The Philosophy

of

Comparative Philosophy

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I declare that this dissertation is original, except where due acknowledgment is given, and has not been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma.

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Abstract

Comparative philosophy is becoming an increasingly important method for understanding ourselves and those around us. At a time when the world's traditions and the great thinkers from the history of humanity are available at our fingertips like never before, comparative philosophy provides the tools to understand how humanity has differed between cultures and across time while simultaneously bringing to light those elements we have in common. While comparative philosophy is well established, its method has never been clearly outlined and comparative philosophers have relied on rusted and dull tools. The aim of this work is to outline a comparative methodology that overcomes the issues of relativity and objectivity, both of which threaten to undermine the comparative enterprise. Replacing these is perspectivism, the principles of which are outlined throughout this work, the only alternative that provides comparative philosophy with a set of tools suited specifically for its method of analysis. This work has a tiered structure with each chapter focusing on one aspect of the new methodology while resting on all that precedes it. The largest portion of this dissertation deals with the work of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche and, while the areas of comparison between these thinkers vary, it should be remembered that the structure of this work is set out to emphasise and aid in the understanding of the proposed method of comparative philosophy. With this method, comparative philosophy may proceed like never before, that is, with all the tools necessary to adequately fulfil its function.

Contents

Abbreviations

In order to assist the reader a brief list of commonly cited texts is presented here. Where possible, and applicable, textual references are formatted by title, chapter in roman numerals, and section numbers. Where this has not been possible page numbers of the relevant translation have been supplied. The titles of works by Nāgārjuna are given in transliterated form and the titles of works by Nietzsche are given in English, as this is the most commonly used method of citing the works of both authors. With regards to Nietzsche's works a 'P' after the initial title abbreviations refer to prefaces and forewords, where applicable, as well as the 'Prologue' to Z.

Nāgārjuna's works have been abbreviated as follows:

Acin   *Acintyastava*

Bod   *Bodhicittavivaraṇa*

Loc   *Lokātitastava*

Lugs   *Lugs kyi bstan-bcos shes-rab sdong-po*

MK   *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*

Rat   *Rājapartikathā-ratnamālā* or *Ratnāvalī*

Suh   *Suhrllekha*

Nietzsche's works have been abbreviated as follows:

A   *The Anti-Christ*

BGE   *Beyond Good and Evil*

BT   *The Birth of Tragedy*

D   *Daybreak* or *The Dawn*

DD   *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*

E   *Ecce Homo*

GM   *On the Genealogy of Morals*

GS   *The Gay Science*

HAH   *Human, All Too Human*

HC   *Homer's Contest* or *Homer on Competition*

TI   *Twilight of the Idols*

PTG   *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*

SL   *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*

UM   *Untimely Meditations*

WLN   *Writings from the Late Notebooks*

Z   *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Full bibliographical information can be found under "References".

The Philosophy of Comparative Philosophy

This work is first and foremost a critique of the methods of comparative philosophy so far proposed. It is necessary to state this at the outset, as the bulk of the material presented deals with the works of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche. It is imperative that the reader does not loose sight of the prime concern. The critique focuses on how both objectivity and relativity, each in their own way, undermine the effectiveness of any comparative enterprise.

Objectivity and relativity can be conceived as either opposite extremes of the same plane or as being views travelling in different directions, intersecting briefly like the join on a cross. Either way, at the intersection, or midpoint, is a position that mediates between both extremes without holding them as mutually exclusive. This, if you will, is the middle path between an extreme that cannot be realised and another extreme that undermines both its own possibility and the possibility of any meaningful discussion. This middle path admits the uniqueness of each and every position from which the world is viewed while situating all possible viewpoints within a boundary common to possible viewpoints. This is what is here termed perspectivism.

Perspectivism, when taken up within the domain of comparative philosophy, provides the necessary foundation from which a meaningful comparison can be developed. A meaningful comparison is one that is able to show where two or more points of view converge, diverge, confirm, or contradict each other without resigning oneself to the incomparability of any two positions. Perspectivism is not syncretic; its value is in the subtle distinctions it shows in varying kinds of difference. The first chapter is dedicated to explicating the problems undermining comparative philosophy and the full benefit of taking perspectivism as the foundation for a comparative methodology.

Comparative philosophy is an important method for analysing texts and thinkers. It could even be said that all philosophy is really comparative philosophy, with its simplest form being a comparison between the reader's views and text under analysis. While there is no intention to pursue this claim, it does highlight the breath of what may come under the term of comparative philosophy, as Masson-Oursel (1951: 6) attests to in writing that "the scope of comparative philosophy is universal history and cosmos". Comparative philosophy is generally used to bring together seemingly disparate texts and examining where they converge and diverge. One must be careful not to reduce one text to another, for this halts and undermines the comparative enterprise. When this is kept in mind, comparative philosophy can be utilised to examine familiar texts and problems from a different vantage point, with the potential to gain a deeper understanding of one or all of the texts or problems compared. This is supported by Rosan (1952: 56), who writes that "the key to comparative philosophy is ... the contrast of basic philosophical *attitudes*". Any attempts to criticise comparative philosophy in favour of some other form of cross-cultural interpretation or non-comparative cross-cultural philosophy are still doing comparative philosophy, having only dressed it up under a different name. Krishna (1986: 59) criticises comparative philosophy as being "in effect the comparison of all other societies and cultures in terms of the standards provided by the Western societies". Yet, Krishna (1986: 68) concedes that "an objective universality of human reason ... ensures that there would be a fair repetition amongst the problems seen and the solutions suggested". Thus, irrespective of how one refers to it, comparative philosophy is crucial, not only for comparing and contrasting materials, but for widening one's conceptual schemata resulting in a deeper analysis of the texts and thinkers analysed.

Part of the proposed methodology is bias, particularly personal bias. The full extent of the role of bias will not yet be apparent. It will be necessary here to detail my bias with regard to this work. The function of bias is acknowledged so the reader can acknowledge the development of this work in the same way bias

is acknowledged for each thinker within the case study. The most apparent aspect of the author's bias is that of underlying unity or absolute interconnection. The pre-Socratics couched unity in terms of water, being, becoming, or the prime aggregate, to name a few instances. In the Hindu doctrines it arises as *Brahman saguna* and is central to *advaita Vedānta*. In Islam it is the doctrine of *tawhid*. This should suffice to show that an acceptance of unity is not unfounded. In the following chapter it will be argued that a rejection of the interconnection of all that exists, with preference for relativity, removes the possibility of meaningful communication. For these reasons the author works from the acceptance of the interconnection of all that is, hence the acknowledgement of underlying unity.

The ramifications and application of the solutions proposed in the first chapter are played out through a case study, which forms the bulk of this work. The reader will notice the contiguity of each topic as the work proceeds yet some general outline is necessary. The case study begins with an examination of superficial differences, that is, aspects of each thinker's work which, at first sight, appear to be in conflict with the other thinker's work. While there are differences, they are shown to be only surface ones. Superficial differences are often the result of differing heritages and historical locations. This clears the ground, so to speak, for an analysis of similarities and congruencies between the thinkers, providing the content of chapter three, which, in turn, makes possible the study of real differences in chapter four.

The case study used within this work does not purport to develop either a comprehensive or an exhaustive study of the real differences between Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche; again the focus is directed and specific topics are discussed so that the varying degrees of difference can be highlighted. This is so that the reader can understand how the methodological issues relating to difference can be applied and, when done so, how this application brings forth a deeper and more fruitful understanding of both thinkers. The reader is encouraged when they strongly disagree with a particular interpretation of either thinker used within the

case study to focus not on the analysis of these particular thinkers but rather on the manner in which this comparative methodology works to provide a greater depth in the analysis of any thinker, especially when comparing two or more from varying times, cultures, perspectives, etc.

It is necessary to make some comments on the manner in which the works of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche are approached. In Nietzsche's case this is easier as there are more details available to us regarding the manner and production of his various works than there are with regard to Nāgārjuna's existent works. I read Nietzsche's works chronologically. This way we can attempt to understand why Nietzsche turned in one particular direction rather than another or why he adopted a different stance and dismissed an earlier one. Nāgārjuna, on the other hand, wrote for varying audiences, including, but not limited to, royal patrons and Buddhist and non-Buddhist dialectical adversaries. Judging from the differences in expression it is possible to see that Nāgārjuna's works are directed to individuals at varying stages of development and realisation. This is important, for Nāgārjuna's advanced works do not eclipse those directed towards beginners, while Nietzsche's later works do, to some degree, supplant his earlier ones. No attempt is made to completely justify either approach. However, the value of such reading should become apparent through the comparison.

On the issue of translation, it is necessary to stifle one possible criticism of the comparison of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche. A criticism that could be asserted is that the comparison presented here is of minimal value because the author understands little of the original languages, within which the thinkers compared wrote, and that the study is a comparison of translations rather than original texts. While it can, to some degree, be accepted that the value of the comparison and the insights gained are to some extent based on the quality of the translations used, this in no way undermines this dissertation. Organ (1975: 13) argued that it "does not follow" that an "ignorance of the original language disqualifies one as [an] interpreter". This is drawn from the examples of Max

Muller who knew Sanskrit and whose "writings on Indian philosophy are not reliable" and of G. R. Malkani who "is a reliable authority on Indian philosophy" without knowing Sanskrit (Organ 1975: 13). Raju (1992: vii) wrote that "the language barrier is likely to confront every writer on comparative philosophy" and as such we must accept our "dependence on translations as inevitable for any treatment of comparative philosophy".

Furthermore, good translations have plenty of room for several varying interpretations, as do the originals. While it is accepted that "the way a text is translated in turn determines how it will be read", that is, reflecting the understanding of the translator, it is not necessary that there be "an infinite number of equally bad translations and no good ones" (Garfield 2002: 247). To accept this position would render all communication, let alone the possibility of learning another language, impossible, due to gross misunderstanding. This is not to deny these issues, merely to acknowledge that, when pursued to their logical conclusion, these views are seen to be absurd. The translations used here have been widely used for many such purposes. Beyond this, the translations used have been widely accepted within the academic community and, where possible, original texts have been consulted with the aid of native speakers, so that the analysis is as close to what the thinkers presented as possible.

The method of comparative philosophy proposed here differs from other comparative methods in two key areas. The first is the development of perspectivism as the basis for comparative study. Perspectivism bypasses the contradictions inherent in both objectivity and relativity, providing a foundation for comparative philosophy whose structural integrity is more solid than previous methods. This is because the basis of previous comparative methodologies, when examined, threaten to undermine the whole comparative enterprise. The second, following from perspectivism, is a more developed understanding of difference with a distinction between superficial differences and real differences.

The result of these differences is a method of comparative philosophy that is better equipped than previous methodologies to compare and understand where any number of thinkers or traditions converge and diverge. A case study has been included to show how the proposed methodology may be applied. It is intended that the principles developed here will provide future endeavours with the groundwork from which fruitful comparative studies can be made.

Chapter 1 - The Methodology of Comparative Philosophy

Comparative philosophy addresses content, context, and form. It requires a sound methodological basis. Comparative philosophy, founded on either the acceptance of relativity or the pursuit of objectivity, is both flawed and incapable of providing the necessary stability for any comparative enterprise. This chapter is not a comprehensive analysis of all the methodological issues of comparative philosophy. Rather, my focus is on relativity, objectivity, bias, context, and the affect these have on comparative enterprises. In doing so, it will be argued that perspectivism, and the understanding of difference that it entails, avoids and resolves the main issues within the domain of comparative philosophy.

Some comparative methodologies contain the assertion that objectivity is paramount for a neutral and meaningful analysis. One reason that objectivity is stressed is to overcome individual bias. This is especially problematic for comparative philosophy as there is, in one sense, a 'double dose' of bias. This 'double dose' arises on the one hand from the original materials compared and on the other hand from the individuals making the comparison, increasing in complexity the wider the analysis. Bias, irrespective of the amount, will affect any work, especially the work of comparative philosophers. There is no point attempting to hide from it or, even worse, to undermine the value of an entire methodology merely because something unavoidable appears unmanageable. Rather, by acknowledging the existence of bias it becomes possible to see the influence and purpose it has within any work.

Masson-Oursel acknowledged the existence of bias when developing the material for an early work on the methodology of comparative philosophy. He wrote that "the [comparative] methodologist will find no difficulty in remarking that everything more or less resembles or differs from everything else in accordance with the disposition or ingenuity of the observer; and that the most capricious similitudes and unexpected differentiations present themselves to our gaze,

provided we know how to vary appropriately the angle of vision from which the fact is perceived" (Masson-Oursel 1926: 39). This is problematic as it may lead to the author of the comparison merely reading their own implicit bias into the material compared producing the "capricious similitudes and unexpected differentiations" through an artificial and forced "angle of vision". This too is informative because it illustrates the subjectivity of the author, but this was not Masson-Oursel's concern.

Masson-Oursel does not explore the possibility that any appropriate "angle of vision" could merely be the biased position of the observer. This is understandable in light of his (1926: 66) positivist background. This meant that the "angle of vision" was scientifically determined and the comparative methodology was scientifically objective. Masson-Oursel made his positivism explicit in only a few places, and even then only mentioned in passing. His positivism is perhaps a product of its time, something Masson-Oursel (1951: 8) later came to doubt. Positivism is problematic because it unnecessarily narrows the scope and application of philosophy and comparative philosophy. Positivism opens the door to more contentious issues, such as 'human relativity' discussed below, merely because other possibilities are not verified by the domain of science.

Panikkar also realised that bias is inevitable, pointing out that when bias is examined it is done so through the bias of another. He (1989: 121) stated that "a critical comparative philosophy will have to ask about the kind of philosophy or philosophical attitude it assumes when doing comparative philosophy". Comparative philosophy requires a 'doubling back', meaning that after developing a fruitful 'angle of vision' *that* 'angle of vision' itself must be analysed to determine why it was done so. Panikkar (1989: 122) stated this succinctly, writing that comparative philosophy "appears as a philosophy that studies the possible conditions of its own philosophising". In studying the possible conditions

of its own philosophising, comparative philosophy requires itself to examine the possible areas where bias affects the analysis it makes.

Bias can, and does, have the capacity to undermine the value of any comparative analysis. Panikkar (1989: 123) felt that "comparative philosophy cannot accept a method that reduces all those visions to the view of one single philosophy". I agree that such a method is more likely to inform the reader of the author's bias, rather than furthering the understanding of the philosophies compared, being nothing more than a syncretic reduction of the materials compared. Bahm (1977: 26) attests to this in stating that if one is only familiar with their own views then one "must judge the other in terms of what he [or she] already knows" to the effect that one's bias becomes their standard with an inability to "appreciate how well [other philosophical systems] can function as standards". However, this can be a double edged sword in that this should not overlook the possibility that unity may be found within differing philosophical traditions despite differences in form, expression, language, and application as such congruent elements manifest themselves uniquely according to the tradition within which they are found. Furthermore, it is not possible to conceive of a position without bias, or as Panikkar (1980: 258) calls it "a *neutral* ground in the human arena", as "the very notion is self-contradictory because such a ground would not be human". The outcome of this is that comparative philosophy "is not philosophically neutral [enough] to perform the role of a truly comparative philosophy" (Panikkar 1989: 125). Panikkar seems to argue that comparative philosophy is caught between syncretic reductionism and inhuman objectivity, a rock and a hard place. Yet, if bias is inevitable, then for Panikkar comparative philosophy is necessarily doomed from the beginning. However, this conclusion can only be accepted if emphasis is placed on overcoming bias in pursuit of objectivity. The methodology proposed here does not accept this conclusion.

Tuck (1990), in agreement with Panikkar, argued that objectivity, within comparative philosophy, is unachievable. However, he (1990: 9-10) went further

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by saying that the pursuit of objectivity is misdirected. According to Tuck, *isogesis* is inevitable in all comparative methodologies. *Isogesis* is "a 'reading into' the text that often reveals as much about the interpreter as it does about the text being interpreted" (Tuck 1990: 9-10). Unlike Panikkar, Tuck (1990: 10) was not deterred by the fact that this is in unconscious phenomenon, nor found it problematic, because *isogesis*, or bias, is "inevitable in all readings of texts: it is not a failure of understanding but the evidence of it". Tuck's use of *isogesis* is useful for comparative philosophy, for in realising the inevitability of a 'reading into' it is possible for the interpreter to make explicit their bias, thus minimising the 'double dose' of bias. While Panikkar (1989: 125) undermines comparative philosophy due to its lack of philosophical neutrality, for Tuck comparative philosophy is only possible due to its lack of neutrality. According to Tuck, comparative philosophy cannot be objective, yet a fruitful study will result if the reader is informed of the interpreter's bias. The acknowledgement of bias ensures a better understanding of the position and intention of the comparison. Furthermore, doing this reduces a misrepresentation of the thinkers and texts by placing it back on the interpreter. Tuck's argument redeems comparative philosophy from the pursuit of objectivity.

Relativity is another issue threatening to undermine comparative philosophy. It is especially problematic for comparisons of vastly disparate traditions and thinkers, such as the comparison proposed in the following chapters, but it is also relevant to thinkers within the same tradition that differ by time, location, culture etc. The argument for relativity rests on the fact that between any two or more thinkers there are major differences such as culture, language, moral values, historical background, etc. The argument asserted is that such differences are not reconcilable, thus there is no common ground. Garfield (2002: 232-233) takes this position, stating that "to the extent to which we consider traditions to be radically distinct from one another, it is hard to see how productive cross-cultural interpretation can take place at all" while overlooking the fact that he does cross-cultural comparisons without any attempt to overcome this issue. It will be argued

that this is problematic for comparative philosophy because it undermines all attempts to make any common points between thinkers and traditions. Examples of where relativity has been incorporated into comparative philosophy will be discussed and the argument developed intends to show that each attempt a) limits the potential of the comparative analysis and b) that it is possible to avoid incorporating such a position. After a discussion of relativity it will be argued that perspectivism bypasses the problems of both mild and extreme relativity.

Masson-Oursel accepted relativity. His reason was that "comparative method consists neither in identity nor in distinction" which is problematic because it would either "infer like laws from a multiplicity of facts" or it would "specify the irreducible originality of empirical data" (Masson-Oursel 1926: 44). Again, the alternatives are either syncretic reductionism or inhuman objectivity, both of which, as has been shown, are untenable. Yet, Masson-Oursel (1926: 42) claims that two seemingly distinct concepts or ideas can share identity, somewhat like family resemblance. Shared identity would be established if the disparate ideas had analogous functions and positions within their respective philosophies. This is Masson-Oursel's tentative solution to syncretic reductionism. For each idea, identity remains distinct, due to expression, culture, and philosophical tradition. For, without such a distinction, all cultures and all philosophical traditions throughout the history of humanity would be exactly the same. Within this dissertation it will be proposed that two concepts or ideas from differing philosophical traditions are more than *merely* analogous, as Masson-Oursel (1926: 44-51) would like to claim.

Pei and Geertz use the existence of multiple languages in support of relativity. Pei (1962: 109) states that language is a "highly relative phenomenon", because it "assumes a multiplicity of forms". Yet, Pei (1962: 109) contradicts this by asserting that "the *purpose* of language is absolute" as its function is always to "transfer meaning from one human mind to another", which in turn would establish a "community of understanding" (Pei 1962: 110). Geertz (1973: 14)

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supports Pei's conception of a 'community of understanding' as seen by the assertion that cultures are "interworked systems of construable signs" and that "meaning varies according to the pattern of life by which it is informed". That language is a "highly relative phenomenon that "varies according to the pattern of life" shows that both Pei and Geertz accept relativity, if not generally, at least within the domain of language. However, both did not fail to notice the commonalities that allowed 'communities of understanding' to be established. This is akin to those who "from a multiplicity of paths ... try to conclude the non-existence of a single and invariable doctrine, or even any doctrine at all" (Guénon 2001a: 87). This would amount to acknowledging dialectical variances and denying the existence of a language common to a people in the same breath. However, if relativity of language is not accepted then there is another possible solution. Neither Pei nor Geertz explicitly drew out this solution, but it can be argued from their premises. From the fact that languages differ, while acknowledging that their purpose is the same, we can conclude that language is perspectival.

There is an easier and more effective way to reject relativity. Schuon (1975:7) states that "relativism consists in declaring it to be true that there is no such thing as truth" which is self-refuting and thus contradictory. Relativism is false "for on what grounds would it be possible to judge when one denies, implicitly or explicitly, the possibility of objective judgement" (Schuon 1995: 16). Guénon (2001: 31) shares this view, stating that "it is not for us to justify the contradictions that seem inherent in 'relativism' in all its forms". The contradiction lies in the fact that to assert relativism "then the definition of relativity is equally relative, absolutely relative, and our definition has no meaning" (Schuon 1995: 36-7). Schuon (1975: 16) felt that the contradiction of relativism is highlighted for the individual by "becoming aware of its own ontological dependence in relation to that one and only Being from Whom it is itself derived and Whom it manifests in its own way". Bahm (1977: 30), in documenting various kinds of relativism, hints at the possibility that the advocates of relativism are implicitly "advocating a

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kind of universalism". While this appears like Schuon's view, this universalism is that of the absolutely relative and we must conclude that Bahm either choose to ignore this or was unaware of the self-refuting nature of relativism in all its forms. Bahm does not provide a solution to the problem of relativity within the domain of comparative philosophy. It is the acceptance of this dependence by all individuals, to use Schuon's words, that gives rise to what is here termed perspectivism. However, Schuon does not call the position he outlined perspectivism.

It has been argued that the pursuit of objectivity and the acceptance of relativity are both untenable and unnecessary within comparative philosophy. Both undermine the possibility of a comparative philosophical methodology. Objectivity places too strict, and unachievable, demands on the methodological approach, rendering comparative philosophy impossible. Relativity strips away all possible subject matter on the grounds that comparison is untenable, leaving comparative philosophy to be a field devoid of content. A solution to these two issues can be found through the position of perspectivism. Perspectivism states that all possible perspectives exist within common limits, thus differences cannot be irreducible, yet each perspective occupies a space that is separate and distinct from all other possible perspectives, thus an objective 'space' is unattainable. The common limits provide the domain within which meaningful comparisons can occur, in that the conclusions drawn will potentially have meaning for all perspectives, in as far as each perspective approaches these limits, while acknowledging that the variation that occurs gives insight into the particular perspective, rather than undermining the analysis altogether. Thus perspectivism is not undermined by the inhumanness of objectivity, nor is it self-refuting like relativity, but provides a position from which comparative philosophy can meaningfully compare materials.

It may be useful to furnish this outline of perspectivism with a few examples. In one sense we could say "one must not consider only the point of arrival, which is always the same, but also the point of departure, which differs according to the

individual" (Guénon 2001a: 86). This is reflected in language for when we say that two people, one from the North Pole and one from the South Pole, meet at the equator we say they are meeting at the same equator not different ones. For a relativist it would be acceptable to say that the reader holds that two plus two equals four while the author holds that two plus two equals three. Within the relativist doctrine both are true and cannot be fruitfully argued about. For the perspectivist it is acceptable to say that both the reader and the author holds that two plus two equals four but in thinking about this equation the reader is thinking of apples and the author of oranges. The difference of apples and oranges is one of position while the agreement on the equation is part of the totality each of us takes part in.

Perspectivism is necessary for the method of comparative philosophy. It provides the domain within which a meaningful comparison can take place. To rephrase this, we may say that it provides the "common horizon that can be a background for genuine collaboration and conversation in a joint philosophical venture" (Garfield 2002: 169). Perspectivism exists implicitly within comparative philosophy, its elements of perspectivism are evident in most methodologies but these remain largely peripheral and unexamined. In examining where elements of perspectivism are evident it will be shown that a) perspectivism is inherently useful for comparative analysis and b) that previous comparative philosophers implicitly drew on principles of perspectivism.

The principles of perspectivism are evident in the work of Masson-Oursel, Radhakrishnan, Mukerji, Liat, and Panikkar. Evidence of Masson-Oursel (1951: 8) moving away from relativity towards perspectivism is in the shift of focus from part to whole, stating that "each mind is ... a 'total part' of humanity". Here, the focus is on the essential relationship between part and whole, with "each mind" being connected through "humanity", similar to the way that each perspective relates to the total limits of all possible perspectives. Radhakrishnan (1951: 4) gave weight to the 'common ground' in stating that "the fundamentals of human

experience, which are the data for philosophical reflection, are everywhere the same". This does not imply that everyone has the same experience but, in accordance with perspectivism, the limits of human experience make up the common ground, the result of which is that we can share and relate to others through similar experiences. From another angle, it is agreed that "there is no convention-independent reality ... which could be truth-making" (Garfield 2002: 52), just as there are a common range of conventions. Mukerji (1952: 5), despite being an advocate for contextualism, implicitly adhered to perspectivism in stating that "human reason has an identical pattern, and, consequentially, the universal laws of reason cut across the boundaries of diverse cultures with their conflicting ramifications". This is seen to be implicit perspectivism because Mukerji's argument bordered on the idea that, despite many real differences between any two thinkers, human limits exist, which do not change, irrespective of the position of the thinker.

Liat (1951: 11) followed a similar line of argument when writing that "though the central problems of philosophy may be universally human and timeless, the setting of the problems and their solutions are determined by historical, sociological, and cultural patterns". Liat provided the most weight for perspectivism in acknowledging the universality of the problem and the uniqueness of the context. The result is that such problems are dealt with in a way such that they can "keep in constant touch with living men [and women] and be understood" (Liat 1951: 11). Perspectivism is partially evident and support for it can be found in the work of most comparative philosophers, in one form or another. These comparative thinkers each lend weight to the validity of perspectivism as the basis for any comparative enterprise. However, by not developing the perspectival method within their works they could not draw on the full value of this comparative method.

However, by leaving perspectivism implicit, comparative philosophy falls prey to issues resolvable only through perspectivism. We may take Liat as an example

because the argument for perspectivism is most evident. For Liat (1951: 13) the possibility that comparative philosophy "may be biased" is problematic. To avoid this, the "comparison must do justice to every item compared", meaning that both the similarities and differences are given equal weight (Liat 1951: 13). He argued that the importance of examining differences is in avoiding the "false conviction that all philosophy or religion is essentially the same". This almost directly contradicts his (1951: 11) prior assertion that "the central problems of philosophy may be universally human and timeless". This contradiction arises because Liat, unlike Tuck, did not consider that bias makes comparative philosophy possible. Had he realised this, the necessity of perspectivism would have been established. Thus, by falling short of perspectivism, his methodology contained an irresolvable contradiction, which undermines the possibility of a fruitful comparison.

Panikkar also edged towards perspectivism without fully realising its implications. Panikkar (1989: 129) made a crucial step by asking, "if truth is one, how can there be a plurality of philosophies, each of them claiming ultimate truths"? Yet, he leaves this question unresolved, with the feeling that it is unresolvable. While this question is too big to provide a definite answer here, a tentative answer is possible through perspectivism. Someone who accepts perspectivism would respond that, although truth is one, it may be expressed in many different ways, where differences of expression, and more generally, of vantage point, should not compromise the idea of truth itself. Thus, perspectivism is able to resolve the relationship between the one and the many, or the absolute and the contingent, where Panikkar could not.

Krausz's work on multiplism that is closest to perspectivism, yet the implications of multiplism fall short of covering the breadth of perspectivism. Multiplism states that "objects-of-interpretation characteristically answer to a multiplicity of ideally admissible interpretations" (Krausz 1997: 415). This is akin to perspectivism in that both accept that object can be observed and understood from more than one

perspective correctly. Krausz (1997: 415) continues to assert that "among multiple admissible interpretations one may have good reasons for rational preferences", again something affirmed by perspectivism. Also, we are told that according to multiplism "objects-of-interpretation are co-created by text and interpreter" (Krausz 1997: 416) and perspectivism affirms this in holding that the significant objects are determined by the position of the perspective in relation to the common ground. However, we are already beginning to see the divergence between perspectivism and multiplism. An important component of perspectivism is the acceptance that all possible perspectives are formed within a common ground. These common limits allow all perspectives to be comparable. The common limits also mean that there are views that are inherently 'wrong' in as far as they purport to outside the common limits. While both perspectivism and multiplism agree that some interpretations are 'better' than others, only perspectivism situates all perspectives within set limits, giving it the ability of determining whether any given interpretation is admissible or not. In this sense we can say that perspectivism includes multiplism but not vice versa.

Common to these moves towards perspectivism is an attempt to understand the role of difference within comparative analyses. Some philosophers, like Krishna, Fleming, and Scharfstein, have argued that the role of comparative philosophy is to examine differences between philosophical systems in order to show the originality and richness of the various intellectual traditions that have cropped up throughout the history of humanity. Others have argued that an analysis of differences will result in a greater acceptance of other intellectual traditions and the potential for a wider and deeper understanding of our intellectual heritage. While these outcomes may be beneficial in their own right, it will be argued that such treatments of difference unnecessarily limit the function of difference within comparative philosophy. The proposal made here is that, building from the contextual/decontextual distinction, a study of levels of difference within comparative philosophy can yield a greater understanding of the similarities and differences between texts and thinkers. Furthermore, such an analysis of the

levels of difference makes it possible to understand why some differences necessarily occur.

Krishna and Fleming offer two alternative examinations of difference. Krishna too (1986: 68) moved towards perspectivism in an attempt to understand difference, stating that "of course" there is a universality of human problems and that this is of only "momentary interest except for those [whose aim] ... is to prove that all worthwhile things originated with them and were borrowed by others". Following this, Krishna (1986: 69) argued that it is important to focus on differences because it "makes one look afresh at the world with a renewed sense of wonder and novelty". However, this position unnecessarily narrows all possible comparative analysis as it can equally be argued that the universality of human problems and their solutions can provide a renewed sense of wonder when it is realised that those problems, and their solutions, arose independently in different intellectual traditions, while sharing many crucial points. Krishna's emphasis on difference undermines the value of an analysis of similarities, resulting in a narrow conception of difference within comparative philosophy.

On the other hand, Fleming felt that an analysis of difference within comparative philosophy would result in a greater understanding of self and other. For Fleming (2003: 260), the aim of comparative philosophy is to develop a better understanding of two or more philosophical systems or intellectual traditions. In doing so, the natural starting point for such a comparison is interpreting "the new and unfamiliar by comparing it with that with which we are already familiar" (Fleming 2003: 260). In other words, the other is, at least initially, understood in terms of the self. It is not until both similarities and differences are identified that a better understanding of each can be established. According to Fleming (2003: 260-61) this would widen our conception of that with which we are familiar. This outcome, while idealistic, is admirable.

However, Fleming did not hold a consistent view regarding the proposed outcome of comparative analysis. He (Fleming 2003: 265) went on to write "comparisons of very different philosophical cultures and communities cannot be expected (even in theory) to culminate in pure philosophical homogeneity: it is arguable that such philosophical (and cultural) homogeneity is not even a desirable goal, diversity being the spice of life and thought". While it is agreed that "pure philosophical homogeneity" is untenable and that diversity is "the spice of life", it can still be argued that the essential similarities between diverse philosophical systems and intellectual traditions are informative as to what it means to be human. Furthermore, differences can show the range of possible human expression. Realising this would contribute to widening our acceptance of other philosophical systems and intellectual traditions, even more than Fleming's methodologically narrow treatment of difference.

Scharfstein's approach to difference is different again; one that shows how informative an analysis of difference can be for comparative philosophy. For Scharfstein (1989: 86) "the question is not whether the differences exist, because they do, but what we should make of them". Scharfstein (1989: 86) went on to assert that a study should examine why differences between philosophical systems and intellectual traditions exist and how such differences have affected the content or form of the text or thinker studied. Support for this approach is within the idea that throughout the history of humanity, philosophers have not been discussing the "same old problems", but they have "spent a great deal of time discussing recurrent problems" (Copleston 1980: 120). The discussions surrounding recurrent problems will differ with each subsequent discussion. What is of interest for the comparative philosopher is a) why such problems are recurrent and b) how and why the differences in discussion occur. In doing so "the very perception that discloses uniqueness discloses similarity", which allows experience to be cumulative, so that it may be learnt from (Scharfstein 1989: 86). This approach, and understanding, of difference makes possible a greater

comparative analysis and, in doing so, Scharfstein went further than Fleming's attempt to widen what we are familiar with.

The question for comparative philosophy now is how to treat and understand the differences that arise between the philosophies compared. However, many comparative philosophers disagree exactly how and what differences should be analysed within comparative philosophy. Many comparative philosophers agree that for an understanding of a philosophy one must understand the context within and through which it arose. However, beyond this there does not seem to be much agreement, especially with regards to what should be included in context as well as how to proceed, once the context is established. As Garfield (2002: 152) has pointed out, "comparative philosophy often imports hermeneutical and philosophical methods to the study of non-Western texts that succeed in distorting or simply missing the significance of those texts ... in the context of their home cultures". These disagreements have a large impact on the results of any comparative study. This affects the value of the research and the depth of analysis.

Thinkers who have tackled the issue of the methodology of comparative philosophy, such as Liat, Dasgupta, Mukerji, Geertz, Panikkar, and Tuck, all agree that an understanding of the context within which the text occurred or the thinker wrote must be considered. For Liat (1951: 15), a "closer and more adequate evaluation may be attained" if comparative philosophy incorporated an examination of "social conditions and cultural patterns on the development of philosophical thoughts" in its methodology. For Geertz (1973: 9), "most of what we need to comprehend a particular event, ritual, custom, idea or whatever is insinuated as background information before the thing itself is directly examined". Panikkar (1980: 370) asserted that "comparative studies have to be historically situated and temporally understood". Furthermore, Tuck (1990: 10) asserted that thinkers and texts need to be treated within their "historical, cultural, and intellectual context" in order to add depth to the analysis and reduce

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misrepresentation. This lends weight to the value of perspectivism which values context due to its influence on historical, cultural, and intellectual perspectives.

Two examples of where a context-based analysis has been emphasised are those of Dasgupta and Mukerji. Dasgupta (1952: 3) argued that "it is only when we study [texts] in their historical perspective that the details of differentiation and their magnificent richness appear in their *true* perspective". Mukerji (1952: 4–5) follows on from this with the idea that "the problems of philosophy and their solutions are intimately connected with the spirit of the age in which they made their appearance" and that "it is positively dangerous to offer a modern theory for the solution of an ancient problem" or visa versa. This is understandable considering how seemingly periphery as issues and events contribute to the expression, propagation, and solutions proposed to the predominant problem. It is positively dangerous to try to give validity to the religious doctrine by attempting to verify it scientifically because its acceptance, and 'validity', hangs on the acceptance of the theory it is 'validated' by[1]. Perspectivism, in acknowledging the uniqueness of each position, realises that context is important for the understanding of texts and thinkers. Yet, to assert that it is *only* when historical context is considered ignores the fact that decontextualisation is, even minimally, inevitable and, to some extent, necessary for a wider understanding. Further, to assert that modern solutions to ancient problems are positively dangerous does not include the possibility that a shift in perspective provides a better understanding of both the historical context and the contemporary environment. On top of this, it is not clear exactly what items need to be included in an analysis of context. It remains unclear as to how Liat's 'adequate evaluation', Geertz's 'comprehension of a particular', and Tuck's 'reduced misrepresentation' are to be achieved.

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[1] This is not to deny the value that may be gained by bringing science and religion together. However, it should be kept in mind that to scientifically verify a religious doctrine, more often than not, reduces the doctrine to its merely physical aspects, and, not to deny these aspects, remains ignorant of the stereological and symbolic value of such doctrine.

Nasr (1972: 56) pointed out that a serious comparative study "must be a study of ways of thinking and of the matrices for determining different sciences and forms of knowledge in reference to the total vision of the universe and the nature of things". This is necessary for, if the analysis is going to be more than just a comparison of word forms, concepts carry with them social, political, and historical values that are not readily evident in the word forms used to convey the concept. In comparing philosophical systems it is vital that the intellectual traditions of each system, or in his (1972: 57) terms "the source of the 'philosophy' in question", be understood so that their foundations can be compared. By starting with a contextualised analysis it is possible to examine and compare the aspects of a text or thinker on which the philosophical systems depend. With this, a major downfall for comparative philosophy, discussed by Nasr (1972: 58), is avoided, namely overlooking "the nature of the experience which the 'philosophy' in question is based and the total world view in which alone it possesses [full] meaning". It is necessary to insert 'full meaning' into this sentence as decontextualisation is to some degree inevitable and, meaning can still be extracted, according to the worldview within which the philosophical system is examined, though it must be acknowledged that it does not retain the *full* richness of its original context. Any attempt to deal with either similarities or differences must begin with a contextualised analysis.

Of those commentators discussed above, only Geertz's (1973) discussion attempts to develop a concrete criterion for an analysis of context. While Geertz is discussing the process of anthropology his conclusions remain useful for comparative philosophy. Geertz (1973: 9) stated succinctly that "analysis, then, is sorting out the structures of signification". The structures of signification are the implicit bodies of meaning, contained within the social, political, and historical implications of the materials compared. Acknowledging such structures makes a deeper analysis possible, Geertz and Liat would agree on this issue. This method of analysis presupposes that texts "in some way form an integral structure"

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(Sefler 1980: 257). This may be problematic, particularly for an analysis of thinkers who claim to be anti-systematic or who claim to make no assertions of their own. Yet, their self-consistency forms the integral structure, providing the structure of signification. By examining the structures of signification, comparative philosophy can show why certain expressions were necessary, or preferred, and how the context of the material influenced the content, form, and audience.

It is important to examine texts and thinkers within their context, for not to do this would ignore key aspects of the material compared, limiting comparative philosophy. I think that Liat, Dasgupta, Mukerji, Geertz, Panikkar, and Tuck limit any possible comparison if their methodology does not also examine the components of a philosophical work within the boundaries of that work, to some degree independently of its historical, cultural, and intellectual context. Decontextualisation is, to some degree, inevitable because the condition under which a text is read is a separate context to the one it was written under. While this may seem trivial, to ignore this would be an oversight. Scharfstein (1989: 86) made this clear by arguing that "taking things out of context is essential" if it is to be understood. Interestingly, this supports Tuck's (1990: 10) view, that, to gain any understanding, individuals must relate what is to be understood in terms of themself. The reason for this is that anyone who wants to expand their understanding can only do so in terms of what they already understand. The result is that, irrespective of the source, the material to be understood will be, at lest initially, decontextualised. Scharfstein (1989: 84) went further in asserting that, in order to understand, material must be detached from its context and related to the contemporary background within which it is to be understood. This is important because, while a contextual analysis will aid in the understanding of the work as a whole and the significance of particular elements, a decontextual analysis can highlight the internal structure of a work and the relationship between its various elements.

Decontextualised analysis has received less attention from comparative philosophers. Decontextual analysis examines and compares the framework of philosophical systems. These relations cannot be examined when the analysis is strictly contextual. A decontextual analysis is better suited for examining aspects of a philosophical system such as thesis, elements, and the relationship between thesis and elements. Sefler (1980: 256) stated that "elements can be logical entities, linguistic categories, epistemological constructs, metaphysical principles, etc." but they should also include presuppositions, descriptions, prescriptions, problems examined, the standpoint taken, and the solutions suggested. As "different problems arise from different standpoints", the choice of premise determines whether "a problem may become significant or not" (Broccard 1982: 246)[2]. Comparative philosophy should not only examine the problems, methods, and solutions of various thinkers, but also delve deeper, comparing the reasons for the specific problems, methods, and solutions tackled by such thinkers. There are many elements that can be discussed, as well as the interrelation of elements, with the focus depending on the thinkers compared.

Scharfstein rejected the emphasis on a context-based analysis on similar grounds to those used for rejecting relativism. Scharfstein (1989: 94) argued that "if we assume that nothing can be understood outside of its particular context, the same must be true of the doctrine of contextualism ... and so on". Like relativism, contextualism is self-refuting. That is, if context is all important, then so is the context of the contextual analysis, neither of which can be fully conveyed, which leads down a self-perpetuating path, limiting the success of any comparative analysis. Mukerji's (1952: 5) emphasis on context is loosened in stating that a useful comparative approach would be to take "the Eastern and the Western

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[2] While these quotes are from discussions on structuralism and systematology respectively, I am arguing neither for or against these types of analysis. There is neither the time nor the space within the scope of this study to adequately examine reasons for or against both structuralism and systematology. It is sufficient to state that the aspects discussed are beneficial for comparative philosophy and it is for this reason only that they have been considered.

philosophical systems and supplement the arguments of one by those of the other, thus helping the clarification of issues appearing in either of the two outlooks", which to some degree pre-empts Scharfstein's view. This is not to suggest that context is not important, just that context is not all-important. It would be optimal to treat context as more important for some areas of analysis and less important in others. This relates to the aforementioned limit in the methodology of Liat, Dasgupta, Geertz, and Tuck. Both contextual and decontextual modes of analysis bring something to the study of texts and thinkers that neither mode of analysis can cover individually. Thus, to avoid these limits, and to give the greatest potential to any comparative enterprise, it is necessary to alternate between contextual and decontextual modes of analysis.

If a contextualised analysis looks out from the philosophical system and understands that system within the context it occurs, then a decontextualised analysis looks into the philosophical system in order to understand that system in terms of its parts. An analysis of the parts of a philosophical system aims to show how that system works as a whole. This has many implications for comparative philosophy. A comparative contextual analysis would show how and why differences between systems occur and how differences in context can produce some common aspects within two differing systems. A comparative decontextual analysis would show how and why two seemingly similar aspects of differing philosophical systems work in vastly different manners within their respective systems as well as how and why two seemingly different aspects of differing philosophical systems share a common purpose within the structure of their respective systems. Rosan (1962: 240) proposed a similar approach, arguing that a multifaceted approach is better suited as it yields a more comprehensive analysis. By attempting to examine thinkers and texts both from a contextualised and decontextualised position, comparative philosophy can provide a greater depth to the understanding of the thinkers and/or texts compared.

Following Tuck, the usefulness of a decontextualised analysis can be developed. Tuck's (1990: 10-11) claim that there is a "difference between declaring that something essential and immutable has been 'discovered' about the ideas contained in these texts [used for comparison], on the one hand, and, on the other, constructing a context in which two intellectual traditions can be understood together". While the distinction between contextualised analysis and decontextualised analysis is important, these two tasks are not necessarily mutually exclusive. This was not acknowledged by Tuck. A comparative methodology that aimed at discovering something essential and immutable and then attempted to show that this discovery brought two intellectual traditions into a position where they could be fruitfully understood together would be in grave danger of producing nothing more than an exposition of the interpreter's bias. However, a comparative methodology that aimed at constructing a context in which two intellectual traditions could be examined together may indeed prove fruitful for the discovery of something essential and immutable. The combination of a contextualised and a decontextualised approach would provide such a context in which two intellectual traditions can be examined together. Perspectivism, in recognising the common ground of all perspectives, allows for a decontextualised analysis, while recognising the uniqueness of each perspective, allowing for a contextualised analysis.

Fleming also supported the joint contextualised/decontextualised approach. As can be seen from his (2003: 259-60) comment that the "endeavour to see [texts] in their full context" is "an admirable if unachievable goal". While he acknowledges the value of contextual analysis, he admits that an analysis that is solely and completely contextualised is unachievable, like an objective position of analysis. Any time a text is read it is read, other than when it was written, it is, to some degree, out of context. While this may appear obvious it is important, it means that any attempt to completely contextualise a text or thinker would inevitably result in some decontextualisation. This parallels and supports Scharfstein's argument in that it acknowledges the intrinsic value of

decontextualised analysis in the study of any work. For an attempt to examine a text or thinker both within their context and without their context may have a blurred boundary. This is because a contextualised element, such as place, may be brought to bear on a decontextualised element, such as the function of a particular idea, or vice versa, without this being explicitly acknowledged. This blurred boundary does not detract from the attempted analysis. While a strict demarcation between the two is not possible, by admitting that both forms of analysis are useful, each be brought to bear on the comparative study and a more comprehensive analysis is possible.

Nakamura developed a criterion for contextual/decontextual analysis, arriving at similar conclusions. Nakamura (1974: 187) pointed out that "when we evaluate an idea or a concept, we have to do it in relationship to relevant or similar ideas or concepts". This is important because it can be carried out with both contextualised and decontextualised comparative analysis. However, he (1974: 187) is unjustified in believing that "by means of this method we can evaluate [texts] objectively". The main reason for this, as Tuck stated, is that bias is, to some degree, inevitable. Furthermore, the re-contextualisation of a text, that is the context it is read under, differs according to the reader, ensuing that an objective evaluation is not possible. Another problem in Nakamura's (1974: 185) discussion is that parallel developments are too narrowly defined as "similar problems" and "similar concepts" that lead to "more or less similar solutions". This definition is problematic for the methodology proposed here as it limits comparative philosophy to the analysis of only that which is superficially similar, whereas an analysis of superficially different problems or concepts can be shown to have deeper similarities within the respective traditions. Nakamura (1974: 187) did make the important point that "similar assertions or similar wording may play different or even contrary roles in different historical contexts". Yet, he did not further say that different and contrary assertions or wording may play similar or even congruent roles in different historical contexts.

Comparative philosophy must recognise both contextual and decontextual methods of analysis. The result is a better understanding of where the texts or thinkers compared come together and diverge. Contextualised analysis can show where intellectual traditions had similar influences on the development of philosophical systems and where these influences differed. Furthermore, such an analysis would help to show why particular expressions were used. Decontextualised analysis can examine how differing elements within philosophical systems parallel the function of elements in other such systems. This type of analysis can also compare and contrast the premises, theses, results and solutions of separate philosophical systems. These are but a few examples of where both contextualised and decontextualised analysis can highlight similarities and differences within comparative philosophy.

It is necessary to explain why an attempt to pursue an exclusively contextualised or decontextualised analysis is impossible, and fruitless, for comparative philosophy. On the one hand, it is impossible to occupy two different time periods, for two philosophical systems to be compared they must, to some degree, be separated from their original context. Comparative studies relate philosophical systems to the author's time and context, which means that an exclusively contextualised study is impossible. However, for comparative studies to gain a deeper understanding of the philosophical systems compared it is necessary for such systems to be understood in light of their intellectual traditions. Thus, an exclusively decontextualised analysis would also be fruitless. Realising this shows that there is no definite boundary between contextualised and decontextualised analyses. This does not invalidate this approach it merely shows that both approaches are mutually reinforcing and intimately connected. In fact, without such an explicit distinction the value and depth of all comparative studies would be reduced.

The process of translation is akin to drawing similarities between texts and thinkers. The aim is to find some kind of congruence, between the original script

and the new language in the case of translation, or between one philosophical system and another such system in the case of comparative philosophy. In both cases the search is for corresponding equivalences. Panikkar (1989: 125) shared this view writing "translation means finding the corresponding equivalences (homomorphic equivalents) between languages". The goal is to show that an element within one language or philosophical system holds the equivalent position or function as an element within another language or philosophical system. However, it must be recognised that no attempt will be made here to 'translate' one philosophical system into another, as this is liable to be nothing more than a syncretic reduction. Such reduction results in the "dramatic distortion of alien traditions through the imposition of hermeneutic and doxographic frameworks ... entirely foreign to the traditions themselves" (Garfield 2002: 169). This is because there are real differences between philosophical systems that are quite often more than just differences in their respective intellectual traditions. As a result of such differences, a search for homomorphic equivalences between philosophical systems should not be attempted.

Krishna rejected the extreme pursuit of homomorphic equivalence. Krishna (1986: 65) was right to highlight the fact that, for any comparative philosophy, to translate one conceptual structure into another limits the potential understanding of and insight into the materials compared because it reduces one work to another. This problem is increased where there are differences of language and tradition. It would not even be possible to examine the same term in two or more occurrences within the work of one thinker as the possible change/gain/loss in meaning between two instances of the same word. However, the issue is liable to be unresolvable. Krishna's (1986: 65) solution was to examine the two concepts from within their respective positions, without privileging either, and if a parallel could be seen and understood then this would count as an informative comparison. This solution does bring comparative philosophy back from an untenable abyss and realises that this methodology may be informative. Yet, this is not an explicit criterion as to what it is to say that two elements from two

separate philosophical systems are similar, parallel, or even congruent. It would be informative to add that, while the form of an idea may differ, it can be said that the ideas are congruent if they occupy the same position or serve the same function, within their respective structures of signification.

The blurred boundary between contextualised and decontextualised modes of analysis requires that difference, within comparative philosophy, be broken down into two distinct kinds, namely superficial and real. Superficial differences are differences between that are only apparent and, on closer examination, can be reconciled. Real differences are irreconcilable and show divergences between the materials compared. Without superficial differences no comparisons could be attempted, only contrasts. Without real differences there could be no demarcation of one system/tradition or another. While the sources of both kinds of difference are often the same, the way that each kind of difference is utilised within comparative philosophy is of vital importance for a comprehensive and meaningful comparative study.

An important aspect of the study of difference is to understand where each kind of difference occurs. When comparing two or more thinkers or texts, it is possible to identify differences in a multitude of places, some contextual and decontextual. Some contextual differences include time, place, language, and culture. Culture is an umbrella term, covering elements such as history, heritage, religious background, philosophical background, economic background, political background, ethics and morals, and the social structure, to name but a few. Some decontextual differences include medium, style, purpose, audience, the prescriptions made, the problems tackled, and the interrelation of elements within the philosophical system. These are not meant to be exhaustive lists and only begin to hint at the possible areas in which differences occur.

There is ambiguity regarding whether differences are superficial or real. A seemingly paradoxical solution to this ambiguity is to assert that most differences

are both superficial and real. In as far are there is a distinction between these kinds of difference, we can say that the content of these differences overlap. While a brief attempt to resolve this issue is made here, it should be understood that this distinction, and the relation between these types of difference, will become apparent through the remainder of this work. Each of the following chapters focuses on a separate aspect of the following argument. Materials often appear disparate, and many of the aspects of these materials that make them appear dissimilar, on closer inspection, can be seen to be closer than was previously thought. An analysis of superficial differences gives rise to the possibility of similarities between materials, the depth of which would not be possible without an understanding of superficial differences. It is only after an analysis of superficial differences that the analysis of similarities becomes, which in turn highlights real differences.

The two types of difference, superficial and real, have vastly different functions and yield different results. Superficial differences do not undermine real differences. A main function of superficial differences is to show that materials can be brought together yielding a fruitful comparison, rather than discarding the project and feeling that the material is simply too different to compare. The study of superficial differences provides the groundwork for the study of similarities, which, in turn, makes possible the study of real differences. An examination of where separate materials converge reveals where they actually diverge. Such an analysis and understanding of difference is highly valuable for studies such as the one proposed here, of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche, where these thinkers are separated by large gaps in time, place, culture etc. While the solutions to the issues of comparative philosophy discussed here will be put to specific use within the comparison to follow, these solutions can be successfully applied to any study within the field of comparative philosophy in order to avoid the problems mentioned in this chapter.

Superficial differences and real differences occupy the same space. Both can be derived from the same material. Like the contextual/decontextual distinction, they are not mutually exclusive and their boundaries are somewhat indistinct. This may be considered problematic for some, but this is not an issue because the use each type of difference is diverse and each adds to the depth of the analysis. A quick example will help illustrate this point. Nietzsche wrote in German, also drawing from Greek, Latin, French, and other languages for emphasis, while Nāgārjuna's texts were written in Sanskrit, with some texts only available in Tibetan and Chinese. This analysis, for both thinkers, draws on English translations. When their texts are translated into a common language, such as English, it can be seen that the words and concepts of primary importance to each thinker are not represented by words or concepts common to both thinkers[3]. It may appear that there is no common ground on which these thinkers can be compared. However, by remembering that separate intellectual traditions have separate conceptual schemata, the analysis can be shifted from how words and concepts are used to the form they take. The differences in the words used may, when the analysis considers why a particular form is given preference, be shown to be only superficial. Yet, at the same time, these concepts, whose respective functions are similar, may take separate, or even contradictory, forms for specific reason, which would mean that the difference is real. Thus the space of real and superficial differences is not mutually exclusive.

So far, the treatment of the similarity between philosophical systems within the field of comparative philosophy has only been hinted at throughout this chapter. Yet, it remains elusive. A major reason for this is the difficulty in showing two separate things to be the same or even analogous. It is made even harder when the arguments of Goodman and Rudner are applied to discussions about the sameness of meaning. Goodman (1949: 1) began his discussion by asking,

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[3] To my knowledge, there is no translator common to both of these thinkers. If there is, they have not been used within this study. While this may be taken up as an issue, particularly where there is a common translator, the methodological solution proposed here would not loose its value.

"under what circumstances do two names or predicates in an ordinary language have the same meaning"? Even though Goodman's concerns are strictly to do with language, and not philosophical systems or intellectual traditions, his discussion does raise issues that are of concern for the comparative philosopher. Goodman (1949: 2-3) examines two criteria for assessing the sameness of meaning a) "that two predicates have the same meaning if and only if there is nothing possible that satisfies one but not the other" and b) "that two predicates have the same meaning if and only if they apply to exactly the same things".

In the field of comparative philosophy both criteria would undermine the application of a comparative methodology because a) the distinction between superficial and real differences would make the first criterion untenable and b) the fact that two philosophical systems have different foci would favour the interpretation that each system applies to different things which does not fulfil the second criterion. From this one could, with Goodman (1949: 6), conclude that "if difference of meaning is explained in the way I have proposed, then *no two words have the same meaning*". Rudner (1950: 117) built on Goodman's work to assert that "there are never different occurrences of the same word, and no two occurrences of the 'same' word can have the same meaning"[4]. This bodes ill for the comparative philosopher.

However, both Goodman and Rudner overlook a crucial point. The focus of their task was to examine "ordinary language" (Goodman 1949: 1). Within ordinary language, people use words interchangeably, as if they were the same. This occurs so frequently that, using ordinary language, while a referent may be constant, the way that it is referred to changes. Rollins (1950: 40) incorporated this into the criticism, rejecting Goodman and Rudner, writing that "normally when

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[4] It is interesting to note that this position can be rejected in the same manner, and for the same reasons, that Krishna rejected the pursuit of homomorphic equivalences, as discussed above (pp. 32). Furthermore, Goodman and Rudner seem to be asserting an extreme form of relativity, which has been already rejected (pp. 17).

we assert that two words have the same meaning we are asserting the same *kind* of thing about their respective occurrences". It is conceivable that I can have two separate discussions on a given topic, one with a university professor, the other with a school child, and that while the two conversations cover the same material, each utilised vastly different expressions. The shift from form to function is important for maintaining the validity of comparative philosophy.

The shift from form to function has practical implications for comparative philosophy. While it is accepted within this study that thinkers and texts say different things because they use different words, it must be recognised that some of the time these differences in form are merely superficial. It will be argued that by examining the function and position assigned to certain concepts within one philosophical system or intellectual tradition, the comparison of this with another philosophical system or intellectual tradition will show that the same aspect is evident in both though under a different sign in each. This approach can fall prey to a shallow analysis of the material by reading into the material a conceptual similarity rather than showing an actual similarity. However, while this is an actual concern for comparative philosophy, one dealt with throughout this chapter, it does not undermine the value of the comparative approach, nor does it detract from the possible depth of analysis achievable through the approach suggested here. It must be kept in mind when delving into comparative philosophy because the analysis of any philosopher "is always read against an interpretive backdrop provided by the philosophical presuppositions of the interpreter" (Garfield 1995: vii). It is difficult to develop a criterion illustrating how the same concept can take on different forms. Yet, without this type of approach comparative philosophy is reduced to the analysis of superficial similarities. Furthermore, the assertion that a concept can take on a multiplicity of forms is consistent with perspectivism, which holds that one thing can be seen from many different angles. The importance of this type of approach for comparative philosophy is most aptly seen through specific examples. I will illustrate this through the comparison of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche.

Comparative philosophy is undermined by both the pursuit of objectivity and the acceptance of relativity. Perspectivism was proposed as a solution to the problem of finding the 'space' where comparative philosophy is not marred by either a bias-free or self-refuting foundation. The acceptance of perspectivism entails an understanding of the distinctions between contextual and decontextual form of analysis and superficial and real differences. An understanding of these distinctions, as has been made throughout this chapter, results in a more comprehensive comparative study than would otherwise be possible. Despite the multiplicity of problems that comparative philosophy suffers, these issues do not reduce the value of the approach to materials made possible by this field of study. An attempt has been made to find solutions to these problems, particularly solutions that maintain the possibility of a comparative approach, rather than undermining this field of study. The concern of this chapter has been primarily theoretical, but the methodological suggestions take on a renewed importance in the following chapters as they are put into practice through a comparison of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche.

Throughout the remainder of the work each chapter will focus on one aspect of the proposed methodology. Starting with superficial differences, moving onto similarities and congruencies, and finally to real differences, each chapter, utilising the joint contextual/decontextual analysis, will illustrate how each of these aspects are crucial to developing a meaningful comparative philosophy.

Chapter 2 – Superficial Differences

The remainder of this dissertation will, through a case study of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche, illustrate how the methodology outlined in the previous chapter can be applied, with each subsequent chapter focusing on one aspect of the methodology in order to highlight the intricacies of its application. This chapter deals with superficial differences, that is, differences that are only surface deep. An examination of these differences is important because these differences are accepted as real differences, the misdiagnosis of which can halt any deeper analysis.

For comparative philosophers, the emphasis on context requires a grasp of the relation of the work to the culture that surrounded it. Oldmeadow (2007: 53) emphasises this, stating that it is "highly desirable that scholars, equipped with the proper tools and cognizant of the profound differences between traditional civilizations and the modern West, should illuminate the similarities and contrasts between the doctrines of different religious traditions". With this in mind, we can pursue an examination of context, mindful of this distinction.

Nietzsche is easier than most other thinkers, due to the wealth of information available. Born Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche on October 15, 1844, to a Lutheran minister in Saxony, he studied theology, philology, and philosophy at the University of Bonn, became the professor of classical philology at Basel at the young age of twenty-four. With a scandal surrounding his first publication, along with ill health, Nietzsche left his professional post. This led to his frequent movement across Europe, writing incessantly, he produced a large body of work. He collapsed in the streets of Turin in 1889 and remained under constant care until his death on August 25, 1900.

These facts, available in varying detail, roughly outline Nietzsche's life. Nietzsche's biography is frequently used to furnish an understanding of his philosophy, a point raised especially by Kaufmann (1956: 30 – 60), Nehamas (1985), Chamberlain (1996), and Cate (2003). Nietzsche even proposed that an individual's philosophy is "an instinct for a personal diet" and perhaps

"nothing other than the intellectual circuitous paths of similar personal drives" (*D* § 553) and is known to have "incorporated into his work numerous autobiographical elements" like "the figure of the philologist to symbolise the Faustian frustrations of the modern world" (Marchand 1996: 26). Parkes (1994: 8) writes that "Nietzsche came upon the idea of philosophy as autobiography early, and it informs the rest of his career". The most solitary figure that is Nietzsche can be seen to permeate throughout his writings and is read this way by numerous scholars. The life and times of Friedrich Nietzsche are a reasonable place to start the study of his work and it is a bonus that the information and resources are fairly fresh and accessible.

On the other hand, Nāgārjuna almost occupies the other extreme. Where information on Nietzsche is readily available, scholars of Nāgārjuna cannot come to a consensus on when he lived. Most scholars agree that Nāgārjuna approximately lived in or around the second century CE (Garfield 1995: 87, Walser 2005: 1, Williams 1989: 56). However, Nāgārjuna has been placed as early as 33 BCE (Pandeya 1988: xi) and as recently as the fourth century CE (Walleser 1990: 15). Estimates regarding a particular duration range from about 113 – 213 CE (Robinson 1967: 22), 150 – 250 or 100 – 200 CE (Tachikawa 1997: 1), with the greatest degree of consent being 150 – 250 CE (Inada 1993: v, Kalupahana 1994:161, Nakamura 1992: 255, Yu-Kwan 1993: 1).

Beyond this, there is some difficulty as to what any scholar should make of the accounts of Nāgārjuna's life. What is generally agreed upon is that Nāgārjuna was born into a family of the Brahman caste in south India (Kalupahana 1994:161, Corless 1995: 526, Ramanan 2002: 25), but there is also the contradictory belief that he hailed from a "northern Deccan Brahman family" (Thapar 1966: 130) probably in the Andhra region (Williams 1989: 56). His parents sent him away as a child because astrologers had predicted his premature death at the age of seven (Walleser 1990: 6) with another account prophesising he would live seven years, seven months and seven days (Walleser 1990: 8). It is uncertain if he was specifically placed in a monastic order (Williams 1989: 56). He is believed to have acted as a sort of advisor to

a king (Corless 1995: 530, Kalupahana 1994:161, Ramanan 2002: 27, Walleser 1990: 7) who was "most likely to have lived in the Eastern Deccan" (Walser 2005: 81). It is generally accepted that he was a major contributor to Mahāyāna Buddhism and the founder of Mādhyamika School. There is much disagreement between scholars about the life of Nāgārjuna, not only as to differences between accounts but also as to how they should be interpreted.

One difficulty arising from the various accounts is why the founder of the Mādhyamika school of Buddhism is known as 'Nāgārjuna'. Almost all accounts of his life, to some degree, involve his interaction with a species of serpent people known as the Nāgas. Walleser (1990: 7) writes that it was "on account of his connections with the Nāgas that he received the name 'Nāgārjuna'". It is recounted that the Nāgas attended his sermons, that Nāgārjuna used the Nāgas as workers, that he travelled to their domain to give them direct instruction, and that while there he procured many texts (Walleser 1990: 6-11). Similarly, the Chinese sources derive his name from the fact that "his mother gave birth to him under an arjuna tree" and "because a dragon perfected his wisdom" (Corless 1995: 531). In Chinese Nāgārjuna is known as Long Shu with the Chinese *long*, meaning dragon, being equivalent to the Sanskrit *nāga* (Corless 1995: 525).

These tales, as well as other miraculous events sited in the Tibetan and Chinese sources on the life of Nāgārjuna, are almost completely absent within scholarly accounts of Nāgārjuna's work. Scholars either deal with Nāgārjuna's life so briefly or avoid it altogether so that they do not have to acknowledge the difficulties that traditional biographies/hagiographies pose for modern scholarship[1]. There is no intention to discuss why such information has been left out, nor pursue it further, merely to note the absence and difficulty regarding such materials. The intention was to point out the difficulty of comparing the lives of two thinkers when many scholars, for the most part,

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[1] It is interesting to note that even Tuck (1990), whose work deals specifically with the scholarly biases incorporated into the interpretation of Nāgārjuna's work, completely overlooked this issue. Bloss (1973) has produced an interesting analysis of the symbol of the nāga and its relation to Buddhism, yet does not make reference to Nāgārjuna.

banish the existing biographies of one of those thinkers to the realm of myth. Thus, while it is necessary to begin a comparative study with a contextualised analysis, it is not always an easy task.

The issues relating to an accepted biography makes Nāgārjuna's work difficult to place. As a result, only a brief comparison of each thinker's cultural backdrop will be attempted. In doing so, broad overviews of India, circa 100 BCE to 250 CE, and Germany in the 19th century will be made in order to see if any cultural congruencies can be found. It will be shown that while a contextualised analysis is necessary, to rely solely on context within a comparative study unnecessarily limits any attempted comparison. It will be seen that the dual contextual/decontextual approach does not suffer these limits. This dual approach is necessary for in one and the same material it can be seen that "what may serve as a *descriptive* statement from a philosophical point of view can simultaneously be understood as having an *injunctive* function from an institutional point of view" (Walser 2005: 10). An attempt will be made to show the historical and cultural flavour underpinning both thinkers and a comparison will be built on to this. It will be shown that an analysis of thinkers limited to this manner of analysis is unsatisfying and shallow. This is not the result of the author merely pruning the subject matter in this way. An actual comparative attempt will be made. However, it will be seen that comparative philosophy that rests to a large degree on context limits itself with regard to both content and methodology.

There is a difficulty in any attempt to characterise the era of Nāgārjuna. This is partly due to the lack of specific, and consistent, information about the historical figure of Nāgārjuna. More so, this is a result of the fact that "between the death of the Buddha and the rise of Mahāyāna ... we are dealing with centuries of doctrinal change combined with geographic dispersal over a subcontinent" which was "in reality a gradual shift not experienced ... by any one person" (Williams 1989: 7). This means that, due to the complexity of Nāgārjuna's cultural backdrop, only a general overview may be possible within the scope of this work, an overview drawn from numerous and inconsistent sources. While Walser (2005: 264), who has done the most to

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locate Nāgārjuna, has perhaps succeeded in his "aims to demythologise Nāgārjuna", he conceded that we are still "looking for a 'best fit'" (Walser 2005: 268) solution to place Nāgārjuna within a historical context. An attempt to supersede Walser's account is not considered, for to do so would draw away from the point of this work. The point is that contextualisation is harder the sparser the material. This also impacts on all comparative studies.

Contextualising Nāgārjuna is difficult as a result of few and inconsistent sources. In an attempt to understand Nāgārjuna's context, an examination of India, circa 100 BCE through to 250 CE, will be made. While difficulties abound in characterising the politics of medieval India, there is a general consensus that between 300 BCE and 1700 CE the country was littered with "both formal state structures … and a civil society that was still localized", meaning both self-contained kingdoms and self-governing communities (Stein 1998: 25). This does not provide the information as to which Nāgārjuna lived under. Walser (2005: 268) stated that "there is no reason to assume that Nāgārjuna spent his entire career in one place". From the varying accounts of his residence, it can be hypothesized that Nāgārjuna would have passed through, and experienced, both.

Within this era of varying political structures, between 200 BCE and 300 CE, trade throughout India started to boom. One impact of this was that "the religions supported by the merchants, Buddhism and Jainism, saw their heyday" (Thapar 1966: 109). This passage of trade, coupled with Buddhist missionaries, opened up access to some of the remotest areas of the subcontinent (Thapar 1966: 107) with both groups going as far as Southeast Asia (Thapar 1966: 113). Another reason for the boom of Buddhism is, coupled with increased access, that political and military forces "actually affiliated themselves with Buddhism" and gave generous support as well as gifts such as caves (Ichimura 201: 41). This made it possible for the first Buddhist missionaries to arrive in China in 65 BCE (Thapar 1966: 120). During this time Roman ships were the "most profitable of overseas trade" in south India (Thapar 1966: 114). This may shed some light in the miraculous accounts of Nāgārjuna saving communities in times when crops were

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insufficient (Walleser 1990: 9), namely through newly established trade with far off places that was previously impossible due to the closed nature of many communities throughout India.

Interestingly, trade was not limited to physical objects. Interaction with other highly developed cultures, such as the Romans and Chinese, would have resulted in the exchange of knowledge. An example is the Buddhist missionaries in China. It is certainly true in the case of Nāgārjuna, whose work was exported in the first few centuries after his death to areas such as Tibet and China. With regard to India's importation of knowledge it is worthy noting that "the interest in alchemy developed [in India] in the early centuries [CE], presumably when both mercury and sulphur were available and their properties familiar" with some reports that "Nāgārjuna was an alchemist" (Walser 2005: 75) or at least "conversant with alchemy" (Thapar 1978: 96). This would mean that Nāgārjuna was not only conversant in and familiar with the traditional areas of Indian knowledge, but was also up-to-date with new areas of knowledge, either being developed in India or arriving through the new found interaction with other cultures.

While it may be that attributing alchemical knowledge to Nāgārjuna may have been "to sell the Nāgārjuna legend to an Indian audience or ... to export the legend to a Chinese audience" (Walser 2005: 75), the image of an individual with knowledge of, or interest in, contemporary trends remains. Beyond this, Walser's point a) misses the soteriological aspect of Nāgārjuna and his work and b) takes a purely materialistic conception of alchemy. Alchemy takes a base material and attempts to transform it into something valuable, like lead to gold, and its symbolic value has soteriological significance, for the unenlightened to be transmuted by enlightenment.

Beyond this cross cultural pollination, there is another event that supposedly occurred during the time of Nāgārjuna. It was during the first or second century CE that the fourth Buddhist council was summoned (Puligandla 1975: 69). The Buddhist councils were summoned, the first according to some schools occurring shortly after the death of the Buddha, in order to

standardise the Buddhist canon and to authenticate the Buddhist teachings. This time the Buddhist council was summoned to "systematise the fundamental doctrines of the Sarvāstivāda" school of Buddhism (Puligandla 1975: 70). Nāgārjuna's attendance at the Buddhist council is not recorded. However, the ramifications of the Buddhist council would have reached across the Buddhist world. It would be safe to postulate that, if Nāgārjuna did not attend, he would have at least been aware of the events that transpired.

Nāgārjuna also occupied an important position within the development of Buddhist thought. Along with the convening of the Buddhist council, there was much philosophical activity among the various schools of Buddhism that shaped Indian culture during the time of Nāgārjuna. Between the death of the Buddha and the rise of Nāgārjuna there was such an expansion and maturity of Buddhist thought that no other period within Buddhist history "could ever match or come up to the level of activity" (Inada 1993: 6) with "Nāgārjuna and his thoughts [coming to] occupy an important place at the crucial crossroads in the subtle beginnings of the Mahāyāna as against the Theravāda tradition" (Inada 1993: 4). Even though the same fundamental philosophy of the Buddha remained intact there was a division between schools that was "initially based on different disciplinary codes ... [which] gradually developed distinctly different doctrinal views" (Hamilton 2001: 85). Through competition and the desire of each school to differentiate themselves from the others the literature became "too complex and abstract for ordinary Buddhists to follow" (Inada 1993: 7).

Nāgārjuna worked against the increasing complexity of the Buddhist teachings to "present a concise and systematic view of thoughts crystallized over the five or six centuries since the Buddha" as well as making literature accessible to both scholars and laypersons (Inada 1993: 5). Nāgārjuna, with the assertion 'dependent arising is emptiness', is "in contrast to the methods of [the earlier school of] Abhidharma Buddhism which had sought to define the world as existent" (Tachikawa 1997: 1-3). The methodology of the Mādhyamaka tradition can be seen as being against Abhidharma Buddhism in that it argues against the view that things have "a real and enduring status"

which is considered to be an ontological aberration (Hamilton 2001: 105). Nāgārjuna marked a turning point in the history of Buddhism in that he disengaged the squabbles that threatened to reduce the religious tradition to scholarly disagreements and reoriented the tradition so that it could once again grow among the multitudes. Running parallel to this the cultural turmoil within India also resulted in a renewal of growth both within and outside of its cultural confines.

An attempt can now be made to grasp the climate of India, or at least the Deccan region, during the supposed time of Nāgārjuna. While India may have had some previous stability, the instability of the era within which Nāgārjuna lived allowed the population and culture of India to grow, expand, and explore. As one can imagine, there would have been much turmoil and unrest as a once relatively closed culture and closed communities began intermixing with and expanding into the foreign cultures that surrounded them. On the whole this seems to have been of great benefit. After the Buddha's death, Buddhism initially fragmented into many sects and schools. It was during Nāgārjuna's time, beginning just before, that the crystallisation into definite groups and schools occurred. Nāgārjuna arrived and, whilst being a major contributor to the Mahāyāna school, founded the Mādhyamika School, amidst this formative stage. Thus, the flavour of India between 100 BCE and 250 CE is primarily one of much outward expansion and interaction, coupled with reduced inward isolation.

Germany during the 19th century was also a tumultuous place. Yet, the turmoil was fuelled by vastly different events than that of first and second century India. Germany, as it is currently known, did not yet exist. Even as late as 1860 it consisted of 39 states, each of which resisted unification and "jealously guarded their power against each other" (Morgan 1966: 11-12). The two biggest of which were Austria and Prussia, where Nietzsche was born and raised. The issue of unification dominated the political and cultural scene into which Nietzsche was born, and influenced his early life. The new King of Prussia, Frederick William IV, instated in 1840, "spoke often and enthusiastically of his pride in the 'German nation'" raising the issue of

unification to the highest level (Carr 1991: 25). So, above all, the issue of the unification of Germany dominated the political agenda for over the first quarter of Nietzsche's life.

There were many factors contributing to the issue of German unification. One of these was the rapid expansion of the German economy, particularly in relation to the rest of Europe. An example of this expansion is that "in the 1840's Germany broke the British monopoly and began to supply her own needs" (Carr 1991: 28). Furthermore, during the 1850's Germany "made a significant step forward towards becoming an industrial state" with "new factories, rapid expansion of the railway network, widespread introduction of steam-driven machinery and the concentration of production in the new factories" (Kitchen 1978: 87). During this time the government was intent on keeping the railway under control. This was achieved by amalgamating a number of small private railways, after their purchase by the state, into the state system, which meant, "by the 1860's Germany had the largest railway network in Europe" (Kitchen 1978: 98). It is interesting to note that, despite coming some time later, around 1890, Nietzsche's "sudden popularity ... came in the context of German's rapidly advancing industrialisation" (Thomas 1983: 2) where the adage 'become what you are', from *Zarathustra*, had significance for both the individual and the culture as a whole. These issues illustrate the sudden and rapid infrastructure expansion within and across the many states under the pressure of unification.

Such turmoil and the preoccupation with unification resulted in war. Prussia was involved in three wars between 1860 and 1871; in 1864 and 1866 against Austria and 1870 against France. In all three it was proposed that "German unification was at stake ... in '64 and '66 in order to release Germany from Austria and that the military effort of '70 against France was needed finally to overcome the division between north and south Germany" (Ramm 1981: 280). The conquest of France in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-71, in which Nietzsche willingly served as a medical orderly (Kaufmann 1956: 34, Hollingdale 1965: 60), led to a "wave of white-hot patriotic" fever throughout Germany and helped cement its unification (Carr 1991: 115). Nietzsche, living

through all three wars, was deeply affected by these events and their ramifications can be seen within his philosophical development[2].

It is informative to place Nietzsche within the philosophical tradition, and in a wider context than the political and economic events previously mentioned. Sutton (1974: 2) called the German philosophical tradition one of the "only three continuous, relatively independent traditions in [European] philosophy", with the other two being the British and the French. Some of the major thinkers within the German tradition of philosophy include Kant (1724 – 1804), Hegel (1770 – 1831), and Schopenhauer (1788 – 1860). Within this tradition Nietzsche is seen as "important for his influence upon subsequent European literature" as well as "for an understanding of the age we have lived through" (Sutton 1974: 83). Part of Nietzsche's "subsequent influence" was his misappropriation in the first and second world wars by German and British propagandists, with some going so far as to regard Nietzsche as "having helped cause it" (Thomas 1983: 1). This may seem, in part, as a result of the pre-war youth movement being "heavily influenced by Nietzsche's insistence upon desiccation of scholarship when not directed to enhancing life" and criticising "the scholarly community for destroying vitality and meaning" (Marchand 1996: 313). Nietzsche's influence can also be seen in the works of many 20th century French intellectuals, such as Sartre, Foucault, or Deleuze, as well as throughout the postmodernist movement. Nietzsche is seen as a turning point in the history of European thought, synchronising with a turning point in the history of Europe.

According to their cultural contexts both thinkers came from formative stages within the history of their respective cultures. Nāgārjuna existed at the beginning of a period in the history of India that, once established, determined the development of the continent until the British conquest over a thousand years later. Even though Germany did not last in the same manner, the

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[2] This is specifically acknowledged by Nietzsche where he writes in his "belated preface" of 1886 to his first published work that "the time which it [BT] was written, in spite of which it was written", being "the exciting time of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71", bears witness to the "deeply personal" nature of the subject matter (BTp § 1).

events that happened during Nietzsche's lifetime were the starting point for much that occurred during the first half of the 20th century. While both India and Germany were experiencing rapid growth, the kind of growth within each culture was vastly different. India experienced an outward growth in the form of cultural expansion and growth into surrounding areas while Germany experienced inward growth in the form of internal unification and strengthening of the interior structure[3].

Within a comparative study it is important to examine the influence, if any, of one source on the other. This is important because it shows a) how the focus shifts according to the context, b) how open a thinker is to utilise, and acknowledge, other material, and c) when misunderstandings occur, how and why they arose, and the impact on subsequent work. It is obvious that Nāgārjuna had no knowledge of, or influence from, Nietzsche. However, there is some controversy over Nietzsche's knowledge of non-European, or non-western, philosophies leading some to argue that Nietzsche's "trans-European eye was more European than 'trans'" (Sprung 2003: 253), while others argue that Nietzsche was "one of the best read and most solidly grounded in Buddhism for his time among Europeans" (Elman 1983: 673). I will now proceed to discuss this controversy with the aim of ascertaining what, if any, knowledge Nietzsche had of Nāgārjuna.

While it is consistently acknowledged that Nietzsche had some knowledge of Asian philosophies, the degree to which Nietzsche was aware remains unconfirmed. One of the potential sources from which Nietzsche could have gained insight into Indian philosophies is Paul Deussen (1845 – 1919), one of the foremost Sanskrit and Vedānta scholars of his time, with whom Nietzsche

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[3] While it is expressed in similar terms, these differing modes of growth have nothing to do with and cannot be extended to the metaphorical distinction of internal/vertical versus external/horizontal spiritual growth. If it was to be seen in this manner then the respective modes of growth would be reversed in that the religious concerns of India were penetrating deeper into the continent as well as extending into Asia rekindling spiritual awareness as opposed to German fulfilment of base desires in their strengthening of political, economic, and industrial awareness which inturn dampened spiritual awareness and desire.

"established a friendship which was to last a lifetime" (Rollmann 1978: 125). Despite the length of their relationship, it seems that Nietzsche did not capitalise on the expertise of his friend. This may be because, according to some, their relationship was "maintained, but not deepened" by time (Rollmann 1978: 126). In the few letters between them, Nietzsche "succeeds in giving the impression he is dissatisfied with Deussen's progress" (Hollingdale 1965: 62). It is as if Nietzsche, in assuming the role of the mentor, limits the amount of knowledge he feels comfortable with learning from his 'student'. Even with Deussen making accessible philosophical texts from India, "Nietzsche seldom quotes from an Indian text" even while alluding to them with frequency "enough to arouse the presumption that it [Indian thought] was alive in [Nietzsche's] mind" (Sprung 2003: 249). This indicates a poor grasp of Indian, especially Buddhist, thought on the part of Nietzsche.

Nietzsche had more opportunity than simply relying on his friends in developing his understanding of non-European thought. It is known that Nietzsche had some familiarity with Asian thought from an early age. It was during his 'high school' days, around the age of seventeen or eighteen, that an essay of his included comments on "two basic documents of Indian literature and religion, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana*" (Figl 1991: 52). Nietzsche also attended university lectures and, from his notes relating to these studies, it can be deduced that Nietzsche was exposed "at this early stage to Indian thought in a fairly comprehensive manner" (Figl 1991: 60). However, what Nietzsche chose to expose himself to also informed, or misinformed, his understanding of non-European thought. Smith (2004: 37) notes that with regard to the *Laws of Manu* "Nietzsche's choice of version shows ... ignorance of both scholarly and popular writing on India". Smith (2004: 38) has shown that Nietzsche's preferred translation, in French by Jacolliot, was superseded by the earlier German translation by Huttner and was in disrepute during his lifetime. Beyond this, it can be seen that his interest in this area did not diminish in later years, if his personal library is anything to judge by, especially those books within his library on Indian thought and Buddhism that contain varying amounts of notes dispersed

throughout many of them (Brobjer 1997: 673, 2004: 33 – 35). This still does not help to understand what knowledge, if any, Nietzsche had of Nāgārjuna.

So far, Nietzsche's knowledge of Indian philosophies other than Buddhism has been discussed. This has shown Nietzsche to have had at least a minimal understanding of Indian philosophies. With specific regard to Buddhism, it is known that "the tenets of Buddhism became known in Europe during the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century" (Abelsen 1993: 255). This means that the study of Buddhism was relatively new to Europe, even during Nietzsche's lifetime. It has been argued that Nietzsche took his conception of Buddhism completely from Schopenhauer (Dumoulin 1981: 469, Sprung 2003: 256), a thinker who "at times even called himself a 'Buddhist'" (Abelsen 1993: 255). In this regard it is important to note "the intellectual culture of the Chinese was accepted in the west earlier than the Indian" (Dumoulin 1981: 457). This is important as it has been asserted that it is the philosophy of Nāgārjuna "upon which the metaphysics of the principal schools of Chinese Buddhism is built" (Dumoulin 1981: 461), an example being that of Chiti who regarded Nāgārjuna as his master (Saunders 1923: 266), which is not to deny other non-Buddhist, especially Taoist, influences. It is from this source that Hegel derived his knowledge of Buddhism (Dumoulin 1981: 461) and presumably Schopenhauer followed suit. This is important evidence that, while Nietzsche may not have had explicit knowledge of Nāgārjuna, his knowledge of Buddhism was implicitly influenced by the work of Nāgārjuna.

Knowing that the study of Buddhism in Europe was relatively new during the nineteenth century is crucial in understanding Nietzsche's position on Buddhism. A central doctrine of Nāgārjuna's school of Buddhism is Śūnyatā, now translated as 'emptiness' but "earlier western commentators had rendered [it] as 'nothingness'" (Elman 1983: 682). This mistranslation led Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to "inaccurate views of Buddhism" (Elman 1983: 683), especially pessimistic and nihilistic views of this philosophical system. This mistranslation, and the misconceptions that it led to, helps to explain how in one and the same sentence Nietzsche can vehemently oppose Buddhism while affirm and agree with Nāgārjuna. Mistry (1981: 195) notes a

similar occurrence, as "Nietzsche to be sure opposes his view of art and power to Buddhist nirvana; his perspective, however, strikes us as an approximation of the Buddhist ideal". Parkes (1996: 357) acknowledges that the translations available during Nietzsche's time are mainly of a "poor quality", with Mistry (1981: 120) citing that "misconstruction is attributable to the lack of adequate information available to Nietzsche, corroborating the reasons behind Nietzsche's misinterpretation of Buddhism. This evidence supports the methodology proposed here. That is, any comparative study that limits itself to the form of words used, instead of examining the meaning that arises as a result of their context within a system, is limited to a merely superficial comparison.

Throughout his life Nietzsche had much to say on the subject of Buddhism. Elman (1983: 686) went so far as to assert that "Buddhism lies at the centre of any attempt to understand Nietzsche's thought in its entirety". Elman's belief is that Buddhism implicitly contributes to the major concepts within Nietzsche's philosophy. Yet, it is difficult to either attempt to develop an overall understanding of Nietzsche's position on the subject or to discuss any particular views Nietzsche expressed as being definitive. These difficulties occur because Buddhism is mentioned sporadically throughout his many writings and because the views held shift and change according to the context or the point being made. While these are issues that any scholar attempting to discuss Nietzsche's view of Buddhism must grapple with, there are some interesting and informative points that can be discussed.

One of the key concepts in Nietzsche's work is nihilism. Buddhism is often derided within his work because of his diagnosis that this tradition has many nihilistic tendencies. For Nietzsche nihilism means that *"the highest values are devaluated"* (*WLN* 9[35]). In this sense it can be understood that both Nāgārjuna's and Nietzsche's work might be considered nihilistic. But beyond this, if nihilism is to mean that not only are the highest values devaluated but also all values eradicated, as the word is commonly used (especially with regards to commentaries on both thinkers), then the charge of nihilism could not hold for either Nāgārjuna or Nietzsche. This will be raised again in chapter

three where it will be shown that both Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche are labelled Nihilists for similar reasons.

Nietzsche, however, continues beyond his definition to separate out "active" and "passive" forms of nihilism with the former being a "sign of *strength*" and the latter "a sign of weakness" (*WLN* 9[35]). Nietzsche said that the "most celebrated form" of passive nihilism, in that it has become a "weary nihilism that no longer *attacks*", is Buddhism (*WLN* 9[35]). However, this attack on Buddhism may be understood as a result of Nietzsche having a very Schopenhauerian understanding of Buddhism (*WLN* 14[123]). Another reason for the nihilist conception of Nāgārjuna's work, and Mādhyamika Buddhism in general, is that Schopenhauer[4] and Deussen, along with many scholars, viewed it from a Vedānta perspective. The charge of nihilism arises as a result of the Mādhyamika assertion that selfhood is empty whereas in Vedānta ātman (self) has an intrinsic value and its denial is taken to be a denial of any sort of intrinsic reality. While this is certainly not the case within Mādhyamika Buddhism this point does illustrate how a superficial difference, when misdiagnosed as a real difference, can both drastically misconstrue the intentions of a philosophical system as well as severely limiting further analysis.

This close association may also explain Nietzsche's belief that "Indian Buddhism does *not* have a fundamentally moral development behind it, which is why in its nihilism there is only morality which hasn't been overcome" (*WLN* 2[127]). While this is categorically wrong, and Nietzsche is severely misinformed, this quote does make sense in light of Schopenhauer's reading of Buddhism. Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer and Buddhism on the same grounds. Furthermore, it has been said that Nietzsche only knew of Buddhism

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[4] This is not to say that Schopenhauer did not have any understanding of, or insight into Buddhism. As Nānajīvako (1988: 5-6) is keen to point out, there has developed a "standard formula", intended to undermine Schopenhauer's understanding of Buddhist texts to such a degree that it "grants to Schopenhauer the privilege of standing at a level of intelligence just above that of an idiot as far as he was able to realize his own problem, but not of inquiring about its reasons, or even looking for help".

through Schopenhauer (Sprung 2003: 256) so the close association of the two is understandable. Given these two things, this may be more of critique of Schopenhauer than it is of Buddhism. This shows that Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche may both be superficially termed nihilistic, but for different reasons. Also, it can be seen that while there is some validity to such superficial categorisation, it is possible to analyse this aspect on a deeper level.

The poor quality of translations available during Nietzsche's time can be seen to have an explicit impact on Nietzsche's understanding of Buddhism. In a further note on nihilism Nietzsche wrote "the most extreme form of nihilism: nothingness ('meaninglessness') eternally" (*WLN* 5[71]). The modern translation of *Śūnyatā* as 'emptiness' rather than 'nothingness', a key to Nāgārjuna's thought, leads to a more sympathetic view of Nāgārjuna whereas the earlier rendering provided good evidence for those early European scholars who felt his views to be nihilistic. It is little wonder that Nietzsche disdained central aspects of Buddhist thought because for him 'nothingness' equalled 'meaninglessness'. Furthermore, there is little in the work of Schopenhauer that would have dissuaded him from this view. Nietzsche's rejection of Buddhism, while, at times, advocating for similar solutions, is understandable, in light of the comparative methodology advocated for here, as being a good example of how a seemingly real difference is seen to be actually merely a superficial one.

The realisation that some differences, appearing to be real, are merely superficial is beneficial for comparing the key concepts from two or more vastly different philosophical systems. Two of the prominent ideals within the philosophical systems of the thinkers compared here are Buddhahood within Nāgārjuna and the Übermensch within Nietzsche. At a cursory glance these appear to be totally different, both in form and function. This can be seen even after the form and function of these ideals are elucidated and they are held side by side. However, from the comparative approach presented here it can be seen that an analysis of key concepts, limited to such differences, does not do justice to the thinkers compared. After examining Buddhahood and the Übermensch an attempt will be made to show how, through a simultaneously

contextualised and decontextualised comparative analysis, these ideals spring from a highly similar view of human physiology and psychology. Furthermore, this type of analysis shows that, while there are many congruencies, the ideals of Buddhahood and the Übermensch do have some real differences. By accepting the existence of superficial differences, and not limiting comparative analysis to these differences, it is easier to show where ideas converge and diverge.

Buddhahood occupies an ambiguous position within the philosophical system of Nāgārjuna. While Nāgārjuna repeatedly accords the highest esteem and position for those who have attained Buddhahood, the actual state attained is seldom discussed. This is understandable as Nāgārjuna, through his works, is attempting to provide individuals with the means to raise themselves to this state of being rather than being concerned as to what it is or with those who have attained it. Nāgārjuna's aim is to aid individuals with their progression along the bodhisattva path. The bodhisattva is an individual who "seeks to realise the wisdom that constitutes Buddhahood" (Ramanan 2002: 297). Nāgārjuna expresses this in writing that the bodhisattvas "strive to represent the lineage of the Buddhas" (*Bod* § 104). Zimmer (1951: 535) writes that "in the Mahāyāna tradition the term designates those sublimely indifferent compassionate beings who remain at the threshold of *Nirvāṇa* for the comfort and salvation of the world". It must be recognised that "the bodhisattva ideal rests on the premise that every living being has within it the potential of becoming a Buddha, and this same premise underlies the entire edifice of Mādhyamika thought" (Huntington and Wangchen 1992: 20).

Furthermore, it is informative to understand the literal meaning of bodhisattva. The term literally means "one whose essence (*sattva*) is (virtually) enlightenment (*bodhi*)" (Zimmer 1951: 539), where *sattva* is built on the principle *sat*, meaning "being; as it should be; good, well perfect", and *sattva* meaning "the ideal state of being" (Zimmer 1951 296). Another rendering of 'bodhisattva' is "awakening being" (Huntington and Wangchen 1992: 19). This is crucial as the idea of 'awakening' implies the process through which one awakens. The stages of the bodhisattva constitute the path that one much

transverse to arrive at Buddhahood. In focusing on the stages Nāgārjuna is attempting to provide the means to realise Buddhahood. It must be stated explicitly that according to Nāgārjuna Buddhahood exists. This might be obvious but unless it is recognised one misses a central aspect of Nāgārjuna's philosophical system. That this state of being remains attainable is important when it is compared to the Übermensch.

Individuals require a teacher who can guide them along the bodhisattva path. For someone to become a teacher they must have attained the degree relevant to being a teacher before they are able to effectively guide any prospective students, as it is acknowledged that anyone "who teaches must first of all clearly understand" (Walleser 1990: 28). Nāgārjuna explicitly states this in writing; it is "the sons of the Buddha [who] are active in developing enlightenment" in others (*Bod* § 85). From this it is possible to see that for one to pass on the knowledge of enlightenment one must first become a successor of those who have attained Buddhahood. This is important as the authority to confer initiation "assured the effective legitimacy" of both the teaching and the teachers (Guénon 2001b: 23). The teacher validates the teaching, showing that it is tried and tested and, at the same time, providing an example of the goal of the teaching.

Nāgārjuna received the titles '*ārya*' (Williams 1989: 55) and '*ācārya*' (Walleser 1990: 12). The title '*ārya*' equates to 'noble being' and denotes one who has direct perception while the title '*ācārya*' equates to 'master' or 'teacher'. The combination of these two titles designates Nāgārjuna as a teacher of the highest degree. It is also recognised that Nāgārjuna's indoctrination and guidance came from numerous teachers, the two most prominent being Śri Saraha Bhadra and Ācārya Rāhula (Walleser 1990: 7–9). Under the direction of Saraha, Nāgārjuna became a monk and later became the High Priest after his teacher's death (Walleser 1990: 7–8). Rāhula placed Nāgārjuna under rigorous discipline "due to the little compassion which Nāgārjuna showed towards living beings" in order to perfect and further Nāgārjuna along the bodhisattva path (Walleser 1990: 9). Such discipline is necessary as the bodhisattvas "strive to represent the linage of the Buddhas" and show

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compassion to all living creatures (*Bod* § 104). It is also said that Nāgārjuna received instruction in the Vedas from earliest childhood, that "there was nothing that he had not thoroughly fathomed" in the known sciences (Walleser 1990: 27). This illustrates that Nāgārjuna received adequate teaching, had appropriate knowledge, and is recognised as fulfilling the requirements for being a teacher of the bodhisattva path.

Furthermore, Nāgārjuna was recognised as a remarkable teacher during his time. In his capacity as High Priest, Nāgārjuna's teachings almost completely obscured the Hīnayāna teaching within the district and saw the conversion of thousands to Buddhism under his influence (Walleser 1990: 7). While it is recognised that Nāgārjuna had a large following, many scholars agree that his principal disciple and student was Āryadeva (Huntington & Wangchen 1992: 33, Walleser 1990: 24, Williams 1989: 55). Nāgārjuna's teaching of Āryadeva can be recognised in the student's work, which mirror's the views and methodology of his teacher, writing "if one makes no claims to existence, non-existence, or both, it will never be possible to defeat him" (in Huntington & Wangchen 1992: 98). Candrakīrti (1992: 194) looked to Nāgārjuna as one who had taught and explained the path to and qualities of Buddhahood. Thus, Nāgārjuna was recognised as having attained both the status of Buddhahood and the qualities necessary to successfully pass on the means for others to attain Buddhahood. That Nāgārjuna entered into a tradition, was accepted by a master of that tradition, strove to attain the highest ideal of that tradition, and, according to the teachings of that tradition, is accepted as an authority who achieved said ideal has added significance when compared with Nietzsche, who created his own highest ideal, had no one to guide him towards that ideal, nor any means to achieve his own ideal.

With Nāgārjuna's qualifications established, the qualities of Buddhahood will now be discussed. Candrakīrti (1992: 149) has said that "every Buddha is [themself] born from a bodhisattva", meaning that the bodhisattva path is the gestation period for Buddhahood. This necessitates an examination of the bodhisattva path in order to see the qualities developed in the attainment of Buddhahood. The qualities acquired along the bodhisattva path "far exceed

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the range of speech" (Candrakīrti 1992: 190). However, of the qualities that can be communicated, those crucial for the current discussion will be detailed. Among the qualities that are indicative of Buddhahood, Candrakīrti (1992: 151-89) details the "complete exhaustion of craving and hostility" (i.e. impatience and anger have been conquered), "balanced concentration", freedom from "reified concepts", "perfect morality". Most importantly is the realisation of the unity of the two truths, emptiness and dependent arising[5]. This realisation is significant because it is central to Nāgārjuna's whole work and more generally it means that the individual who has realised it has access to the true nature of existence.

Buddhahood requires the realisation of *Śūnyatā*, which is the "absence of constructs", where "a 'thing' is a construct" (*Bod* § 44). Freedom from reified concepts, or 'things', a consequence of *Śūnyatā*, is central to the realisation of the two truths, another prime quality of Buddhahood. A 'thing' becomes thus due to its differentiation from other 'things', making each thing, to some degree, separate and independent of everything else, meaning that it is neither empty nor dependently originated. Nāgārjuna states that "dependent co-origination; just that is what you maintain to be *Śūnyatā*", showing that the realisation of the interconnected nature of existence is connected to freedom from reification, as "whoever awakens to this is called Buddha" (*Acin* § 40-1). This illustrates that it is in the realisation of the unity of the two truths that leads to Buddhahood. These are some of the effable qualities of Buddhahood.

Nāgārjuna's combination of emptiness and dependent arising, while innovative, governs the moral value of action[6]. For one who is yet to attain Buddhahood, there are actions that are clearly moral and other immoral.

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[5] There are various translations of this key term. Garfield (1995) opts for "dependently co-arisen", Inada (1993) uses "relational origination", Ramanan (2002) has "dependent origination", and Tachikawa (1997) decided upon "dependent co-arising". For consistency 'dependent arising' will be used, though these terms are interchangeable and each author's rendering has been kept when quoted.

[6] For detailed expositions and commentaries on Buddhist ethics see especially Nāgārjuna *Rat* and *Suh*, Śāntideva (1995), and Harvey (2000).

Nāgārjuna has much to say about which are and are not permissible, like not killing, stealing, or cheating. We may hypothesise that their moral worth is connected with either their promoting harmony or aiding in the realisation of the two truths, or both. One who attains Buddhahood directly experiences the two truths; it is the simultaneous experience of the emptiness of ultimate reality and the dependent arising of all things within conventional reality. As Nāgārjuna stated, "that which is dependent origination is explained to be emptiness" (*MK* XXIV § 18). The combination of the two truths has a seemingly contradictory impact on all moral outlooks which threatens to make "perfect morality" impossible. Nāgārjuna states that "virtuous and nonvirtuous actions ... are all maintained to be similar" (MK XVII § 5). Nāgārjuna distinguishes between two kinds of actions without categorising any particular actions. Yet, for an action to be intrinsically moral it "requires something that does not ultimately exist, the subject for whom events in a life can have meaning" (Siderits 2007: 77). On the level of ultimate reality there are no moral values because they are inherently empty, whereas on the level of conventional reality moral values cease to have independent existence, meaning that there is nothing definitively good or evil.

Seen in this light it is possible to venture that morality does not exist because if it did then all moral values would be completely relative. However, moral relativity does not necessarily follow. Nāgārjuna reminds us that "the doctrine of the indestructibility of karma is taught by the Buddha (MK XVII § 20) as karma is "without essence ... not arisen" (MK XVII § 21). Karma, action, being not essentially arisen cannot be essentially virtuous or nonvirtuous. By accepting that there are no inherently moral values, it is possible that those who have attained Buddhahood realise that any, and all, moral action is intimately bound to the dependently arisen nature of existence. They are able to perceive what action is necessary for each situation and act accordingly. The result is that all of their behaviour is perfectly moral[7]. For those struggling

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[7] This is parallel to Kant's early formulation to a universalizable action in *Groundwork*. In both it can be seen that, while no particular kind of action is inherently moral, certain actions, according to the circumstances, would be acceptable to all people.

along the path to Buddhahood, the permissibility of an action is important as "being moral is part of the training necessary for attaining *Nirvāṇa*" (Siderits 2007: 79). It follows that, while there are no inherently moral actions, the virtuous action for the novice is that which weakens their belief in an inherently existing self. This solution is more closely aligned with the doctrine of perspectivism, as used within this dissertation, than relativity. This is because, ultimately, everything is empty, and conventionally, one's view is dependent on the position occupied.

Alongside the ideal of Buddhahood we can place the Übermensch. Nietzsche used the figure of Zarathustra to introduce the concept of the Übermensch and this ideal remained in the background of his subsequent works. While it is from *Z* onwards that Nietzsche discusses and elaborates on the Übermensch, this phrasing of the concept first appeared in *GS* § 143. Here, consistently with later elaborations, the Übermensch (or Übermenschen as it occurs here as a plural) is brought in as a way of moving beyond, or transvaluating, established values that, for Nietzsche, are a sign of sickness. While this is the first actual occurrence of the term, the concept itself predates its encapsulation in 'Übermensch'. It can be seen in *BT* with the idea of the collapse of individuation, the use of history proposed in *UM* II, and the Free Spirits of *HAH*. The Übermensch is often translated as 'superman' or 'overman' but both phrases can misconstrue the concept through inaccurate associations and as a result is kept in the transliterated form. Yet, what both translations do capture is the feeling of being above and beyond normal human existence.

Ordinary human existence is considered a means, not an end, in that "man is a rope, fastened between animal and Übermensch" (*Z* P: 4). Nietzsche states that the Übermensch is the meaning of human existence (*Z* P: 7), and greater still "the meaning of the earth", as "all creatures hitherto have created something beyond themselves" (*Z* P: 3). It seems that for Nietzsche, the value of anything is in what it can become, its ultimate goal, and in the case of the human that goal is the Übermensch. Nietzsche felt that if one were to grasp what he was trying to present it "would raise one to a higher level of

existence" (*E* III § 1). While both 'superman' and 'overman' have connotations of being superior to ordinary human existence, the feelings and connotations associated with it are best achieved by retaining the term 'Übermensch'.

For Nietzsche, the Übermensch is the grandest triumph that any human can strive towards. It designates "a type of supreme achievement" (*E* III § 1) that compared with which "whatever was so far considered great in man lies beneath him at an infinite distance ... none of this has ever before been dreamed of as essential to greatness" (*E* *Z* § 6). Compared to the normal human who is a river, for Nietzsche the Übermensch is a sea (*Z* P: 3), again reflecting the Übermensch as the goal of human existence, just as all rivers race to become the sea. All this points to the belief that no matter what any individual can achieve, and no matter what greatness one can achieve as a human, the attainment never comes close to the achievements and greatness of the Übermensch. Likewise, we can say, no matter how long a river is or how fast it flows, it is insignificant in comparison to the sea. The Übermensch is above and beyond the human; they are of a higher type.

This then raises the question: how may one strive towards this higher type? Nietzsche's answer is somewhat obscure, though there are hints. In climbing higher, the Übermensch questions previously established values such as 'happiness', 'reason', 'virtue', 'justice', and 'pity' with the result that, compared to established values, the values of the Übermensch are/must be considered madness (*Z* P: 3). It must be considered madness because the value would appear absurd to those conditioned to accepted morality. For Nietzsche, this type of madness is not something to lament as it is necessary for climbing higher and it is this "with which you should be cleansed" (*Z* P: 3). Through the questioning of established values the Übermensch finds that "all opposites are blended into a new unity" (*E* *Z* § 6), a new unity that does not see the natural world and human world as distinct but as connected beyond good and evil. As a result of this many would call the Übermensch "a devil" because the, so-called, "wise and enlightened ... would flee from the burning sun of wisdom" in which the Übermenschen bathe (*Z* II: 21). These are some of the hints Nietzsche gives the individual who desires to strive towards the higher type.

Opposed to the higher type are the individuals who attempt to climb higher but are restricted from reaching anything beyond their present state[8]. Some are "despisers of the body" who "are not bridges to the Übermensch" (*Z* I: 4). The reason that the despisers of the body are not bridges to anything higher is because, according to Nietzsche, they deny the unity between the physical and the psychological, whereas in nature there is no such distinction, and such a separation fragments and limits the potential of the human. The despisers discount the body so that they may enliven the spirit. This is a grievous error because it is against the grain of the "new unity" and overlooks an idea crucial in Nietzsche's work, that opposites are intricately bound together and to prefer one to the other is an unnecessary and unnatural restraint. Therefore, not everyone may attempt to cleanse him or herself, climb higher, and will the existence of the Übermensch.

While the Übermensch represents the greatest and best aspects of human existence and everything beyond that, Nietzsche believed that this type of existence within the world had not yet manifested. Nietzsche felt that, while prototypes of the Übermensch had sporadically manifested throughout the history of humanity, he could not point to any specific individual who represented the Übermensch as he envisaged it. Nietzsche has Zarathustra tell the audience in the town, as well as the reader, that they should say and will that the Übermensch "*shall be* the meaning of the earth" (*Z* P: 3). Nietzsche went so far as to say that "there has never yet been [an] Übermensch" (*Z* II: 4). Nietzsche further considers the Übermensch a "new star", again emphasising that he felt that this is something in humanity that has not yet been realised (*Z* III: 12 § 3). Yet, we should not feel that the higher type of human is an unattainable goal, as Nietzsche believed that "one day the Übermensch *may* live" (*Z* P: 4, italics mine). There have also been glimpses of its existence in that "there are cases of individual success

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[8] It must be acknowledged that here, as elsewhere throughout this work, there are instances where parallels and conclusions could be drawn regarding master and slave morality. No such comparisons are drawn as they are outside the scope of this work.

constantly appearing in the most various parts of the earth and from the most various cultures in which a *higher type* does manifest itself: something which in relation to collective mankind is a sort of Übermensch" (*A* § 4). From this we can conclude that the Übermensch, as a goal not yet actualised, remains as a potentiality which humanity may, and in Nietzsche's view should, aspire to. Nevertheless, the Übermensch embodies human potential.

The Übermensch is not Nietzsche's first attempt to encapsulate the idea of existence above normal human existence. Before the Übermensch there was the Free Spirit. Like the Übermensch, Nietzsche does not completely explain what the Free Spirit means, preferring glimpses into some of the qualities they embody. The Free Spirit has "that *mature* freedom of spirit which is fully as much self-mastery and discipline of the heart" (*HAHp* § 4) that can later be found in the Übermensch. Nietzsche also alludes to the Free Spirits as being "higher" (*HAHp* § 7). Just as the Übermensch questions prevailing views, the Free Spirit is called thus because "he [or she] thinks otherwise than would be expected, based on his [or her] origins, environment, class, and position, or based on prevailing contemporary views" (*HAH* § 225). Nietzsche notes that it would be difficult for the Free Spirit to live amongst their anthesis the Bound Spirit as the former must account for their existence in terms of the measure of things accorded by the latter (*HAH* § 229). The Free Spirits cannot account for themselves within such confines because they are free of all that the Bound Spirits are bound to, such as tradition, education, and morality.

Furthermore, the Free Spirit sees the world as a means to an end, only becoming involved with it as far as it furthers the adoration of the inner world that cannot be impacted on by any amount of turmoil in the physical realm (*HAH* § 291). The closest tie between the Free Spirit and the Übermensch is that "there are no such 'free spirits'" just as the Übermensch has not yet existed (*HAHp* § 2). The Free Spirit is to the Bound Spirit as the Übermensch is to the herd.

A comparison of the concepts of Buddhahood and the Übermensch from the material above shows them to be two vastly different ideas. However, the

material above is a strictly decontextualised analysis and because of this can be seen to fall short of a meaningful comparison. The differences between Buddhahood and the Übermensch are only superficial. The sort of meaningful comparison intended proceeds because it draws from both contextualised and decontextualised material.

It is possible to bring the ideals of Buddhahood and the Übermensch together for a meaningful comparison, yet in order to do so it is necessary to understand them within their respective contexts. In Nietzsche's work the concept of the Übermensch is closely associated with the idea of "the transvaluation of all values"[9]. The transvaluation of all values involves examining established values and revaluating them, not according to some well established virtue such as truth, the good, happiness, or rationality, but using their value for life as the bar against which all values are to be henceforth held. Nietzsche said that he was the only individual who knew how "to *reverse perspectives*" which led him to the belief that "a 'revaluation of values' is perhaps possible for me alone" (*E* I § 1) because, according to himself, he was the only one to have conceived of this possibility. Yet, Nietzsche felt that "for the task of a *revaluation of all values* more capacities may have been needed than have ever dwelt together in a single individual" (*E* II § 9). Perhaps this is why Nietzsche waited on the "philosophers of the future" (*BGE* § 42), or, better yet, maybe the arrival of the Übermensch. But despite Nietzsche's lack of success, the 'transvaluation of all values' is intimately tied to the moral outlook of the Übermensch, in that the Übermensch, as a creator of values, has a transvaluative morality.

The transvaluation of all values is a difficult and complex task. The difficulty of transvaluating all values may be split into a negative task and a positive task.

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[9] Between the various translations there is some discrepancy over the translation of this key term in Nietzsche's thought, generally rendered either as 'revaluation' and 'transvaluation'. For consistency 'transvaluation' is given preference throughout this work. However, the other translation has been retained in quotes, according to the preference of the author. As a result, both words are understood as interchangeable without any variance in the sense of the sentence.

The negative task involves the initial transvaluation that sets the whole project in motion. Of this Nietzsche has said that "we need a *critique* of moral values, the value of these values themselves must first be called into question" (*GMp* § 6). In questioning, the task is to challenge each value's value, culling all moral values that are no longer relevant. The positive task involves keeping the project running by somehow maintaining the transvaluative process. This task is necessary because without it moral values would once again stagnate and one would lapse into taking "the *value* of these 'values' as given" (*GMp* § 6). The positive task requires an element that keeps the whole task in perpetual motion, that is, an element that renews the transvaluative aspect of the transvaluation of all values. Either task, independent of the other, is strenuous enough, but taken together these tasks seem impossible to achieve within the lifetime of one individual.

There is one crucial aspect of Nietzsche's attempted transvaluation, the importance of which is seldom emphasised. It is that it merely remained an attempt. It is important to know that "Nietzsche himself never achieved a complete transvaluation of all values" (Huszar 1945: 271) and that work on the proposed book "like the *Will to Power* before it, the *Revaluation of All Values* had been abandoned" (Hollingdale 1965: 263). This is perhaps because Nietzsche a) realised that a project such as this cannot become definitive, in accordance with its own definition, which meant that it could not be placed in book form and b) that this project would remain as a latent possibility within those who strove to 'climb higher'. Following on from this, it can be postulated that the Übermensch, being those within whom the highest potentials of humankind are realised, would be a walking, breathing, living expression of the 'transvaluation of all values'. Huszar (1945: 268) accurately realised that "to Nietzsche the transvaluation of all values is not an intellectual problem – it is something to be experienced". This supports the proposed reasons for Nietzsche's abandonment of presenting the project as his major work. The Übermensch seen in this light brings Nietzsche's aim closely in line with Nāgārjuna's goal of Buddhahood, thus hinting at the possibility of an analysis of these ideas beyond the superficial differences discussed.

It is possible to understand why Nietzsche thought that the Übermensch had not yet come into existence. In order to see why this is, it is informative to see why the Übermensch remained a latent potential while for Nāgārjuna Buddhahood was an actual possibility. It can be assumed that while Nietzsche may have discussed individuals such as Wagner and Schopenhauer in glowing terms, he never personally met anyone who would satisfy the criteria of being, or approaching, the status of an Übermensch. On the other hand, it can be seen from the accounts of Nāgārjuna's life that he had many different teachers, both Brahman and Buddhist (Walleser 1990: 6-8, Zimmer 1951: 519). Furthermore, Nāgārjuna is recognised as a teacher of great knowledge who had many students. From this we can deduce that examples of individuals who had attained the status of Buddhahood were available to Nāgārjuna and that, because of his teaching authority, he had attained the status of Buddhahood. Opposed to this, Nietzsche did not have any such teacher and strove to understand the Übermensch on his own terms. Nietzsche's goal was not realised in anyone directly available to him. As a result Nietzsche felt that it had not been realised in anyone, yet it remained as a potential. This is an example of where the joint contextual/decontextual approach brings to light an issue that would otherwise remain hidden if either method was applied independently.

The ideal expressed by each thinker can also be seen to be partially a result of their philosophical backgrounds and methodologies. It was necessary for Nāgārjuna, according to his context, to use his dialectic to deconstruct the extremes of realism, of Abhidharma Buddhism, and anti-realism, whilst simultaneously advocating for the middle path. In constructing the middle path the dialectic defended Nāgārjuna's unity of dependent arising and emptiness. Similarly, Nietzsche, using his philological tools, then in vogue, traced through the history and development of various values. These tools developed into his genealogy, which allowed him to establish and support the view that so called progress had often led values and virtues to become ends in themselves[10].

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[10] It is my view that Nietzsche's genealogical method is an extension, and result, of his early foray into philology. Where philology examined the etymology of words, the genealogy

Through attacking this position, Nietzsche was able to develop the ideal of the Übermensch, which reinstated the central view that values are a means to establish, and strive to establish, something beyond our present state. Nietzsche sums up this sentiment as "all creatures have hitherto created something beyond themselves" (Z P: 3). Nietzsche's view is that "he [or she] who wants to create something beyond himself [or herself] has the purest will" (Z II: 15) and Nietzsche says, "I love him who wants to create beyond himself" (Z I: 17). The Übermensch, as an ideal whose impetus is to strive and create new values, is intimately tied to Nietzsche's methodology, which developed directly from his context.

It is necessary to delve further into Nāgārjuna's dialectic method to show how it both defeats his opposition while simultaneously defending the relationship Nāgārjuna saw between dependent arising and emptiness. While doing so, it will also be shown that any attempt to use Nietzsche to undermine Nāgārjuna's method make an attempt that is, at best, superficial. Copleston sums up Nāgārjuna's dialectic as stating that it is incorrect to assert that x is, x is not, x both is and is not, nor even x neither is nor is not. For Copleston (1982: 53) this functions as a "clearing away" that is the preparation for correctly apprehending reality. Conceiving of Nāgārjuna's dialectic as having primarily a "clearing away" function likens it to the Socratic *elenchus* method. This in turn would potentially open Nāgārjuna to the same criticism Socrates suffered under Nietzsche's view. The *elenchus* method, in the hands of Socrates, was used to show that commonsensical views of the world were based on beliefs that were contradictory.

The Socratic method, while clearing away erroneous conceptions of the world in order to prepare for 'real knowledge', does not, by itself, propose or demonstrate a correct, or better, way to conceive of the world. Nietzsche's rejection of the Socratic method rests on his view that it is biased against, and

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examined the etymology of morals. Through reading Nietzsche chronologically it is possible to see that this philosophical method developed out of the sort of extension he attempted for the field of philology with *The Birth of Tragedy*.

denies, the qualities and capacities of nature that humans embody, those generally seen as nasty and evil, in preference of uniquely human capacities, namely rationality and happiness. Rather, Nietzsche argued, that "in reality there is no such" separation between "'natural characteristics and those called specifically 'human'" (*HC*: 187). Nietzsche valued both 'good' and 'evil' capacities because each is equally capable of providing a position from which to act and value life. If it were possible to show that Nāgārjuna's dialectical method denied one or more major sources of value, as the Socratic method does, then it would be possible to utilise Nietzsche's rejection of Socrates to dismiss Nāgārjuna.

However, the Nāgārjunian dialectic does not fall prey to the criticism of the Socratic *elenchus*. The Nāgārjunian dialectic, unlike the Socratic, is intimately tied to two notions of truth. The two notions of truth, dependent arising and emptiness, are, for Nāgārjuna, intimately connected, for "without depending on the conventional truth, the meaning of the ultimate [truth] cannot be taught" (*MK* XXIV § 10) and "that which is dependent origination is explained to be emptiness" (*MK* XXIV § 18). Nāgārjuna is dissuaded from a strictly realist account of reality where emptiness is posited and similarly against a strictly antirealist account where dependent arising is posited. As both emptiness and dependent arising are two views of the same reality, it is possible, according to Nāgārjuna's method to stave off attacks from both groups while maintaining the middle path between both extremes. As a result Nāgārjuna's dialectic, unlike the Socratic, attempts to prepare the way for 'real knowledge' without denying the pragmatic value of conventional reality. This entails "all positive conceptual representations of reality" (Copleston 1982: 58), which maintains a position from which to act and create value. This, in turn, makes it possible to see that a superficial analysis perceives a great deal of distance between Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche, whereas a fuller analysis closes this gap, showing these two thinkers to be closer than previously thought.

A comparative analysis that ventures beyond the superficial differences shows where similarities between philosophical systems are. However, there should be no intention to overlook or even reconcile real differences when

they occur. One such real difference between the methodologies of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche will be shown. If we accept Raju's (1971: 128) claim that the "aim of Nāgārjuna is to show that nothing positive or negative can be asserted of reality". This differs from Nietzsche whose aim was to show that both positive and negative aspects of reality intimately work together, not against each other, to shape our understanding of the world. In Nietzsche's early works the focus is on the contingent existence of contrary values and develops in his later works into the view of the world being beyond good and evil.

Both the early and later positions of Nietzsche by themselves seem to disagree with Nāgārjuna, in that Nietzsche's early work proposed the unity of the multiple aspects within the world and later proposed a world without positive or negative aspects. It must be recognised that both thinkers are tackling a similar issue from different points. Nāgārjuna was taking issue with the unity of ultimate reality and conventional reality whereas Nietzsche was taking issue with the conceptualisation of conventional reality. Furthermore, Nāgārjuna's position can be expanded to include Nietzsche's position by realising that the early and late positions make the same point from different positions and as such are akin to the two truths. Contrary to this, Nietzsche's position does not conceive of the relation between conventional and ultimate reality as Nāgārjuna's position does. This means that a real difference between the thinkers does occur. However, it would not have been possible to examine this if the superficial differences were not seen for what they are, that is mistaking something superficial for something real.

By acknowledging that superficial differences exist, and not assuming them to be real, comparative philosophy is able to proceed to a deeper and closer analysis of philosophical systems than has previously been possible. By examining key ideals from separate philosophical systems, such as the example of Buddhahood and the Übermensch, and distinguishing between superficial and real differences, it is possible to expand the study further into the works of the thinkers compared in order to see how similar or different they really are.

Throughout this chapter it has been shown that many seemingly irreconcilable differences between two philosophical systems are merely superficial. When treated as being irreconcilable, such differences halt any further possible analysis of the material compared. This may be somewhat obvious and methodologically insignificant at this time. However, as this work progresses it will be seen that the points of difference raised here, in acknowledging them to be superficial, become significant as they become the groundwork to a deeper comparison.

Also, throughout the chapter the joint contextual/decontextual method of analysis has been utilised. Following on from the discussion in the first chapter, it has been shown that either method, independent of the other, unnecessarily limits the analysis of the material.

Nowhere is it claimed that comparative philosophers have been mistaking superficial differences for real ones. However, as was shown in the first chapter, discussions of comparative methodology do not distinguish between superficial and real differences, and in turn overlook the function of superficial differences. It is necessary to observe the superficial differences because they open the way and explore what similarities or real differences may exist between the philosophical systems compared. The next chapter, focusing on similarities and congruencies, builds on the clarification made within this chapter of what constitutes a superficial difference in order to examine what, if any, underlying similarities and congruencies there are between philosophical systems now that it has been shown that some differences are merely superficial.

Chapter 3 – Similarities and Congruencies

In continuing with the case study of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche, this chapter will elaborate on some of the similarities hinted at previously. The similarities and congruencies are so diverse and numerous that this chapter does not intend to provide a definitive comparison, nor is it possible within the scope of this work. Rather, the intention of this chapter is to show the application of one aspect of the method of comparative philosophy advocated throughout this work. The comparison made within this chapter is broad, ranging from the fundamentals of Nāgārjuna's and Nietzsche's worldviews to their conceptions of language, as well as including analyses of free will, determinism, epistemology, ontology, suffering and pain, morality and the charge of nihilism levelled at both. All of this will suffice to show how the comparative method presented throughout this work is able to analyse similarities and congruencies between philosophers and their works not readily evident using other methods of comparative philosophy.

It can be seen from both Nietzsche's early and late works that, according to him, the world is fundamentally unified. That is, there is an interconnection that precedes the differentiation of multiple things. Within his early works, especially those dealing with the Greeks, Nietzsche continually takes up the idea that "all things are one" (*BT* § 1, *PTG* § 3), placing emphasis on the interconnection. It is because of the prominence of this idea, within the pre-Platonic philosophers such as Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Anaxagoras, that Nietzsche responds positively to it in *PTG*. For instance, it is the artistic representation of this "primal unity" that distinguishes Attic tragedy (*BT* § 1). With respect to his later work the conception of the world as a unity is prominent within both the will-to-power as well as the eternal return. Nietzsche treats the will-to-power as a unifying principle to which the multiplicity of things becomes subservient. Nietzsche presents the world as will-to-power, where the multiplicity of things, the world, is governed and unified by the principle of the will-to-power.

This is analogous to the relation between *Brahman* and *ātman* within the Hindu teaching, in that if one realises their *ātman* they in turn are in harmony with *Brahman* and any action that is in accordance with this realisation is accomplished with the authority of *Brahman*, or in other words the action is carried out with the force that can only come from the unity of the existent. This analogy would not be lost on Nietzsche, it is an area that he was familiar with and affirms his views of unity.

On the other hand, the eternal return, too, unifies the existent multiplicity, as all is bound by this universal law, as if all were just one interacting with itself. As Zarathustra, in grappling with the eternal return, questions, "how could there be an outside-of-me" to which he responds, "there is no outside" (*Z* III: 13 § 2). This question and answer, arising as it did as a result of the eternal return, shows that by realising his true nature Zarathustra came to understand that within unity there is no delineating of an "outside" to which the inside is other than or separate from[1]. With no distinction between the inside and outside an understanding of the true nature of the individual is at the same time an understanding of the true nature of the world. It can be seen that the absolute unity of the existent is fundamental to Nietzsche's conception of the world.

In the work of Nāgārjuna there are two possible approaches that lead to the realisation of unity. Within Nāgārjuna's philosophy dependent arising/emptiness can be understood from different angles. From one angle dependent arising/emptiness can be treated as an epistemological claim. If

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[1] On this, Stambaugh (1991: 24) wrote that for Nietzsche "it is a conception of fate, destiny, and necessity not as something outside or above us to which we are subject, but as something *within* us, as our innermost being". Following on from the above interpretation, it is correct to say that for Nietzsche fate is not a strictly 'outside' phenomenon to which our inside is subject. Yet it is equally incorrect to assert that fate is solely an 'inside' phenomena. As seen with Zarathustra's assertion about the inside/outside boundary it would be more correct to say that fate, as either eternal return or will-to-power, encapsulates all that is and to feel that there is a 'subject', an 'inside', an 'I' which is bound to, yet in some way separate from, this cosmic principle is *the* mistake from which all other mistakes about Nietzsche's conception of the nature of existence arise.

treated in this manner all the things that can be known conventionally are dependently arisen and by virtue of the fact that knowledge of any particular thing cannot be divorced from all other things there is a common unity between all that can be known. Nāgārjuna wrote that "[there is] no object of knowledge unless it is being known ... but the knowing consciousness does not exist without [its object]", concluding that "knowledge and the object of knowledge do not exist by own-being" (*Loc* § 10). With no separation between the knower and the known, it follows that as conventional differentiation has no essential existence the thing known as well as the knower are united. Nāgārjuna also states that "when asked if the beginning is known, the great sage said 'no'" (*MK* XI § 1), concluding that "all entities are without a prior limit" (*MK* XI § 8). If all entities are without beginning then we must admit that they are in some way connected and thus unified by those interconnections. Furthermore, according to the ultimate truth the world of things is empty. This means that all things are inherently empty and as such all that exists is united by virtue of their emptiness. Thus epistemologically dependent arising/emptiness can be seen to have, at its foundation, a metaphysical unity.

It is also important to note that when the epistemological aspect of the doctrine of dependent arising/emptiness is analysed it makes no claim to the ontological reality that is appended. This opens the way to an examination of dependent arising/emptiness as an ontological claim. Treated ontologically, dependent arising/emptiness again makes an explicit claim of a fundamental unity. If all that exists is dependently arisen then on the level of conventional truth then dependent arising unites that which exists through the process of dependent arising. As Nāgārjuna wrote "one different thing depends on another for its difference ... it is not tenable for that which depends on something else to be different from it" (*MK* XIV § 5) with the result that "it is also not tenable that there is difference" (*MK* XIV § 4). That is, difference is not tenable from the perspective of ultimate truth, i.e. emptiness, and similarly dependent arising, i.e. conventional truth, when treated as a cosmic or metaphysical principle. In this discussion of unity we must clarify our position. In discussing Nāgārjuna on unity it is not being asserted that all things are

one, for that would be to posit a self existent, independently originated entity. Rather, we are asserting the unity that, in a sense, precedes oneness, that is, if you will pardon the expression, the unity of zero. While somewhat awkward, it can be seen that it is not absurd. From zero all things may be drawn out, while it itself is no 'thing', in the sense that we can get one if, and only if, we accept negative one at the same time. Both one and minus one arise dependently, neither have self existence, and when observed correctly are no more or less than zero. Thus, it is in this sense that unity in Nāgārjuna is being discussed.

The establishment of a particular 'thing' is achieved through its differentiation from other 'things', but as Nāgārjuna pointed out it will not be separate from what it is differentiated against. All things are intimately bound together without real separation, thus conventional truth requires unity. According to ultimate reality all is united by virtue of its inherent emptiness, as Nāgārjuna wrote, "empty things are born from empty things" (*Bod* § 63). If this is not enough, De Jong (1972: 8) has aptly pointed out that "the Madhyamika are monists, not in the sense of a unique monistic reality but in the sense of a unique principle of explanation, which excludes all real plurality", hence unity as an intrinsic aspect of their worldview.

The claim of unity applies equally to Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence and will-to-power as each is a "unique principle of explanation" excluding all real plurality[2]. It is important to note that while dependent arising and emptiness appear to be two separate unique principles of explanation "emptiness (*Śūnyatā*) is defined as equivalent to dependent coarising" (Robinson 1972: 326) and are thus two sides of the same coin, both professing unity. However, whatever way dependent arising/emptiness is examined, it is possible to see unity at its foundation. It could be stated, by

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[2] This does not contradict perspectivism in that it does not deny a plurality of positions on a personal level. Rather, it is confirmation of the unity in which all perspectives exist.

way of analogy, that emptiness as "absolute is 'necessary' Being, that which must be, which cannot not be, and which for that very reason is unique" and that dependent arising as "infinite is 'free' Being, which is unlimited and which contains all that can be, and which for that very reason is total" (Schuon 2005: 310). While this is not a typical reading of Nāgārjuna, it does lead to an interesting conclusion.

Emptiness, in that emptiness is itself empty, is absolute, in that it is self-contained, unique, and necessary. If emptiness was not self-contained, then emptiness itself would not be empty. If it was not unique, that would mean that there was something like it, thus independent from it. If it was not necessary, then not everything would be empty because it did not have to be. All three of these conclusions are absurd, thus, we may say, emptiness is self-contained, unique, and necessary. Emptiness, as unique and necessary, unifies all that is empty. Dependent arising, covering all that has, does, and will arise, is unlimited, in what it covers, and is thus total. Being total, dependent arising is infinite and unifies all that arises. The absolute and infinite are inseparable in the same manner that emptiness and dependent arising are linked. Thus, according to this reading, from either angle, unity can be seen to function within the work of Nāgārjuna. From this it is evident that unity is a principle common to both Nāgārjuna's and Nietzsche's philosophies.

By acknowledging that the world of multiplicity is underpinned by unity, both Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche can be seen to be making claims about determinism. Of the two thinkers it is more obvious that Nietzsche's eternal return is an explicit doctrine of determinism. With a finite number of particles existing within infinite time endlessly moving from one permutation to another it is apparent that each particular permutation must both follow a necessary sequence as well as repeating said sequence time and time again, "it shall return ... *not* to a new life or a better life or a similar life: [it] shall return eternally to this identical and selfsame life" (*Z* III: 13 § 2). The "it" referred to here is any and all specific combination of particles or permutation. Thus,

while we may perceive that free will exists, this is due to our lack of ability to grasp the true nature of the world.

Yet, while Nietzsche openly embraces the deterministic nature of the universe, he does not feel that this is a reason for despair, nor is the eternal return a pessimistic or nihilistic doctrine. For Nietzsche there are two options to overcome a defeatist response to the eternal recurrence. An example of kind of response is Danto's (1987: 48) calling the whole idea "nauseating". His reason for this is that knowledge of the eternal return "could, of course, change nothing" and that such knowledge leads to "cosmic boredom" (Danto 1987: 48). While knowledge of the eternal return will ultimately change nothing, the idea (even as a necessary fiction) is meant to give a reason, and position, to act from and, in doing so, avoids the "despair with life" Danto (1987: 48) sees as characteristic of both Nietzsche's philosophy and the Indian view of life. Either, we can, in blissful ignorance, choose to believe that we still have free will or, as Nietzsche prefers, we can embrace it openly, crying out like Zarathustra "I love you, O Eternity" (Z III: 13 § 2), with such fervour that we experience *amour fati*, love of fate. The consequence of this would be that we accept the predetermined nature of the universe, ignorant of what will actually happen, and must continue to strive towards our, so-called, 'chosen' destination, accepting, as necessary, all the pitfalls along the way.

This determinism is a stricter more calculated form of an idea that Nietzsche developed within his early thoughts. In an early work Nietzsche stated that what we designate as uniquely 'human' qualities, in this case free will, as opposed to merely 'animal' qualities, in this case their reactive and determinable nature, have "grown together inextricably" (*HC*: 187) or we may say "everything forever has its opposite along with it" (*PTG* § 5). To say that the qualities that raise us above the animals are 'good' and that for us to have the qualities that we relegate to animal nature as 'bad' is a fallacy and a result of our inability to realise that this created dichotomy is really a harmony and unity of all such qualities. Thus, determinism plays a crucial role within Nietzsche's philosophical system, following on from, and as a result of, fundamental unity.

Within Nāgārjuna's philosophical system we can see determinism in a subtler position. Before we proceed with this analysis, it must be admitted that discussions of free will do not enter Buddhist thinking because of the absence of the notion of will. However, the intention is not to comment on Nāgārjuna, rather to engage in the kind of conversation proposed by Garfield (2002: 169) to see if these views have any bearing or consequences for us. It will be shown that determinism is evident within both epistemological and ontological interpretations of the dependent arising/emptiness principle. Within the ontological interpretation determinism becomes apparent by examining successive states. By state it is here meant the occurrence, position and relationship between all existent things at one given moment. At any given moment all existent things are intimately tied together because they are dependently arisen. Yet, if this is the case then any two successive moments must depend on each other for their existence, one being unable to exist without the other and vice versa. Therefore, we must conclude that states too dependently arise. This is something that the Buddha realised in that as a result of the principle of dependent arising "his death was initiated when he was born in this world, an occurrence over which he had no complete control" (Kalupahana 1994: 92) However, if one state presupposes its successor and is presupposed by its predecessor then we could say that one state determines the next.

If the principle of dependent arising/emptiness is treated as an epistemological claim then it does hint at the possibility of a non-deterministic result. By treating dependent arising/emptiness as making an epistemological claim the focus shifts to psychological states. Like its ontological counterpart, successive psychological states are determined by the states preceding it. No particular psychological state has independent existence and is empty of the ability to initiate action. In one sense Nirvāṇa, or liberation, can be considered an "absence of constraint" (Kalupahana 1994: 91). Liberation would then be a release from the deterministic and limited nature of unenlightened thought. This would then hint at the possibility of real action, real in the sense that it has causative value, in that it is unconstrained, rather than being merely

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consequential, that is, depending on the state that preceded it. Unenlightened thought is the source of suffering because it is the result of "mental defilements and ignorance" (Tachikawa 1997: 19). Successive psychological states are the consequence of previous states within unenlightened thought because of one's ignorance about any particular state.

Understanding, and thus liberation, allows for a free, or unconstricted, response to dependently arisen phenomena. This means that one has the ability to act rather than merely react. The experience of suffering, i.e. the psychological state, is intimately tied to the degree of understanding, i.e. the epistemological state. Yet, this would be blurring ontological and epistemological boundaries. Thought free from attachment does not result in independent action. Liberation is freedom and "freedom pertains both to human knowledge and understanding and to human behaviour" with the result that "the first form of freedom is a necessary condition for the second" (Kalupahana 1994: 91). Freedom of human knowledge and understanding means unconditioned reflection on one's actions, which, in turn, results in unconditioned behaviour.

Liberation is possible through understanding the dependently arisen nature of the world. In order to understand this, it is necessary to develop a psychological state free of attachment. Whether or not this is actual freedom, or merely as close as one may come, is contentious, placing further doubts on the achievement of an individual initiating action, as the freedom of action depends on the freedom from attachment. Thus, we may extrapolate from Nāgārjuna that, as it remains unachievable to become unattached physically, determinism has a large role while its implications remain implicit.

To follow these ideas on dependent arising and the eternal return, while a minor digression from the proceeding, shows how these two ideas are almost a reflection of the same principle. A commentator on the eternal return wrote, "for Nietzsche, eternity, the eternal return of the Same, meant 'there is no end' ... in the sense that it *endures* on and on without ever encountering anything to stop it" (Stambaugh 1972: 3) and "there is no 'once and for all', neither in

time nor outside it" (Stambaugh 1972: 4). The eternal return presupposes a finite quantity of material and "if finitude is understood to mean impermanence, eternal return is that which gives permanence to Becoming" (Stambaugh 1972: 13). Nietzsche's idea derived from Heraclitus who profoundly affirmed Becoming and realised that Becoming itself is free from judgement, as Nietzsche has him say "not the punishment of what has come-to-be did I see, but the justification of that which is coming-into-being" (*PTG* § 5), the ramifications of which are within Nietzsche's moral outlook. In light of this interpretation we can say that there is no 'once and for all' within dependent arising as it is a doctrine of continuing and everlasting unfolding of events and their constituents.

For those who are subject to them, both dependent arising and the eternal return are without a goal or end. The impermanence of the 'things' they each influence is the result of a common lack of teleology. Both doctrines give permanence to Becoming by virtue of their all-encompassing nature, which describes the constant flux without completion. This is true of dependent arising, if examined in isolation. Buddhism is thoroughly teleological, as it is a quest for Buddhahood and *Nirvāṇa*, the cessation of *samsara*. Similarly, the teleological aspect of Nietzsche's work is the arrival of the Übermensch. Thus, we could say that Buddhahood saves one from the "abyss" of dependent arising, drawing another similarity between these two ideal. Again, this indicates to the fundamental unity, common to both doctrines, expressed as permanent Becoming. Yet, while Stambaugh's views can be affirmed this far we must draw the line, as a result of the commonality between the doctrines shown here, when it is asserted, "no one ever, in the West or in the East, has ever made such a statement" as the eternal recurrence and concludes that "Nietzsche's thought is unique" (Stambaugh 1972: 5). While Stambaugh's focus was not on comparative issues we must admit that this claim is, at best, naïve, especially with regard to the method of comparative philosophy argued for through this work. Putting these comments aside, it still remains that there is some degree of congruence between dependent arising and the eternal return.

Another similarity can be shown through an analysis of the role of suffering and pain within Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche. It becomes possible to see that both thinkers see pain as being intimately tied to the freedom from suffering. The focus is here placed on a distinction between pain, as a given and necessary result of interaction with the world, and suffering, which is the desire to be free from pain. Nāgārjuna begins with the Buddhist truth that "this life is 'a world of suffering', and it has, as its main cause, suffering" (*Suh* § 114); Nietzsche asserts that suffering's existence is something that he has experienced firsthand with one commentator writing that "since the time of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche upheld the unmodified insight that profound suffering accompanies our life" (Takeda 2001: 101). While both thinkers begin with the existence of suffering, Nāgārjuna proposes liberation from it whereas Nietzsche proposes that we engage with it so that it may be transvalued. This, then, would appear to show that the role of suffering has opposing functions in each of these thinkers.

However, it can be seen that while the form may differ, the intended outcome of Nāgārjuna's and Nietzsche's views on suffering are closely aligned. As both philosophical systems accept the determined nature of the world, both systems concede that what happens within the world proceeds irrespective of the preferences, beliefs, or actions of anything within it. It can be seen that for both thinkers suffering occurs when we desire the world to proceed differently to the way it actually does. Suffering arises as a result of our inability to accept the determined nature of the world. Thus, both Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche agree both on the occurrence and source of suffering.

In order to get a deeper understanding of the role of suffering it is necessary to show how Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche each propose to deal with the problem of suffering. At its base suffering is psychological, as a result of attachment (Nāgārjuna) or as a result of one's value system (Nietzsche). Yet, Nāgārjuna seeks liberation from suffering so that it may cease while Nietzsche seeks its transvaluation so that we may strive higher, presumably closer to the Übermensch. While Nāgārjuna proceeds by reducing attachment in order to reduce suffering, Nietzsche suggests that we increase our suffering so that

we may know it better. However, it would be wrong to assert that Nietzsche's "affirmation of life is thus nothing other than a strong affirmation of profound suffering" (Takeda 2001: 101). Rather, Nietzsche writes "sickness is a powerful stimulant – but one has to be healthy enough for it" (*WLN* 18[11]). Sickness in this sense is a combination of pain and suffering, which is why it requires health, not of the physical kind but of the psychological kind.

For Nietzsche the sign of health is the ability to endure sickness, which is the ability to endure pain without suffering from it. While this may seem paradoxical it provides us with the greatest insight into Nietzsche's transvaluative process and his reason for saying, "who knows how much I am ultimately indebted ... to my protracted sickness" (*E* I § 6). Nietzsche is ultimately indebted to his sickness because through it he could learn the difference between pain and suffering, and how the former is necessary while the latter is self-created. This equivocation on 'suffering' carries beyond Nietzsche's work, it can be seen in Nishitani (1990: 52) writing that the love of fate for Nietzsche provided the means for "a self-transformation that overcomes suffering through suffering", and in Deleuze's (1983: 129) comment that "pain is a reaction" when in fact suffering is a reaction to pain.

Others have understood Nietzsche's intention without drawing out the dual role given to suffering in comments that suffering "is turned into a monster, wildly exaggerated, in order to make action necessary" yet "true suffering [i.e. pain], incidentally, is not projected elsewhere; it is the stimulus that causes authentic distress and provides the source of self-transcendence" (Ackermann 1990: 41). Another example is Wicks' (2002: 88-9) comment that Nietzsche and Buddha "would have made good friends" because "nothing impressed Nietzsche more than the transience of our daily world ... with its apparently senseless suffering" but that "Nietzsche wanted to live with the flame of suffering rather than extinguish it". If the distinction between pain and suffering were explicitly stated there would have been no separation between suffering and "true", "authentic" suffering. Also, one commentator noted the disdain for suffering, as it is used here, without the denial of pain in writing "Nietzsche has certainly a contempt for pity – that is, for sentimentalising over

one's own sufferings" (Coomaraswamy 1924: 116-17). Nietzsche even acknowledges the value of Buddhism as being "a hundred times more realistic than Christianity" because "it no longer says 'struggle against sin' but, duly respectful of reality, 'struggle against suffering'" (*A* § 20).

Before completely solving this puzzle it is necessary to turn and examine what Nāgārjuna is proposing to reduce. Nāgārjuna proceeds to reduce suffering, as it is unnecessary. This is "a world of suffering" whose "main cause" *is* attachment (*Suh* § 114). However, this is not to say that Buddhists propose to reduce all feeling with the aim to anaesthetise humanity, as it would undermine skilful living. Liberation from suffering frees the individual from unnecessary pain while leaving necessary pain untouched. We may extrapolate from the four truths, that pain is necessary because it informs us about the world, providing us a basis from which we can act, whereas, suffering does not inform us about the world or how to proceed within, it only how we construct our value system. This shows that Nietzsche is equivocating on the word suffering without distinction between suffering and pain, a distinction crucial to Buddhism. Nietzsche almost acknowledges the distinction between, and transformation of, pain into suffering, writing of the "reinterpretation of suffering as feelings of guilt, fear, and punishment" (*GM* III § 20). In doing so, Nietzsche feels that this enables us to transvalue suffering, realising that it informs us about the perceptions we impose on the world, thus we no longer suffer from it. The existence of suffering, and the necessity of pain, is integral to the work of both Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche. Both attempting to relegate suffering to its rightful place within the human condition, showing a further congruence.

From the above analysis it is possible to show that there is congruence between individuals who realise the dependently arisen nature of the world and individuals who accept the eternal return. Simply stated, these doctrines reduce anxiety, where upon realisation of these doctrines, the individual's psychological outlook becomes free of current, and devoid of the potential for future, anxiety.

This process, of the reduction of anxiety, is easily apprehended through an examination of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence and his gradual acceptance of it. While it was implicit in some of his earlier works, Nietzsche first explicitly presented the eternal recurrence by introducing it as "*the greatest weight*" (*GS* § 341). Nietzsche realised that if it "gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you" (*GS* § 341). Zarathustra, too, at first was presented with the eternal recurrence as a doctrine both ugly and heavy, a burden to bear for humanity. However, by *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche's attitude is lighter. This change in attitude is also captured in a letter in 1882 to Jacob Burckhardt where Nietzsche wrote, "I have reached a point at which I *live* as I *think*" (*SL* § 101). Gutmann (1954) documented this change calling it a "tremendous moment" in Nietzsche's philosophical development. The crush of the eternal recurrence is obvious and most commentators focus on this point, with Danto (1987: 48) finding it "nauseating" and Tanner (1994: 45) asserting that it "invests with a terrible weight what *does* happen". Hatab (2005: 2) confesses to "having been deeply challenged by this thought of eternal recurrence" and when faced with saying "Yes or No to life as actually lived" responds "I don't think I can measure up to saying Yes, but somehow I think I should". These commentators, to varying degrees, resist the change that may be brought about by the eternal recurrence and thus their comments can be seen to be in response to its crushing aspects.

The primary aspect of the crush being focused on here is the existential angst over the purpose to strive if everything is predetermined and lived repetitiously over. From Nietzsche acceptance of the eternal recurrence, we can posit that this acceptance changed how he was and allowed him to reach a point where his actions, in his own eyes, reflected his thoughts. This can be seen through the change in the disposition of Zarathustra, his maintaining the doctrine of eternal recurrence, and a change of focus away from its crushing aspects. It is for this reason that "Nietzsche understood his task of 'transvaluation of all values' in close connection with the 'thought of eternal return'" (Takeda 2001: 99). Ansell-Pearson (1992: 320) recognised the transformative aspect of the eternal return, writing that the Übermensch "is the person who has emerged from the experience of the riddle of return and affirmed the importance of its

teaching". The importance is, for this analysis, the reduction of anxiety. Nietzsche realised that those who came up against it would feel the crush, but, if they had the strength and forbearance, then they would be changed.

How the eternal recurrence reduces anxiety may still be unclear. We can see that anxiety generally arises when an individual's selfish desires are not realised in the manner they desired. Yet, the eternal recurrence tells us that we have already eaten, spent, purchased, and worn all that we ever will innumerable times over and will continue to eat, spend, purchase, and wear all that we ever will innumerable times more. All our provisions are catered for without increase or decrease. This means that selfish calculation, the cause of anxiety, is totally unnecessary. This is how the eternal recurrence will "change you as you are" (*GS* § 341). It is interesting to note that implicit in this realisation is a kind a freedom not previously discussed. Without anxiety one no longer suffers from existential angst. Here we may say that to accept the eternal return, or embody the doctrine of dependent arising, is to be *free* from existential anxiety.

After realising that the eternal recurrence reduces anxiety it is possible to see that the doctrine of dependent arising works in the same way. Realising that any particular thing depends on all other things for its existence means that all of one's provisions are bound to the totality of all things. Dependent arising, as a unique principle of explanation excluding "all real plurality" (De Jong 1972: 8), explains the multiplicity of 'things' according their interrelation with all other existents. This has the potential to crush anyone who attempts to calculate all things. That is, they would be overburdened because in order to determine their provisions they would have to include in the calculation all things in existence. The stress and anxiety involved in such a calculation would be too much for any individual. Yet, the contemplation of dependent arising rarely includes an analysis of its existential ramifications. There is safety in avoiding this sort of calculation and contemplation as it precludes the increase of anxiety.

If one was to delve into the ramifications of their interdependence, they may feel as if they have taken on the greatest weight, realising that, for one to gain anything, they must affect all things. Nāgārjuna avoids this sort of thinking and, in doing so, precludes any anxiety that would come as a result of one knowing that it is impossible for them to change all things. Nāgārjuna frequently used and discussed dependent arising within his works to correct one's understanding of causation (*MK* I), desire (*MK* VI), past and future time (*MK* XIX), etc, the result of which is a relinquishing of focus on and calculation of various things and types of things, such as one's provisions. The change in one's anxiety levels is brought about much more organically and faster. Both dependent arising and the eternal return have the same affect on anxiety. While both achieve this through different means, the result is the same.

Furthermore, by examining this similarity a real difference regarding the effectiveness of both doctrines has emerged. In precluding calculations of the kind mentioned, Nāgārjuna's method saves the individual from the crush of such calculation, whereas Nietzsche himself, along with others who have taken up his views, was deeply affected by the crush of the eternal return. This is a real difference, in that the former reduces anxiety while the latter induces anxiety which subsides as one works through it. This real difference would not have become apparent if the superficial differences had not been drawn out. If in our analysis of the eternal return we, like the scholars mentioned, has merely focused on the crushing aspect of the eternal return, we could not have seen how it changes the individual and reduces their anxiety, and thus would have been left with a merely superficial difference.

For Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche, their views on morality are founded on their acceptance of the existence of suffering. On examination it can be seen that both thinkers have two systems of ethics within each of their respective philosophies. Nāgārjuna, after admitting the existence of suffering, proposes that one should engage in activities that minimise the suffering of other creatures. Nāgārjuna advocates "ethical behaviour" (*Suh* § 4) emphasising that "you must make faultlessness, open-mindedness, mental clarity, and purity the basis of ethical behaviour" (*Suh* § 7) which in turn becomes "the

support of everything valuable" (*Suh* § 7). Ethical behaviour, according to Nāgārjuna, includes, but is not limited to, "charity" (*Suh* § 4), "gifts" (*Suh* § 6), "patience and tolerance" (*Suh* § 8), the honouring of one's parents (*Suh* § 9), and giving up "hurting, stealing, improper sex, lying, intoxicating drinks and obsession with eating" (*Suh* § 10) among other things. It follows from the previous comments regarding attachment, that such action can only be considered moral if it is sincere and selfless, for selfish action only perpetuates suffering.

Nietzsche, in accordance with his views on suffering, states "all morality allows the intentional infliction of harm ... when it is a matter of *self-preservation*" (*HAH* § 102) and even killing, stealing, or even lying are permissible for a moral being. The primary opposition to such action "is not 'egoism' and 'selflessness', but rather adherence to a tradition or law" (*HAH* § 96). Nietzsche wrote "those capacities of [the human] which are terrible and are viewed as inhuman are perhaps, indeed, the fertile soil from which alone all humanity, in feelings, deeds and works, can grow forth" (*HC:* 187). Nietzsche's reasoning for this is that seeming opposites occur in harmony within the world and to pursue one to the detriment of the other would result in one fighting against the natural order.

Furthermore, "we don't accuse nature of immorality" (*HAH* § 102). Since, according to Nietzsche, we are bound by the laws of nature it would be absurd to fight them and to do so would lead only to our detriment. With Nāgārjuna prohibiting certain behaviour and Nietzsche enjoining those very same actions it would appear that the moral systems of both thinkers are in opposition, yet both ensure the adherent's continued engagement with the world.

On further analysis both Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche, however, have a higher morality that is not encompassed by their dos and don'ts. This is the moral system of an enlightened being; for Nāgārjuna it is the moral being of Buddhahood and for Nietzsche it is the morality of the Übermensch. We may extrapolate, from Nāgārjuna's dialectic that, while there is the imperative to be

moral, the moral worth of any given action hinges on the circumstances that surround it. By this we mean that the validity of moral laws is not absolute. Harvey (2000: 46-7) writes that the criteria for separating virtuous from nonvirtuous actions includes the motivation behind the action as well as its direct effects and that in an action is based upon non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion then it can be considered virtuous. Thus, for one who understands the dependently arisen nature of existence, it is possible to envisage circumstances where lying or even theft be considered moral, contrary to Kant. In fact, the existence of a morality beyond good and evil is attested to by Harvey (2000: 44) where he states that there is a soteriological station "for whom both unwholesome and wholesome moral conduct (sīla) are said to be 'stopped' completely".

Similarity, the Übermensch is to a human as a human is to an animal as Nietzsche wrote, "[the human] is a rope, fastened between animal and Übermensch" (Z P: 4). Animals have no created values and are inferior to humans who have values. Yet, the values held by humanity are reactionary and outdated because, according to Nietzsche, humans have ceased to have the ability to evolve their values. One of the defining features of the Übermensch is the ability to create values. The superiority of the Übermensch is its ability to create moral values according to their necessity. The Übermensch here differs from slave morality in the sense that the former can accept the nature of birds of prey whereas the latter react against the birds of prey and "make the bird of prey *accountable* for being a bird of prey" (GM I § 13). This shows that the Übermensch, like one who has realised Buddhahood, has no absolute moral values, that is, no actions that are deemed to be always moral. Yet, both act according to circumstance, such that, irrespective of the circumstances, their actions must, by definition, always be considered moral.

It is also possible to see parallels between Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche in their views on language. Both thinkers show that while it is essential for communication, when language is taken as a means to apprehend the world it provides a misleading view of reality and is flawed in this manner. Nietzsche

wrote "the seduction of language (and of the fundamental errors of reason that are petrified in it) which conceive and misconceives all effects as conditioned by something that causes effects, by a 'subject'", concluding that "there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is merely a fiction added to the deed" (*GM* I § 13). Further noting, "our entire science still lies under the misleading influence of language and has not disposed of that little changeling, the 'subject'" (*GM* I § 13). Danto (1987: 99) succinctly captures this argument of the flaws of language in writing, "Nietzsche believed that the fact we have a subject-predicate grammar has misled us into believing that we live in a subject-predicate world". This is akin to the mistake of positing the existence of independent 'things' due to the fact that language requires separate 'things' for its content. This can be seen from the Mādhyamika School's views on language, that "the failure to distinguish between reality in itself and reality of names and forms is ignorance, which breeds suffering" (Puligandla 1975: 85). Martin (1991: 91) wrote, "Nāgārjuna's dialectical analysis of the common categories by which people understand existence carries radical implications, somewhat comparable to those of Nietzsche's philosophy" as both led to "the realisation that both everyday existence and the categories by which we comprehend it are self-contradictory and incoherent". In Nāgārjuna, this is so if one is attempting to assert independent existence of one of the categories, and, in Nietzsche, this is so if one's mode of valuation is inherently biased to one set of values over others. Thus, for both Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche, language, when used to apprehend reality, provides a misshapen view of reality and is a source of suffering.

It is now possible to examine a similarity between the way Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche have been discussed and interpreted. It will be seen that, while this approach is from an altogether different angle than the preceding, the methodology is consistent and yields interesting results. It is fruitful to examine the fact that both thinkers have been labelled nihilists. Tuck (1990: 31 – 37) details how and why, from various angles, Nāgārjuna and the Mādhyamikas were, in a sense, left to the dogs and accepted as nihilists without any attempted defence. There was a "consensus that Buddhist

philosophy had little relevance to the conclusions of the great European philosophers" (Tuck 1990: 35) and as a result the "Mādhyamika, commonly agreed to be the most nihilistic of all Buddhist schools, was ignored" (Tuck 1990: 36). Evidence of this is in the oft used phrase of Northrop (1946: 348 – 50) "the nihilistic Mahāyānistic Buddhism of Nāgārjuna", appearing on three consecutive pages. Part of this exclusion and tag of nihilism would have resulted from the early European Buddhist studies that drew from poorly translated texts. However, we may posit that part of the aversion to this alien doctrine is in its avoidance of reification, which is counter to much of continental philosophy and its discussions on historical dialectics, things-in-themselves, or the will-to-power, to name a few.

Nietzsche's relation to nihilism is somewhat more difficult to define and to detail it here would take us beyond the scope of this work. It will be sufficient to note that assertions such as "I commenced to undermine our *faith in morality*" (*Dp* § 2), "there are no moral phenomena at all, only a moral interpretation of phenomena" (*BGE* § 108), and that his assertion of the Übermensch is opposed to "Christians and other nihilists" (*E* III § 1) have led to commentaries that either disdain Nietzsche for his nihilism or champion him for it. Nietzsche's ambivalence towards nihilism is recognised and summed up by Hulin's (1991: 64) comment that "Nietzsche himself denounces nihilism, on the one hand, as the decay of the highest values of a culture … and on the other he proposes it as an enterprise to be undertaken, a path that must be climbed all the way to the end if the transvaluation of values is to have any chance of coming about". Irrespective of the truth of the claims against both Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche, both have been accused of nihilistic tendencies.

In order to determine if this label can be justifiably applied, nihilism must be clearly defined. If by nihilism it is meant "something like the total rejection of religious or moral principles" (Elman 1983: 672) then it is clear that both thinkers are not nihilistic. Nāgārjuna, in his smaller treatises, makes comments such as "there is no moral defilement equal to lust " (*Lugs*: 25) and "a short life come through killing, much suffering through harming, through stealing poor resources, through adultery enemies" (*Rat* § 14). In his major

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treatise Nāgārjuna states "self restraint and benefiting others with a compassionate mind is the Dharma" (*MK* XVII § 1). This clearly shows that Nāgārjuna does not deny all values.

Nietzsche's work *Daybreak* has the subtitle 'thoughts on the prejudices of morality', which shows that, while he may have disagreed on the application of certain moral principles, he gave credence to their existence through acknowledging them. Furthermore, the failed attempt at a 'transvaluation of all values' shows that Nietzsche did not intend a "total rejection" of moral values.

In further support of Nietzsche as non-nihilistic it is possible to see why his proposed total transvaluation necessarily failed. Nietzsche had intended to write a several volume opus dedicated to the topic, of which *The Antichrist* was to be the first book. Yet, if Nietzsche had succeeded in capturing the transvaluation of all values in black and white, once it had been completed, it would instantaneously begin to stagnate and require itself to be transvalued. This is why it is necessary that this task failed and why the moral outlook of the Übermensch would succeed because, as a process, values can be continuously transvalued. The abandonment of a 'transvaluation of all values' encapsulated between two covers and the continued adherence to the Übermensch is further evidence that Nietzsche never intended to reject moral values altogether and is not a nihilist in this sense. Some would go so far as to assert "neither Nietzsche nor Nāgārjuna, however, concluded that there was no world; neither affirmed nothingness" (Elman 1983: 685-86). Thus, no argument against Nāgārjuna or Nietzsche could support the idea that either thinker was a nihilist in the sense of a total denial of moral value.

However, there is evidence to justify claims that both Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche adhere to a weaker type of nihilism. If we accuse each thinker of "a nihilism of indifference with respect to what we have become" (Havas 1995: 1), that is, they denied the validity of the prevalent values, the values we have come to embody, or a nihilism that "no longer the devaluation of life in the name of higher values but rather the devaluation of the higher values themselves (Deleuze 1983: 148), where the necessity of life is not challenged,

but the values we use to evaluate life are, then this label has credence. To the decadent and the materialist, Nāgārjuna must be a nihilist as he denies the value of wealth and possessions, seeing greater wealth in virtuous actions. As he states, "generosity is the best friend, and the Dharma is the most precious gem" (*Lugs*: 26), "it is wise economy to give alms, knowing that when we pass, our actions, like our property, abide" (*Lugs*: 45), and again that "giving alms which do no harm to others results in pleasure which cannot be carried away by flood, nor burned by fire, nor stolen by thieves" (*Lugs*: 47).

For those who see a strict divide between right and wrong, Nietzsche, too, is a dangerous nihilist. Nietzsche noticed that "if we speak of *humanity*, it is on the basic assumption that it should be that which *separates* [the hu]man from nature and is his [or her] mark of distinction" adding that "in reality there is no such separation" (*HC*: 187). The title of Nietzsche's work *Beyond Good and Evil* reflects a recurrent theme within his philosophy, that opposites are not mutually exclusive or separate and that if one penetrates past this appearance then they will realise that seeming opposites are intimately linked. Nihilism is here a destroyer of values, so that they can be rebuilt, rather than a denier of values, that is a nihilism that "may be both creative and destructive: destroying sick values in favour of healthy ones" (Rudolph 1969: 40).

Both thinkers challenge assumptions and, in doing so, both Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche, each in their own way, show how well established values may be toppled, and seemingly contrary values may be established on a firmer basis. Nāgārjuna's dialectic destroys extremes while paving the middle path, whereas Nietzsche's approach is to smash values in order to test them, as if with a tuning fork. For this reason, it can be argued that Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche are nihilists. This shows a further congruence between Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche, namely, that if it is argued that either thinker is nihilistic, then both are nihilistic for the same reasons and, if it is argued that either thinker is not nihilistic, then both are not nihilistic for the same reasons.

Throughout this chapter it has been argued that both Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche propose similar or congruent conclusions. It should be repeated

that it was possible to show these similarities and congruencies only after first examining what are only superficial differences. Perspectivism, while it has not been explicitly discussed within this chapter, is evident throughout the analysis. If perspectivism was not accepted it would not be necessary to accept that Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche are in anyway discussing similar things. In accepting the common limits of all perspective we can see that both thinkers are frequently commenting on what the limits of all possible perspectives are, especially in the discussions of Buddhahood and the Übermensch. This is not to say that both thinkers are saying the same thing or that both draw the same conclusions. By analysing where these two thinkers confirm each other it is now possible to see where they really do differ and it is the real differences between the works of these thinkers that is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 4 – Real Differences

Previously, attention has been given to Nāgārjuna's idea of Buddhahood and Nietzsche's concept of the Übermensch with the intention to show how both thinkers posit a stage of human development beyond mundane existence. While it has been shown that there are some interesting commonalities between these two ideas, especially in their respective moral positions, it should have become apparent that there are differences between these ideals that are not merely superficial. One of the primary differences is the response and role each has with regard to the rest of (unenlightened) humanity and even all of nature.

Those who have attained the status of Buddhahood take on a drastically different position in society to those who have become an Übermensch. This difference is a result of each thinkers approach to compassion and service. It is recounted that at one point Nāgārjuna, whilst travelling the path to enlightenment, had "little compassion ... towards living beings" (Walleser 1990: 9). In order to rectify this, his teacher set him the task of establishing 108 monasteries and 1000 temples (Walleser 1990: 9). By building temples where others could come for their devotions Nāgārjuna was placed in the service of others allowing him to erase his own egotistical drive and develop compassion for those whom he served. The egotistical drive, being self-serving, divides the world according to self and other, with preference given to self. The subsequent hierarchy of values views the ego as, somewhat, independent of other things, in as far as it gives itself preference. This independence of the egotistical drive, one's 'I', is contrary to the doctrine of dependent arising. By eradicating the independence of the self it is possible to affirm the interdependent nature of the world. By serving others with compassion and the self-serving nature of the ego is reduced, if not stamped out. The further the attitudes of compassion and service towards others are cultivated, the more the principle of dependent arising is affirmed. Thus, compassion and service are crucial for the bodhisattva's interaction with society.

While Nietzsche had not attained the status of Übermensch it is possible to glean from his writings that the Übermensch did not serve humanity, or at least not in the same way. Zarathustra does try to show the masses that there is a stage of development beyond ourselves, but this is not in service to humanity. Indeed his whole "down-going" is out of deep felt need as Zarathustra states he is "like a bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to take it" (*Z* P: 1) and speaking to the people he begins with "*I teach you the Übermensch*" (*Z* P: 3). In this sense the Übermensch serves as a lamppost, with which humanity can mark a position ahead of us, and to which we can strive towards. Even more startling is Zarathustra's outright rejection of service to others. This is apparent when Zarathustra, who had climbed higher than anyone previously, is greeted by the "higher men" (*Z* IV: 11) who had reached his cave. These individuals were striving to attain the status of Übermensch. Zarathustra grew impatient with them and, rather than guiding them higher, decided to leave them as they were in preference for his own striving higher. He was "overcome by a little repugnance and scorn towards his visitors" (*Z* IV: 17 § 1) which grew into "*pity for the Higher Man*" (*Z* IV: 20). This shows a great difference between Buddhahood and the Übermensch in their interaction with others in that the former serves other while the latter is self-serving.

A further difference between Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche is their responses to compassion. For Nāgārjuna, compassion and service are connected by the fact that the more both are cultivated, the more one forgets personal satisfaction, which in turn allows the interdependent nature of existence to be realised. This is confirmed by Harvey (1990: 209) who wires that when we see that "compassion is the aspiration that being be free from suffering" it follows that its development results in "undermining the attachment to 'I'". For Nietzsche, however, the focus is on pity rather than compassion. Nietzsche felt that "*your greatest* dangers" are "in pity" (*GS* § 271). The German word *Mitleid*, which has been rendered as both compassion and pity, is composed of *mit*, meaning 'with', and *leiden*, meaning 'to suffer'. This may explain Nietzsche's contempt of established morality in favour

of a spontaneous value creation. To adhere to a moral code is to unnecessarily limit oneself because, in one's interaction with others, there is a limit on morally permissible actions. Thus, to show compassion is to suffer merely because one is with others.

It has been noted that, as the creative will is crucial for transvaluing values, "pity is anathema to Zarathustra because it encourages weakness and robs mankind of its creative will" (Grundlehner 1986: 214). Nietzsche wrote that suffering "is incomprehensible and inaccessible to almost everyone" because it is incredibly personal and that pity "strips away from the suffering of others whatever is distinctively personal" (*GS* § 338). This shows that, for Nietzsche, pity is superfluous and destructive in as far as it inhibits spontaneous value creation. It is superfluous in that pity has no benefit for either the pitier or the sufferer and it is destructive because it undermines the value of pain for understanding one's position in and interaction with the world. As the Übermensch is not in the service of humanity, as the bodhisattva is, Nietzsche feels that to reach down and aid others in their struggle for realisation, is a hindrance and distraction from one's own struggle. Thus, Nietzsche differs from, and almost opposed to, Nāgārjuna with regard to pity and compassion.

With the difference between pain and suffering in mind, it is interesting to see how each thinker would potentially, comment on the other's work. Nietzsche would argue that one would not reach enlightenment by pitying others as it masquerades such feelings behind the mask of service and communal benefit. On this point, Nāgārjuna would probably agree, yet would point out that it is specifically action committed without sincerity that has no soteriological value. Nietzsche's views denying the existence of selfless actions would also weigh heavily on his criticism as he wrote "a weakened, thin, extinguished personality that denies itself is no longer fit for anything good" and that "'selflessness' has no value" (*GS* § 345). Nietzsche also ties selflessness to morality writing "'selflessness' – that is what was hitherto called *morality*" (*E*: D § 2). From this it

is clear that in Nietzsche's work morality, in as far as it extends compassion towards others, unnecessarily limits each individual's striving higher and, thus, "has no value".

In response, Nāgārjuna would question the value of the Übermensch and challenge that if it is as yet unrealised then it never will be. It is conceivable that Nāgārjuna would apply his dialectic to the Übermensch. Nāgārjuna's statement on time, that if "the future depended on the past, then ... the future would have existed in the past" (*MK* XIX § 1). As the Übermensch is, as yet, unrealised then, without prior existence, the Übermensch will not exist in the future, for "how could the present and the future be dependent on it" (*MK* XIX § 2). Furthermore, the possibility of the Übermensch could not arise for "without depending on the past ... the future could not exist" (*MK* XIX § 3) and the Übermensch, without prior existence, would not have future existence. Nāgārjuna could mount a further argument against the existence of the Übermensch. Namely, Nietzsche's insistence on the 'will-to-power' and 'self-overcoming' affirms an illusory individual identity. In this respect, the Übermensch is as far as possible removed from Buddhahood, not because they are 'selfish' or 'immoral', but because the ideal is founded on ignorance. Furthermore, it is conceivable that Nāgārjuna would argue that Nietzsche's views are egotistical. In not showing compassion for other creatures, the Übermensch acts solely for their self, their 'I', as a result all of their actions are set up to reaffirm their ego. It seems that from Nāgārjuna's perspective that the Übermensch will be unrealisable as long as Nietzsche clings to and affirms the supposed value of the ego. Interestingly, as long as Nietzsche is opposed to compassion and service the Übermensch will remain an unrealised ideal.

There is a further possibility that the Übermensch marks a stage on the path to Buddhahood. At some point on the bodhisattva path one is going to be confronted with their limits and hindrances. For one to pass beyond these hindrances it would become necessary to complete the work prescribed by their

teacher. In this respect, one who is travelling towards, but has not yet reached, the status of Buddhahood could be considered selfish. They are too preoccupied with the illusory nature of their 'self' that they do not look beyond their 'self, becoming, to some degree, indifferent to others. It is in this sense that Nietzsche can be understood when he wrote "the masterpiece of the art of self-preservation – of *selfishness*" (*E*: II § 9). Nietzsche here acknowledges that selfishness is necessary so that one may climb higher rather than becoming absorbed by the needs of others, especially those with a similar struggle. At some point on the path to Buddhahood, the traveller on this path may appear to others as lacking in compassion, somewhat like the Übermensch. It is possible that this is where Zarathustra is at, as seen from his lack of concerned for the struggling of the 'higher men'. Growing beyond this point means having compassion without 'going down'. This is something Nietzsche did not conceive. This is why Nāgārjuna is teaching throughout all of his texts and is able to have compassion without it being a hindrance. If this is the case the difference between the Übermensch and Buddhahood is not a difference in kind but a real difference in status.

Another difference is in those who can potentially attain to the status of either Buddhahood or become an Übermensch. For Nāgārjuna, compassion is shown to all creatures. This is consistent with the bodhisattva ideal of raising sentient beings so that they may achieve enlightenment. Compassion for creatures is unanimous as all have the potential for enlightenment. Nietzsche's opposition to this is in his view that his work is a "prelude to a philosophy of the future" (*BGE* subtitle) and that the Übermensch is as yet unrealised (*Z* P: 3). Nietzsche aimed his ideas at the select few who, he thought, could attain to the higher status. One must admit that those who actually reach the bodhisattva ideal are, probably, as few as those Nietzsche felt could attain the status of an Übermensch. Yet, the belief in the latent potential within each member of humanity differs greatly between Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche with the former believing that every individual

has the potential to be a bodhisattva, while the latter believes that only a select few may become Übermensch.

Nāgārjuna continually refers back to others and one's engagement with them in proceeding along the path. He wrote, "whosoever honours his father and mother will become a praiseworthy one" (*Suh* § 9) stressing family ties; "those who speak with discretion are respected by mankind" (*Lugs*: 4) pointing to one's interaction with society; while "centres of doctrine established by the previous king, all temples and so forth, should be sustained as before" (*Rat* § 318) emphasises the responsibility of the ruling class to their subjects. This sample could be greatly expanded, but it succeeds in showing that, throughout Nāgārjuna's work, compassion for, and interaction with, others is essential. With Nietzsche this cannot be said. While Zarathustra can be seen to require interaction with others in his saying "like a bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to take it" (*Z* P: 1) his interaction challenges them. Zarathustra's challenge ostracizes his audience and they reject him, crying out "now we have heard enough of the tight-rope walker; let us see him, too" (*Z* P: 3). Zarathustra's challenge was reflected, the manner in which he spoke showed little consideration for those to whom he was speaking. It can be seen that Zarathustra recognised this, saying "I am not a mouth for these ears", but rather than seeing the fault within himself and striving to rectify it, his inconsiderate solution was to "shatter their ears to teach them to hear" (*Z* P: 5), showing no compassion for those he was trying to teach.

The difference in approach to compassion and service also manifests a difference of moral nature. In the previous chapter we examined the idea that both Buddhahood and the Übermensch, because of their ontological status, must be considered moral, irrespective of their actions. Yet, with regards to other creatures both, thinkers proceed in vastly different manners. Buddhahood, based as it is on compassion and service, would attempt to avoid conflict, as this creates disharmony and is often founded on some self-serving desire, meaning

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that it is contrary to dependent arising. One who has attained Buddhahood acts in accordance with necessity, that is, they act in cohesion with the way dependent arising unfolds in any given moment. Nāgārjuna asserts that "self restraint and benefiting others with a compassionate mind is the Dharma" (*MK* XVII § 1) and that "the holy, though destitute, do not discard moral virtue" (*Lugs*: 15). Here it is possible to see that compassion and consideration for others is the guiding force behind the actions of a bodhisattva.

One may not understand the actions of a bodhisattva, or may even feel that they were treated unfairly. Zimmer (1951: 483) confirms this, stating that "the Illumined Ones behave in a way that should be rather shocking and confusing to any sound thinker, who from habit and firm determination, is resolved to keep his [or her] feet on the ground". From the prior analysis of the qualities required to attain Buddhahood, it follows that those who have attained Buddhahood have only the best intentions, guiding others in the most productive and necessary manner available at any given moment, with actions that are "appropriate, effective, and not covertly self-seeking" (Harvey 1990: 121). Thus, the actions of a bodhisattva, while not appreciated or understood by all, may appear to be unfair by some but, on further reflection, can be seen to be the most fair and beneficial, as these interaction have the potential to further individuals along the path towards enlightenment, in fact "the Bodhisattva may even do a deed leading to hell, if this is a necessary part of helping someone" (Harvey 1990: 121). Furthermore, moral transgressions made by the less fortunate, while accepted by most of society, such as the poor stealing food, are not permissible to "the holy", irrespective of their circumstances, due to the status attained. Thus, Buddhahood is, at all times, an icon of moral perfection[1].

Nietzsche would reject the avoidance of conflict. For Nietzsche, to will compassion is to deny the value of conflict, which is life denying because

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[1] For detailed expositions and commentaries on the path to Buddhahood see especially Āryadeva (1994), Śāntideva (1995), and Tsong kha pa (2002).

opposites have contingent existence. This is analogous to the contingency between creation and destruction, or human and inhuman, that Nietzsche saw as crucial in maintaining the tragic worldview. He notes that "in reality there is no such separation" between these seemingly opposing sides (*HC*: 187), for without one the other cannot exist. Similarly, to serve is to deny mastery. One cannot have creation without simultaneous destruction. This is why the Greeks took "pleasure in destruction" (*HC*: 187). As both are necessary for the continuation of life, both positions should be affirmed within one's existence. It is now possible to see why Nāgārjuna's teaching, at the various levels to which it is directed, attempts to negate suffering, killing, and stealing (*Rat* § 14), whereas for Nietzsche it is acceptable when necessary to lie, cheat and steal for our continued existence (*HAH* § 102). Nietzsche believed that this is because once one understands "*the manner in which moral judgements have originated...* grand words, like 'sin' and 'salvation of the soul' and 'redemption' have been spoiled for you" (*GS* § 335), that is, spoiled in the sense that these words no longer hold authority over the actions of one who creates values. This shows that, while there are some similarities between the moral outlook of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche, there are in fact some deep seated and real differences between the two positions.

Another way to highlight real difference is to conceive of a community of bodhisattvas in comparison to a community of Übermenschen. From the comparison thus far, it is difficult to conceive of either community, but for different reasons. A group of people who have attained Buddhahood would make for a cohesive community due to their focus on compassion and service. Some may raise the objection that a community of bodhisattvas is bound to fail, like a community of altruists, as each member of the community is too concerned with the requirements of others, with individuals neglecting themselves to the point of death. Yet, this simply would not occur. In being considerate of other's needs, each bodhisattva, or altruist, would receive gifts and consume food out of compassion and respect for the giver. Thus, the community would survive. The

role of the bodhisattva is to help others to enlightenment. Thus, such a community would not exist as once an individual has attained the status where they can aid others towards enlightenment they would be sent out of the community to be of service to others. Those who have attained Buddhahood would be predominantly in physical isolation[2] from others of similar status, as this is necessary for such individuals to have the greatest affect. That is, for the bodhisattvas to have an active role within society, and for that role to have the greatest possible impact, it makes sense that once one has attained Buddhahood they would be sent out from their teacher so that they may become a teacher in their own right.

Likewise a community of Übermenschen is bound to fail, but for vastly different reasons. The Übermensch is too self absorbed to function coherently within a community of likeminded individuals. While it is possible to see in parts of Nietzsche's work a sort of communitarianism, especially in his commentary on and championing of Hellenic culture, it is at best sporadic and is not consistent with the Übermensch as it is most consistently proposed. Zarathustra, as the spokesperson of the Übermensch, states, "I need companions ... I need living companions who follow me" (Z P § 9) but walks out on the 'higher men' who indeed wish to follow him. That Zarathustra, who has climbed higher than any preceding him, cannot stand to be with others is a good indication that the Übermensch is likely to treat humanity as humanity treats monkeys. The result is that both the bodhisattva and the Übermensch end up physically isolated, for the former it is out of greater concern for those outside the community, while, for the latter, it is simply an inability to integrate with likeminded individuals.

There is also a real difference in the means available for one who would like to attain to either ideal, if they were to work solely from the works of each thinker. Nietzsche, for all his grand proposals, is distinctly devoid of any method for

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[2] We here say "physical isolation" as the bodhisattva has overcome the illusion of individuality and there is no longer a 'one' isolated from 'others'.

becoming an Übermensch. He may hide behind subtitles such as "a book for everyone and no one" (Z) which implies that everybody needs to know of the Übermensch and once they do none, will look back to its source as they will be too busy climbing higher, but this does not escape the issue. Perhaps this is why Nietzsche himself did not come to embody the Übermensch. He had many ideas, but he had no means to make them a reality. Nāgārjuna, to whom Buddhahood has been attributed, continually advocates for specific restraints that individuals may impose upon themselves, to further them along the path to Buddhahood.

The closest that Nietzsche comes to providing actual guidance on becoming an Übermensch is his insistence on avoiding pity. One may interject, reminding us that Nietzsche also promoted creating one's own values. Yet, what this entailed is not quite clear. In his essay "'Good and Evil', 'Good and Bad'" (GM I) Nietzsche shows how, over a period of time, two almost diametrically opposed sets of values developed to keep people in their place. Interestingly, Nietzsche's criticism is directed towards the plebs who never want more because it is 'evil', but it is inconceivable that the ruling noble class is equally kept in their place, restricted by their morality that states that it is 'bad' to want less. While it is clear that Nietzsche wants us to create our own values, and that for the underclass this would mean to some degree accepting ruling class virtues, it remains unclear what the ruling class is to do if they, too, are to become creators of value. Thus, apart from a few generalised statements Nietzsche does not present any practical means to attain the ideals he proposes. Against this, Nāgārjuna not only provides councils on morality, he also advises on correct thinking.

While it is possible to see similarities between the manners in which Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche express themselves it should also be realised that the goal to which they each aim is different. Throughout the works of both thinkers they are at times poetic, conversational, elusive, elliptic, aphoristic, and to the point. These are a result of their differing intentions. Nāgārjuna believes in the existence of Buddhahood where as Nietzsche feels that the Übermensch is the

greatest idea of which humanity has previously been ignorant, thus the view that it is an unrealised potential. This difference has a profound effect on the work, mode of expression, and direction taken by both thinkers. Nietzsche is known to have used particular words from various languages and various writing styles in order to convey his views. Nāgārjuna was not merely attempting to assert his views; his writings have a pedagogical and soteriological function. As an example, among many, we can see that Nāgārjuna's dialectical method confronts and confounds the rational mind, creating the potential for an understanding that is not strictly logical, yet not irrational or illogical, similar to a Zen *kōan*.

The difference in the assumptions accepted by Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche affects the target audience of each thinker. By accepting the existence of Buddhahood Nāgārjuna is writing for those who are striving towards it, by giving advice on right action, i.e. no killing or stealing (*Rat* § 8), or on right thinking, i.e. the nature of action or time (*MK* VIII & XIX respectively). Any discussion on Buddhism must recognise "the Buddha's original enlightenment", as the "failure to recognise this fact has caused many problems in the understanding of Buddhism" (Inada 1988: 261). The failure to recognise this, along with the accepted existence of Buddhahood by Nāgārjuna, is an example of "distorting or simply missing the significance of those texts or the meaningfulness of their claims" mentioned by Garfield (2002: 152). In light of this, the possibility of enlightenment and Nāgārjuna's attainment of Buddhahood underpins all of his writings. Any discussion of Nāgārjuna's work would suffer if it failed to recognise this fact. Nietzsche, however, is grappling with his own ideas and by denying the existence of the Übermensch, while accepting its possibility, he documents his thoughts so that others can start where he finished. This difference has a further affect on the relationship between the various texts within the thought of each thinker.

Within Nietzsche's works it is possible to see him grapple with various ideas, and over the course of time to see the different approaches and solutions that he

arrived at. See for instance his responses to the eternal return and the development from the idea of the 'free ones' into the Übermensch. We could accept that Nietzsche's attempt to pave the way for the Übermensch was "foredoomed to failure by the absence of a spiritual doctrine and discipline" (Burckhardt 1987: 69). By trying to make his own way his soteriology lacks "effective legitimacy" (Guénon 2001b: 23), whereas Nāgārjuna's teachings are "protected by the [Buddhist] tradition … which also supplies the necessary supports for the full realisation or actualisation" of his teachings (Oldmeadow 2007: 60).

Nāgārjuna, in guiding his students, was writing for people at various stages on the path to enlightenment. Some texts contain material that some people, with at least a minimum of moral awareness, would consider them self-evident, while other texts are highly technical and difficult for even well versed practitioners of his teaching. One may like to propose that Nāgārjuna's easier texts, such as *Ratnāvalī* and *Suhrllekha*, are his earlier ones and that the more difficult texts, including *Bodhicittavivaraṇa* and *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, represent his later works. While the exact chronology of his works is not known this may be the case, but it is unlikely. The consistency and degree of certainty shown throughout his literary output shows that, while unlikely, it is conceivable that Nāgārjuna wrote them all around the same time. Thus, the ways that the ideas of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche are presented vary significantly, with this difference being intimately connected to the goals of each thinker's literary output.

Many scholars dissect literary corpora so that they are more manageable. Sections of work are grouped together most consistently by topic or period. This is evident in Nietzsche's work where some scholarship differentiates between early, middle, and late periods with each supposedly marking a paradigm shift with particular ideas dominant in each. Prime examples of this approach are Young (1992) and Heller (1979: 320) who suggests that "Nietzsche's thoughts can be unified" according to the development of recurrent themes but still divided

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Nietzsche's development into "three stages". While such an approach to Nietzsche is not given preference within this work, from the analysis given throughout, it is evident that such hard and definite divisions unnecessarily limit our understanding of Nietzsche. Within the scholarly approach to Nāgārjuna chronological compartmentalisation of particular texts has not been proposed. This sort of differentiation between texts is against the nature of his philosophy. While Nāgārjuna's texts may be grouped according to predominant themes, such as emptiness or ethics, these distinctions give no insight into the figure of the author, nor do they show 'stages' of development. While there is some truth in differentiating an individual's stages of development, in the available material by a thinker such as Nietzsche, a strong delineation of periods is arbitrary, at best, and, at its worst, such an approach limits the potential analysis of the work.

For Nietzsche texts are a personal exposition. He believes that an author says more about himself or herself than they do about their topic. With Nietzsche this is unmistakably clear. His childhood, education, relationships, adulthood, and self-development standout in all of his writings to such a degree that, if one did not know his life, one could still understand his struggle, and the ideas that contributed to it. Marchand (1996: 125) notes that in *The Birth of* Tragedy there is more than just the two kinds of emotional turbulence affecting the writing of that book acknowledge by Nietzsche, namely that "mental turmoil" of "his attempt to come to grips with the professional position he had suddenly attained at the age of twenty-four". Kaufmann (1956: 30 - 60) succinctly sums this up in the chapter titled 'Nietzsche's life as background of his thought' and this is achieved through Nietzsche's attempt to "make his presence as an individual author unforgettable to his readers" (Nehamas 1985: 4-5). However, for Nāgārjuna, if this is not impossible, it is extremely difficult. Other than what is evident within Nāgārjuna's texts, such as his compassion towards all of nature, or the firm but gentle nature of his guidance, there is little material that gives a sense of who he was, why he was that way, or how he became that way. Walleser (1990) in recounting the life of Nāgārjuna from both Tibetan and Chinese sources is devoid of any instances

that directly inform on the formation of his ideas, other than historical dates relating to meetings with people such as masters, teachers, kings, and students, none of which are discernable from the available works of Nāgārjuna. This is another real difference in the approach between the two thinkers.

For Nietzsche's ideas to have the impact he thought they should, it was necessary for him to document his personal struggle through his conceptual topography, and the psychological effects the journey had on him. Nietzsche shows us the affects on and effects of his journey so that others may use his work to strive towards the ideal of the Übermensch. This is ironic because, at times, his comments are too personal to serve their pedagogical role. On the other hand, the personality of Nāgārjuna is superfluous, as long as his directions aid his students in attaining enlightenment. This analysis is supported by the view that "the outer person, the egoic self with all its attendant contingencies, is of no lasting significance" (Oldmeadow, 2000: 3), which amounts to saying that the colour of the glass is superfluous as long as it is clean and successfully carries water. That Nāgārjuna had attained to the degree where he is qualified to guide others would have been enough for his students. This shows that there is a difference in the degree to which each thinker is contained within their texts.

The use and absence of hyperbole within the works of Nietzsche and Nāgārjuna respectively is another real difference. Within Nāgārjuna there is a distinct lack of hyperbole, everything is stated as a matter of fact, whereas, Nietzsche is consistently hyperbolic. Compare, for instance, comments such as "view as your enemies: avarice, dishonesty, deceit, attachment, [etc]" (*Suh* § 12), "attachment is a small entanglement arising from desire" (*Rat* § 419), "with great effort, a large stone may be thrown to the top of a hill, but with little effort it may be toppled over" (*Lugs*: 17), or even "it makes sense that *Nirvāṇa* is neither a thing nor a non-thing" (*MK* XXV § 10), with "a 'revaluation of values' is perhaps possible for me alone" (*E*: I § 1), or "I have never been childlike enough" (*E*: II § 1). By accepting the existence of Buddhahood, Nāgārjuna can actively guide his

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students through his texts in a manner that is meant to rectify particular pitfalls experienced on the path. He does not need to justify what he is helping others to attain.

Nietzsche, however, is attempting to assert his views. He thinks that they are new and therefore need to be heard. Nietzsche needs hyperbole and constantly rests on it for the expression of his ideas. Nietzsche's over emphasis is an attempt to have his ideas taken seriously by others. When this did not happen, Nietzsche denied that anyone around at the time could possibly understand them as can be seen from his comment that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* "would raise one to a higher level of existence than 'modern' men could attain" if they could understand, "that is, to have really experienced" it (*E:* III § 1). It is inconceivable of Nietzsche being as devoid of hyperbole as Nāgārjuna was.

The exception here is the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* where Nāgārjuna refutes particular views so that the readers may develop correct thinking while embodying correct action. While Nāgārjuna argues for a particular position it is still done in a manner that is consistent with his role as a teacher rather than arguing merely for the sake of his views. Furthermore, the text is set out such that all the objections to Nāgārjuna are clearly stated at the beginning and are then systematically refuted in subsequent sections in the same order the objections were raised. Embellishing and emphasizing his answer adds nothing.

There are many differences between to be seen if the distinction, roughly stated, between the realism of Nāgārjuna and the idealism of Nietzsche is drawn out. This claim is idiosyncratic and we say 'roughly stated' as it would be wrong to call Nāgārjuna a realist in the usual sense of the term, as it would be equally wrong to call Nietzsche an idealist given its usual meaning. Realism and idealism are here used as opposites, with the former designating something that has current existence and the latter designating something that, while it may potentially come into existence, does not currently have existence. While Buddhahood is the

pinnacle of Nāgārjuna's teaching, and in this sense is an ideal, the existence of, and ability to attain to, Buddhahood is real for Nāgārjuna. Whereas, Nietzsche's Übermensch is a possibility without a reality, and will always remain an ideal. It is in this sense that Nietzsche is idealistic, that is, he proposes the pursuit of something that, as yet, has no reality. While Nietzsche claims that "no new idols are erected by me" (E: P § 2) he also states, in implicitly referring to the Übermensch, that "a *counterideal* was lacking – *until Zarathustra*" (E: GM). Thus, Nietzsche realised his own idealism. If we look further into the works of both thinkers, not limiting this analysis to one example, it is possible to see this difference arise again and again. From the preceding comments of Nāgārjuna, it is evident that, irrespective of the moral virtues he discussed, he believes that all are attainable for those willing to pursue them. The attainment of each virtue may require considerable consistent effort, but, according to Nāgārjuna, they are real, in as far as there are individuals in existence who embody them.

Nietzsche's idealism can be seen throughout his work. Nietzsche wrote, "art represents the highest task and the truly metaphysical activity of this life" (BTp). It is with regard to this task that Nietzsche wrote his first work, describing the heights attained in this respect by Greek tragedy. Yet, when he came back to this work, he implored the reader that they "ought to learn the art of *this-worldly* comfort first" (BT Criticism § 7) with the imperative 'ought' implying that the modern individual needs to relearn something from Greek tragedy that has been lost. Nietzsche asserts, "we must hold fast to our luminous guide, the Greeks" if the metaphysical heights attained through their art, is to be reattained (BT § 23). The potential of art, attained by the Greeks, has been lost and its reestablishment remains an ideal. This is another example where Nietzsche's idealism remains opposed to Nāgārjuna's realism.

This use of realism or idealism opens up a further difference regarding the time when Buddhahood or the Übermensch can be realised. According to Nāgārjuna's teachings, one is able to strive towards, and come to embody the virtues of,

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Buddhahood as soon as one is willing to take up the teaching. It follows that it would be necessary to find a teacher who has reached the goal, as they are able to revive the teaching without innovation. Revival is necessary because it means the student can be directed in how to employ the aspects of the teaching in accordance with the time and circumstances in which they occur. Innovation is to be avoided because it destroys the principles of the teaching through variation and deviation. If these requirements are met, then the fruits of Nāgārjuna's teaching can be realised, irrespective of when and where it occurs. Nietzsche, however, looked to the future. Combined with his lack of directives set up to achieve Übermensch status, Nietzsche's result is an unfulfilling continuous gazing into the future for its realisation. According to Nāgārjuna Buddhahood is and will be, whereas, for Nietzsche, the Übermensch will be but never is. The reality of Buddhahood means that it is achievable whereas the lack of existence of the Übermensch means that it will only ever be an ideal.

The potential existence of the Übermensch may be connected to Nietzsche's philosophical predecessors. It is possible to argue that without thinkers such as Hegel, Kant, or Schopenhauer Nietzsche could not have grappled with the issues he attempted to. An example of this is the overcoming of pessimism, as Nietzsche wrote, "I tried laboriously to express by means of Schopenhauerian and Kantian formulas strange and new valuations which were basically at odds with Kant's and Schopenhauer's spirit and taste" and, after making note of Schopenhauer's "resignation", Nietzsche comments "how differently Dionysus spoke to me" (*BT* Criticism § 6). An examination of content reveals and reaffirms the championing of ancient Greece, as well as the developing interest in foreign religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. On another level, the pursuit of a unified Germany, and the use of war to establish this, is a physical manifestation of the unifying of the will to power, and the acknowledgement of the equal value of destruction and creation, culminating in the positing of the Übermensch. In Nietzsche's time the future existence of a unified Germany, or even a unified Europe, is akin to the future existence of an Übermensch. In contrast to this,

Nāgārjuna is continuing his tradition. While the views refuted with his dialectic method are particular to his context, the teachings of Buddhahood, and the means of attain to it, are not particular to either Nāgārjuna or 2nd century India. Thus, there is a real difference in the degree to which Nietzsche and Nāgārjuna are products of their respective contexts.

However, to test whether these thinkers are really just products of their contexts it is necessary to decontextualise the works of both thinkers. Both Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche were unique and both provided the groundwork for further inquiries. There is a long history in commentaries on Nāgārjuna's magnum opus the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and, in this sense, it is necessary that the historical context of his works be acknowledged. By uniting dependent arising and emptiness Nāgārjuna was revolutionary. Buddhism between the time of the historical Buddha and Nāgārjuna had been in considerable decline. Nāgārjuna could only be considered a reviver of Buddhism if this were the case. If Buddhism as a whole, and its numerous schools individually, had maintained its teaching, rather than becoming bogged down in interpretational differences, it would have been unnecessary for a revival of any sort[3]. This further shows that Nāgārjuna's historical context is important.

Yet, the fact that there has been further fragmentation of the Buddhist teaching, into an increasing number of schools, shows that Nāgārjuna's ideas could have come earlier or later, and still would have had a similar degree of impact. If we further decontextualise his works and focus on their content alone, we see that, apart from some linguistic nuances particular to his time, Nāgārjuna's advice is almost as relevant today as it was when it was produced. Thus, it cannot be said that Nāgārjuna is contained by his context rather there is something timeless about his works.

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[3] It is only possible to consider Nāgārjuna's position a revival if one accepts that his views are accurate to the tradition.

It cannot be said that Nietzsche, too, is timeless. Admittedly, his ideas have given birth to a whole range of new studies, and his influences can be felt in fields as disparate as existentialism, post modernism, etymology of social institutions, not to mention the array of Nietzsche studies. For any of this to have come about it is necessary that Nietzsche occupy his historical context. Nietzsche's work relies so heavily on that of his predecessors that it is inconceivable that he could have come earlier. It is possible that his philological work could have been produced prior to the works of Schopenhauer, but Nietzsche's philosophy would have been severely lacking, if evident at all. Without the works of the great pessimist, even *The Birth of Tragedy* could not have been what it was, let alone all of his 'more' philosophical books. This overlooks the influence of Wagner, the timely introduction of Vedic and Buddhist studies into Europe, and preoccupation with the virtues of ancient Greece that are all intimately intertwined with Nietzsche's literary output.

If Nietzsche had arrived later he may have avoided the connection of his work with the Nazi ideology, but this is not a given considering the controversy that surrounded Heidegger. This would not have necessarily ensured the acceptance of his work, as it would still have come into conflict with early twentieth century philosophical trends. Being the type of individual he was his work would not have been what it is if he had come into contact with thinkers such as Russell and Wittgenstein, as he tended to absorb and process the ideas surrounding him into his own work. Furthermore, as Thomas (1983: 125) concluded, Nietzsche's impact on German culture during the early 20th century intrudes into both the social and political domains, and was "important one way or another, positively or negatively", and, we may add, irrespective of whether his ideas were understood or not. Even Nietzsche's attack on philology in *The Birth of* Tragedy "laid the foundations for the next generation's attacks on his field" (Marchand 1996: 133) In this respect, we must admit that Nietzsche cannot be considered other than a product of his time. Nietzsche has fulfilled his pedagogical role in as far as his works have been absorbed and have provided the basis for further inquiry

without constant reference to his works. Thus, it can be concluded that, in the same respect as Nāgārjuna being timeless, Nietzsche is altogether timely. This is an example of how contextual and decontextual analyses can be combined to highlight a real difference.

The relationship of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche to their respective times opens up a real difference in regard to relationship to their respective traditions. Nāgārjuna was considered "the second Buddha" (Inada 1993: 3, Kalupahana 1991: 2). He worked to revive the Buddhist tradition. His teachings were consistent with the lessons given by the founder of his religion, as well as those he received the tradition from. This consistency is evident from the fact that he "brought to maturity the *Mādhyamika*-philosophy which had only been sketched by his teacher Saraha" (Walleser 1990: 7). It is noted that he "contradicted the doctrines of the Brahmans" (Walleser 1990: 6) and mastered many texts quickly. It is not recorded that he contradicted his Buddhist teachers, nor deliberately acted contrary to their prescriptions. It is interesting to note that after he succeeded his teacher as "High Priest", in order to maintain the purity of the teaching "introduced sharp discipline and expelled 8000 monks whose moral purity was suspected" (Walleser 1990: 7).

Nietzsche, on the other hand, directly revolted against his forefathers in philosophy. He outgrew Schopenhauer, commenting pejoratively on "how differently Dionysus spoke to me [Nietzsche]" in comparison to Schopenhauer (*BT* Criticism § 6). Nietzsche can also be seen as attempting to undermine the exalted position held by Socrates within the discipline of philosophy, saying that he "recognised Socrates and Plato as symptoms of decay" (*TI*: 39). Yet, Nietzsche would see this as being consistent with the tradition of philosophy, as he merely continues a trend he noticed amongst the pre-Platonic philosophers who were great because they were able to "find their own individual form and to develop it through all its metamorphoses to its subtlest and greatest possibilities" (*PTG* § 1). Nietzsche's portrait of the pre-Platonic philosophers makes them

appear as if their "unity of style" (*PTG* § 2) came as a result of conversation that developed from Thales, passing through the generations, concluding with Socrates, that allowed each of these philosophers to define themselves in contrast to their predecessors, without being in conflict with them. While Nietzsche would believe that he is consistent with the tradition of philosophy, in defining himself by his predecessors, it remains that he is in direct conflict with them, and his philosophy is not continuing the tradition of philosophy in the same manner as he characterised pre-Platonic philosophy. With this, we must conclude that there is a real difference in the manner that Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche each respond to their tradition and predecessors.

This chapter has not been an attempt to exhaust the areas of difference. Rather, an attempt has been made to show how the proposed comparative method can work within a range of areas highlighting real difference. Again perspectivism, while implicit, has played an important role. If it was not accepted that all potential perspectives existed within common limits, then we could not conclude that any of the divergences discussed throughout this chapter constitute any sort of difference, let alone real differences. Also, the joint contextual/decontextual method of analysis has been deployed to show how it can be used when drawing out real differences.

Conclusion

The intention of this work was to develop a method of comparative philosophy based on perspectivism and to show its application. A new method is necessary because previous methods either rested on a self-refuting assumption or were underpinned by the pursuit of an unachievable goal. These flaws inherent within previous comparative methods have been shown to result from either the acceptance of relativity or the pursuit of objectivity. Relativity and objectivity are opposite extremes to which perspectivism, being the middle way, provides the solution. Perspectivism, in acknowledging the common ground to all potential standpoints while accepting the uniqueness of all actual positions, overcomes these flaws and provides a sound and practical foundation from which it is possible to examine any number of thinkers across disparate traditions.

Previous methods of comparative philosophy have taken as their basis either the acceptance of relativity or the pursuit of objectivity. Thinkers such as Masson-Oursel (1926), Pei (1962), and Geertz (1973) accepted relativity without realising its self-refuting nature. Panikkar (1989) and Tuck (1990) agreed that the pursuit of objectivity is unachievable, yet neither proposed an adequate solution for grappling with this issue within the bounds of comparative philosophy. Both relativity and objectivity are equally ineffective for fruitfully comparing any thinkers or ideas but solutions to either of these issues had not been found. If we accept relativity, then we must concede that everything is right according to its time and place. Any attempt to examine and evaluate any particular thing in terms of another idea or another's views would be futile because they occur in different times and different places and have equal validity. On the other hand, if an attempt is made to find an objective position from which to compare thinkers and ideas then this amounts to trying to find either a non-position to examine all other positions, which is unattainable, or an all encompassing position to examine the multitude of positions that it contains and, being finite creatures, we cannot hope to contain all positions simultaneously. Either there is nothing to

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compare, as a result of relativity, or there is no position from which to compare, as a result of objectivity. Thus, we must conclude that both relativity and objectivity are insufficient as a basis for any comparative methodology as both forfeit the right to act as a foundation for comparative philosophy.

To save comparative philosophy from the dilemma of lacking a solid grounding on which its practitioners could construct their comparisons perspectivism has been proposed. Perspectivism accepts that there is a common domain that all that exists partakes in, yet acknowledges that each position within this domain will view the domain differently. The existence of a common domain is what allows each member of humanity to be justifiably considered human along with all others, while the difference in position of each human within the common domain means that each individual is unique. The result is that, in any given perspective, there is enough that is common that allows it to be compared with any other perspective, while allowing for the fact that differences of perspective occur due to the uniqueness of each perspective. Thus, perspectivism provides a solution to both relativity and objectivity. Comparisons within the domain of philosophy can now continue with the knowledge that a solid foundation exists from which such comparisons can be made.

The interesting result of this method is a heightened understanding of difference. Difference, according to this comparative method, becomes either superficial or real. Superficial differences occur when ideas appear different but further examination shows that the ideas examined occupy the same position and serve the same function within the work of two or more thinkers. Real differences occur when it is evident that the thinkers compared will not reconcile on some aspect of their thought according to the position they occupy. An example of how these two kinds of difference function is as follows: one thinker posits x and another posits $not\ x$, they appear to contradict each other, yet it can be shown that x and $not\ x$ function in exactly the same manner and occupy the same position within the work of their respective thinkers such that we may say that these two ideas are

congruent. To highlight the two kinds of difference we can say that in this example there is a superficial difference with regard to content and a real difference with regard to context. That is, each thinker is expressing themselves according to the culture, time, and discipline that they were writing for, which explains the manner that each use to express their ideas, and that the ideas they express are the same. The interplay between the two kinds of difference, unique to this method, acknowledges that both contextualised and decontextualised forms of analysis are of equal value when comparing material. This is because each fulfils a role that is not catered for by the other. While Mukerji (1952) and Geertz (1973) both raise valid points when considering a contextualised analysis and Scharfstein (1989) discussed equally valid points for pursuing a decontextualised analysis it must be accepted that each form of analysis, independent of the other, does not provide comparative philosophy with all the tools required for a full comparison. For this reason a multifaceted approach, akin to that proposed by Rosan (1962), has been pursued. From this it should be evident that the examination of difference plays a primary role in a comparative method founded on perspectivism.

Included within this work was a case study intended to show the vitality of a comparative method based on perspectivism. This examination of the works of Nāgārjuna and Nietzsche illustrates how this form of comparison aids the understanding of the role of both superficial and real differences. By beginning the case study with an analysis of superficial difference the intention was to probe beyond surface differences to open up the possibility that there may be a level of comparison that would otherwise be unconceivable if left unchallenged. In doing so it was shown that a strictly one sided analysis, whether contextualised or decontextualised, will always be insufficient within the bounds of comparative philosophy. This is seen by the fact that little, if any, similarities exist between India circa 100 BCE – 250 CE and 19th century Germany, yet if the analysis halted at this conclusion it would miss vital aspects common to both bodies of work. By examining superficial differences in depth it was possible to

show that, in attempting to exhaust these kinds of differences, there is some aspect of the analysis that remains untouched. The possibility of examining the similarities and congruencies between intellectual traditions arises when the superficiality of many differences is realised. Nietzsche's Übermensch and Buddhahood for Nāgārjuna may appear as being two different things but by conceiving of the possibility that some of their differences are only superficial it was possible to show that these ideas have many aspects in common, even the possibility that the Übermensch marks a point on the path to Buddhahood. This is not to deny real difference, but it is only after an analysis of superficial differences and similarities that divergences may be asserted as real. While it need not be necessary to separate a comparative analysis, as has been done above, it should be remembered that the structure of this work was set out to emphasise and aid in the understanding of the proposed method of comparative philosophy.

Comparative philosophy is becoming an evermore-important means to understand ourselves, and those around us. We are now at a time when the world's traditions and the great thinkers from the history of humanity are available at our fingertips like never before. Comparative philosophy provides the tools to understand how humanity has differed between cultures and across time, while simultaneously bringing to light those common elements that show us that we are all human. We can better understand ourselves by understanding those around us. While comparative philosophy is well established, its method was never clearly outlined and comparative philosophers have only had rusted and dull tools. Relativity and objectivity were never the right tools for comparative philosophy. Perspectivism, the principles of which have been outlined throughout this work, provides comparative philosophy with a set of tools suited specifically for its method of analysis. "Principles by their very essentiality are capable on ongoing application which no one author can exhaust" (Perry 1995: x) and for this reason it was necessary to develop a stable comparative methodology. Thus

comparative philosophy may proceed like never before, that is, with all the tools necessary to adequately fulfil its function.

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