implications of this concept without agreeing with Nietzsche that Buddhism is nihilistic?

**I do recommend the thesis for final defence.**

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***Referee Signature***

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	<b>A</b>	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	<b>B</b>	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	<b>C</b>	= good
61 – 70	<b>D</b>	= satisfactory
51 – 60	<b>E</b>	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	<b>F</b>	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.