Fusion of Nietzsche and Buddha in Jessica Au's Cold Enough for Snow

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ABSTRACT

In Jessica Au's well-known novel Cold Enough for Snow, the themes of mindfulness and compassion are prominently explored through the relationship between the mother and daughter. Their interactions reflect the contrasting attitudes of older and younger generations toward life, while also suggesting that combining their perspectives can enrich human experience. Although both characters value mindfulness throughout their metaphorical journey, the daughter is driven by Nietzsche's concept of the Will to Power and aspires toward self-transcendence associated with the Overman. In contrast, the mother's contemplative outlook encourages peacefulness, acceptance, and detachment from material concerns.

The two characters also differ in their engagement with interpersonal relationships. The mother, representing the older generation, demonstrates compassion and emotional attentiveness toward others, whereas the daughter, as a representative of the younger generation, is more concerned with transcending her own limitations. While the novel's emphasis on mindfulness and compassion aligns it with Buddhist philosophy, its focus on self-overcoming and individual striving reflects important aspects of Friedrich Nietzsche's existential thought.

Accordingly, this paper combines Buddhist spiritual principles with Nietzschean philosophy to examine Jessica Au's intellectual and philosophical vision in shaping the novel. The methodology adopted in this study treats compassion and the Will to Power as complementary forces that contribute to human fulfillment. Buddhism encourages individuals to overcome everyday anxieties through mindfulness and compassionate engagement with others; however, without the motivating force of the Will to Power, personal growth may remain incomplete. Conversely, Nietzsche's concept of the Overman emphasizes self-development and transcendence but often neglects social connectedness and collective responsibility.

Through close textual analysis of selected passages from the novel, this paper demonstrates how mindfulness helps the characters avoid unnecessary psychological distress, while compassion protects them from an emotionally detached and excessively individualistic mode of living.

Keywords: Nietzsche, Buddha, Overman, Compassion, Will to Power, Mindfulness, Nothingness

INTRODUCTION

Focusing on the inner world of the individual is strongly emphasized in both Buddhism and existential philosophy, despite the significant differences between them. In Buddhism, mindfulness is regarded as an essential practice that helps individuals reduce anxiety and cope with the uncertainties of life. However, Buddhism often views desire as the primary source of suffering, a concept clearly expressed in the First and Second Noble Truths. The First Noble Truth asserts that suffering is an inevitable aspect of human existence, while the Second Noble Truth identifies desire and attachment as the causes of this suffering. Although accepting life and its hardships may bring inner peace, the complete rejection of desire can also make life appear passive or lacking in ambition.

Similarly, both Buddha and Friedrich Nietzsche emphasize the importance of confronting suffering and becoming more aware of one's inner self. They encourage individuals to focus on the present moment rather than becoming overwhelmed by fear, regret, or social expectations. Nevertheless, their views diverge

significantly regarding compassion and human relationships. Nietzsche prioritizes self-creation, self-overcoming, and the realization of hidden potential. In Thus Spoke Zarathustra, he argues that many individuals follow social conventions blindly and live according to what he calls the "herd mentality," without attempting to discover their authentic selves. This emphasis on individuality and self-assertion places Nietzsche in contrast with the Buddhist concept of "no-self," which encourages detachment from ego and personal desire.

Nietzsche's existential philosophy inspires individuals to transcend limitations and pursue personal growth; however, it pays less attention to compassion and emotional connectedness with others. Buddhism, by contrast, values compassion and mindfulness but may underemphasize ambition and self-assertion. Bringing these two philosophical perspectives together can therefore provide a more balanced understanding of human fulfillment, one that combines personal transcendence with social and emotional responsibility.

Accordingly, this paper employs the Buddhist Four Noble Truths alongside Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra to explore the similarities and differences between these two philosophical traditions and to examine how they are reflected in Jessica Au's Cold Enough for Snow (2022). The study argues that the integration of Buddhist spirituality with Nietzschean philosophy offers a productive framework for interpreting the novel's treatment of identity, mindfulness, generational difference, and self-transcendence. Jessica Au, the author of Cargo (2011) and Cold Enough for Snow (2022), received significant literary recognition for the latter novel, including the Victorian Premier's Prize for Fiction and the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Fiction. Through close textual analysis, this paper demonstrates how the novel negotiates the tension between compassion and individual aspiration in shaping the experiences of the mother and daughter characters.

Statement of the Problem

The present study employs a Buddhist–Nietzschean analysis to explore the intersection of these two distinct philosophical traditions in Jessica Au's Cold Enough for Snow (2022). Since the novel is relatively recent, scholarly research on it remains limited. Among the available studies, some have focused primarily on the theme of mindfulness in the novel. Emma Heath, in her book review, highlights how everyday details are presented through a strong sense of the present moment. Other studies emphasize the contrasting orientations of the two main characters in the novel. Magdalena Ball argues that the mother tends to look toward the past, whereas the daughter is oriented toward the future and personal progression.

However, these studies mainly address mindfulness, the daughter's drive toward self-overcoming, or the mother's compassion as separate analytical categories. Therefore, there remains a research gap in examining how these dimensions can be integrated within a unified philosophical framework. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring how the daughter's aspiration toward power, combined with the mother's compassionate disposition, contributes to the formation of a more balanced human subject.

Research Objectives

To examine instances of mindfulness, the Will to Power, and compassion in Cold Enough for Snow.

To analyze how Nietzsche's concept of the Will to Power and the Buddhist notion of compassion contribute to the formation of a balanced and fully developed individual in the novel.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be addressed in this study:

How are mindfulness, the Will to Power, and compassion represented in Cold Enough for Snow?

How can Nietzsche's concept of the Will to Power and Buddhist compassion contribute to the construction of a well-rounded individual in the novel?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the interpretation of Cold Enough for Snow through a Buddhist–Nietzschean framework, with particular emphasis on mindfulness, compassion, and the Will to Power. By applying close textual analysis, the research aims to deepen understanding of how these philosophical concepts are reflected in the novel's characters and narrative structure.

The significance of this study lies in its engagement with contemporary ethical and philosophical concerns, particularly the tension between individual ambition and relational ethics. In modern society, excessive individualism without compassion may lead to emotional isolation and psychological strain, while compassion without self-development may limit personal growth and achievement.

By integrating Buddhist and Nietzschean perspectives, this study proposes a more balanced model of human development that combines self-transcendence with empathy and social awareness. Accordingly, it demonstrates how the interaction of mindfulness, compassion, and the Will to Power can contribute to the formation of individuals who are both self-aware and ethically grounded.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emma Heath, in Cleveland Review, argues that the novel "is defined by its small scale, driven by the details of life in its absolute present moment…floating from one association to another" (CEFS, 16). Similarly, Magdalena Ball highlights a generational and psychological tension within the narrative, stating that "there is a tension between the mother's own acceptance of her increasing frailty and the daughter's desire to keep moving forward" (Ball, 2022, 37). These perspectives emphasize the contrast between stillness and movement, which can also be read through the lens of mindfulness and self-transcendence.

Isabella Gullifer describes the novel as "the process of seeing again and again the threads through the central plot" (Gullifer, 2024, 51), thereby foregrounding its meditative and reflective quality. Tobias, in A Mother and Daughter Go Sightseeing. They See Each Other, further suggests the possibility of interpreting the relationship between the two central characters as an attempt at integration between distinct subjectivities and perspectives.

However, some critics express reservations about the novel's stylistic and structural approach. Byrne argues that "although it improved upon rereading, in the end it was so understated that it left me unsure as to whether Jessica Au's writing was subtle to the point of genius, or just a little dull" (Byrne, 2022, 18).

In an interview, Jessica Au herself reflects on the title Cold Enough for Snow, describing it as having "an abstract, unfinished quality – that it could be both a fragment and a question… snow comes only when the conditions are right, and when it does, it can be beautiful, almost magical, but it will also all disappear" (Au, 2022, 1). This statement highlights the novel's thematic concern with transience, temporality, and fragility, which reinforces its suitability for philosophical readings grounded in mindfulness and existential reflection

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on Jessica Au's Cold Enough for Snow as the primary literary text. It adopts a qualitative research approach that relies on textual analysis and interpretation of selected passages from the novel. The study employs a Buddhist–Nietzschean framework, drawing on the concepts of mindfulness and compassion from Buddhism, and the Will to Power from Nietzschean philosophy, as analytical tools for examining the representation of the two main female characters.

The analysis proceeds in stages. First, instances of mindfulness are identified and examined in relation to both the mother and the daughter, focusing on how this concept shapes their perception of experience and reality. Second, the study explores how the daughter's orientation toward self-overcoming aligns with Nietzsche's notion of the Will to Power, while also considering its implications for interpersonal relations. Third, the concept of compassion is analyzed in relation to the mother's character, highlighting her emotional responsiveness and relational awareness.

Finally, the study examines the tension and interaction between these philosophical dimensions, arguing that their integration offers a more comprehensive understanding of human experience as represented in the novel. The methodology is therefore interpretive and text-based, aiming to connect philosophical concepts with close readings of the narrative

Theoretical Framework

The present study adopts a Buddhist–Nietzschean theoretical framework to examine mindfulness, the Will to Power, and compassionate behavior in Jessica Au's Cold Enough for Snow. Both Buddhism and Nietzschean philosophy emphasize the importance of engaging with human existence in a meaningful and reflective way. However, they differ significantly in their conceptualizations of the self and its relation to the world.

Buddhism advocates detachment from material desires and the dissolution of the ego, culminating in the concept of Śūnyatā (emptiness). This perspective encourages individuals to reduce suffering through mindfulness and non-attachment. In contrast, Nietzsche's philosophy emphasizes self-overcoming and empowerment through the Will to Power, encouraging individuals to realize their full potential and actively shape their existence.

Furthermore, compassion constitutes a central ethical principle in Buddhism, guiding interpersonal relations and emotional awareness. In Nietzschean thought, however, compassion is often viewed with skepticism, as it may conflict with the process of self-assertion and individual strength. Despite these differences, this study argues that the integration of these two perspectives provides a more balanced philosophical lens through which human experience can be understood in the novel.

Analysis

In Cold Enough for Snow, Jessica Au presents a dialogue between two contrasting perspectives through the relationship between the daughter and her mother. The daughter is portrayed as intellectually intense and inclined toward interpreting experience through meaning-making, as reflected in the idea that she has "the need to make every moment pointed, to read meaning into everything" (CEFS, 29). In contrast, the mother adopts a more reflective and accepting attitude toward life, suggesting that individuals often mistakenly assume complete understanding is attainable, "as if enlightenment were just around the corner" (CEFS, 57). She further reflects that "the best we could do in this life was to pass through it, like smoke through the branches" (CEFS, 36), emphasizing impermanence and non-attachment.

These contrasting perspectives construct the philosophical tension at the core of the novel. The daughter's approach can be read in relation to Nietzsche's concept of self-overcoming and the Will to Power, as she attempts to impose structure and meaning on experience and move beyond ordinary perception. In this sense, she seeks a form of transcendence grounded in intellectual and existential striving.

By contrast, the mother's outlook aligns more closely with Buddhist thought, particularly the emphasis on mindfulness, acceptance, and detachment from fixed interpretations of reality. Rather than pursuing control or transformation, she suggests that understanding arises through letting go and embracing impermanence. From this perspective, compassion and acceptance become central to human experience, offering an alternative path to fulfillment that differs from Nietzschean self-assertion.

Mindfulness

Both the mother and the daughter share a concern with mindfulness, understood as an inward turn toward reflection and heightened awareness of experience. In the novel, their symbolic journey through Tokyo can be read as an external manifestation of this inward movement, where physical travel reflects a parallel process of self-exploration. This shared attentiveness to the present moment allows the relationship between the two characters to be interpreted as a convergence of Buddhist and Nietzschean perspectives.

While both traditions emphasize turning inward, they differ significantly in their philosophical aims. In Nietzschean thought, inward reflection is associated with self-overcoming and the realization of one's latent

potential, ultimately leading toward the ideal of Overman. The focus is on transformation, strength, and the active shaping of the self.

In contrast, Buddhist mindfulness is directed toward detachment from desire and the dissolution of attachment to the self. Its ultimate aim is the realization of Śūnyatā (emptiness), a state in which the individual is freed from craving and ego-centered perception (Sumedho, 1992, 50). Rather than striving for self-enhancement, this perspective emphasizes acceptance, awareness, and liberation from suffering.

Will to Power

In the novel, the daughter, in her symbolic journey, endeavors to focus on the world within. In many instances in the novel, she passes dark quiet places that would provide the opportunity of mindfulness: that night, we went to a restaurant, in a tiny little street near the railway lines. I took us by a route along the canal, which I thought might be nice at that time of evening. The buildings around us were dark and the trees dark and quiet. Plants grew on the steep walls of the canal, trailing downward, and the water gave a shaking, delicate impression of the world above (CEFS, 30).

She wants to look at things "as they were", as forms of art, and know about their origin. She examined the patterns on a simple bowl, the way it was painted and glazed, or the vessel that was possibly made by hand. The landscape is known to the daughter but in this trip, she attempts to see things mindfully with fresh eyes as if all trivial matters mattered: I recognised the form of everything – buildings, overpasses, train crossings – but in their details, their materials, they were all slightly different, and it was these small but significant changes that continued to absorb me (CEFS, 3).

Elsewhere, looking at the canopy of leaves with their visible threads mesmerizes her while she is saddened by the fact that such authentic beauty has been forgotten. She regrets that people are now taking the beauty of rivers, trees and grass for granted and thinks maybe it is better to stop sometimes to find the true essence of the patterns, to avoid the rat-race competition on a daily basis, and go beyond the unchartered territories and stay away from mundane worries of life. In art gallery she practices mindfulness via looking at the carvings and sculptures that were aimed to portray the essence of life (CEFS, 41). She enjoyed the works of Monet, the great painter, and some other impressionist painters and saw that in each work a world could be discovered, a world with its own cities, ports and its mornings and nights. It was suggestive of a world that was much better than reality and thus unendingly fascinating. She thought the most important thing in life is to be open and to listen, to know when not to speak (CEFS, 60).

While earlier in the novel the narrator has high expectations of the place, she resides in, by choosing a hotel that would be not only convenient but also luxurious and comfortable, later she finds it as a transitory place: same heavy furniture that you would find in hotels all around the world (CEFS, 37).

There was a large window at one end of the room with a wide, cold ledge and heavy silk curtains, as well as a thinner, inner layer of gauze for when you wanted to see, or partially see, the shimmering outside (CEFS, 37).

Elsewhere, she admits that being equipped with mindfulness, she cares less about other people's judgement and their take on so-called truth:

I thought that some of it was true and some of it was not, but the real truth was how such things allowed someone to talk about you, or what you had done or why you did it, in a way that unraveled your character into distinct traits. It made you seem readable to them, or to yourself, which could feel like a revelation. But who's to say how anyone would act on a given day, not to mention the secret places of the soul, where all manner of things could exist? (CEFS, 29).

Being mindful of her surroundings, she is able to let go of the happenings that are beyond her control: Another part of me wondered if it was okay either way, not to know, not be sure. That I could let life happen to me in a sense, and that perhaps this was the deeper truth all along, that we controlled nothing and no one, though really, I didn't know that either (CEFS, 53).

When she was asked about her decision to have a child, she is undecided, saying that she does not insist on anything in life; the viewpoint that has been attained by her constant mindfulness.

Some of them said that it was possible to find a way, especially as their children got older. Others said that all the weakest points of our relationship would be laid bare. Others still said that it was a euphoric experience, if only you surrendered yourself to it. And yet really, these thoughtful offerings meant nothing, because it was impossible, ultimately, to compare one life to another… (CEFS, 48).

She has come to the point that she does not need to attain confirmation of others in life or follow their footsteps, which is compatible with Nietzsche's assertion on not following blindly the opinions of the majority of people, just to acquire their confirmation. Nietzsche calls these people "herd", who do not have the will to focus on their inner capabilities, and prefer to blindly follow others since they have the fear of being rejected in society.

The narrator endeavours to lift her life by symbolically taking a journey, visiting different places and learning about Greek philosophy and literature. She enjoys attending the lectures of the professor at university, being engaged in philosophical discussion with her peers, whereas the mundane, rudimentary conversation at home with her sibling would not be fulfilling to her. Like Nietzsche's Overman, she has the right understanding of what she wants in her life and makes effort to stay concentrated on her conduct.

The narrator's attitude towards religion is depicted when she compares the church to a box-like building, located in a quiet area, with walls that absorb all the light, making the interior dark and dim. However, within this gloomy place, she finds some huge cuts both vertically and horizontally, resembling a giant cross. The attention of both mother and the narrator is attracted to this brilliant, large shape that was spreading light, contrary to the stifling atmosphere of the building. The narrator aims to convey the idea that over time the fabrics of religion are rusted and have turned in the opposite direction: And perhaps, I said to my mother, this too was what it had felt like to be in the earliest churches, when nature itself was still a force in the world, visceral and holy. I said also that the architect had originally intended the cross to be unsealed, so that air and weather would have gusted through the openings, like the will of God itself (CEFS, 85).

We can see the similarity between the narrator's ideas on religion and those of Nietzsche, who viewed religion as a tool used by those who seek to exert control over others.

Nothingness

Her mother on the other hand is not likely to stand out and prefers to adapt to the norms in the society. She even sent her children to Catholic school, not because of the quality of education, but "she had been thought" (CEFS, 22) that such schools would be more suitable for her children. Rather than trying to take the control of her life in her hand, the mother tends to have deterministic attitude to life and being superstitious to some degree. What she lacks is the will to change her destiny; hence, being the opposite of what Nietzsche referred to as overman with will to power. She believes the time and place people are born can determine their destiny:

She flipped to the right month and read out mine. People born on your birthday, she said, are idealistic in their youth. In order to be truly free, they need to realize the impossibility of their dreams, and thus be humbled, and only then will they be happy (CEFS, 28).

Nietzsche did not believe in equality between people, asserting that the essence of people is different and that some are smarter than others. Hence, their duty should be to actualize their potential seed, clime up the ladder of success and reach the zenith of accomplishment in their lives.

I do not wish to be mixed up and confused with these preachers of equality. For, to me justice speaks thus: 'Men are not equal.' Nor shall they become equal! What would my love for the overman be if I spoke otherwise? … Life wants to build itself up into the heights with pillars and steps; it wants to look into vast distances and out toward stirring beauties: therefore, it requires steps and contradiction among the steps and climbers. Life wants to climb and to overcome itself climbing (Kaufmann, 213).

In fact, the mother's attitude towards life is compatible with Buddhist First and Second Noble Truth, which considers all entities in the world devoid of true identity. The very foundation of Buddhism is based on the idea that nothing in the world is permanent and that all occurring are transient; hence, people should not crave for temporary attainment, because down the road there would be no real gain in life. The cessation of suffering and the path to do so is addressed in the third and fourth noble truth. A transcendent person in Buddhism fully apprehends "emptiness" or "Sunyata"; meaning that things in this world lack independent and inherent existence; rather, they are interconnected and arise dependently (Garfield, 1994,16). Likewise, the mother believes in the changing nature of occurrences around us, so she does not attempt to cling on transitory objects or situations. She contends:

Nowadays, she said, people were hungry to know everything, thinking that they could understand it all, as if enlightenment were just around the corner. But, she said, in fact there was no control, and understanding would not lessen any pain. The best we could do in this life was to pass through it, like smoke through the branches, suffering, until we either reached a state of nothingness, or else suffered elsewhere (CEFS, 85).

Unlike her daughter who attempts to further her knowledge when she finds chances, she hesitates that such gestures would be of any use in life. In the museum, when the narrator asked her mother about the nature of soul: "she thought for a moment. Then, looking not at me but at the hard, white light before us, she said that she believed that we were all essentially nothing, just series of sensations and desires, none of it lasting" (CEFS, 86).While the mother's perception of life is easily fitted in Buddhist concept of "Sunyata" or "nothingness", the daughter's approach is closer to Nietzsche's Overman who is focused mainly on himself, trying to elevate her lifestyle via reading Greek philosophy, taking part in academic gatherings as well as taking a symbolic trip to find truth in life.

As their time together draws to a close, the daughter thinks that "the trip had not done what I wanted it to," while her mother smiles "as if she were simply happy that we were in each other's company, and to have no need for words" (CEFS, 88). While the narrator strives to be connected with her mother, she resists when the opportunity is presented. Unlike the narrator who is very focused on the present time, the mother's presence is on and off: When my mother finally appeared, she might as well have been an apparition. She came with her puffer jacket zipped up to her chin, and in the cold night air her breath came out in a little cloud, like a small departing spirit (CEFS, 90).

The only question she'd asked once was whether, in winter, it was cold enough for snow, which she had never seen.

Compassion

Nietzsche and Compassion

Nietzsche views compassion as a form of shared suffering that obstructs human progress and self-overcoming. From this perspective, individuals who prioritize the self and resist emotional entanglement with others are better positioned to achieve greatness and move toward the ideal of the Overman. In contrast, Schopenhauer regards compassion as a metaphysical bond that unites individuals through shared suffering, creating a sense of collective existence.

In Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Nietzsche presents compassion as a force of danger for higher individuals, warning that it weakens strength and self-mastery. He states: "The danger for superhumans is compassion. Let us avoid giving them compassion!" (Zarathustra, 5). From this standpoint, compassion is not a virtue but a limitation that interferes with self-development.

Engaging in the suffering of others, according to Nietzsche, requires individuals to sacrifice their psychological stability, which is essential for self-enhancement. Such involvement produces a dual burden, as one carries both personal struggles and the emotional weight of others, resulting in unnecessary exhaustion. Consequently, compassion becomes a source of internal conflict that weakens creative and intellectual potential.

Nietzsche further explains that the act of helping others may appear valuable, yet it is often driven by self-rewarding emotions such as recognition and moral satisfaction: in the very idea of being able to help […], in the thought of praise and gratitude were we to help, in the very activity of helping insofar as the act is successful and succeeds step by step, thus allowing the performer to delight in himself, but especially in the sensation that our action has put an end to an injustice that arouses our indignation (Nietzsche, 1962, 133).

From this view, compassion is not purely altruistic but intertwined with self-affirmation. However, Nietzsche criticizes excessive concern for others, arguing that it diverts individuals from their own path of self-realization. Instead of cultivating their potential, individuals risk losing themselves in the needs and struggles of others, thereby weakening their capacity for growth.

He reinforces this idea by stating: You flee to your neighbor to escape yourself and you want to make a virtue of it: but I see through your 'selflessness,' … that your love of the neighbor is your bad love of yourselves (Zarathustra, 104).

Similarly, Nietzsche argues that individuals often abandon their demanding path of self-overcoming in favor of social comfort and moral approval: our 'own path' is too hard and demanding and too far from the love and gratitude of others, we are not at all unwilling to escape from it, from our own conscience, and take refuge in the conscience of others and the lovely temple of the 'religion of compassion' (GS, 338).

Thus, compassion becomes a mechanism of avoidance rather than strength, preventing individuals from fully engaging in self-creation. It leads to passive existence, where personal values are replaced by collective emotional dependence.

Nietzsche further emphasizes that maintaining individual judgment is essential for growth, as excessive empathy leads to passivity: It is a relief to count oneself the same as others, to try to feel as they do, to adopt current feeling: it is something passive compared with the activity that maintains and constantly practices the individual's right to value judgments (Kaufmann, 2013, 72).

In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche explicitly rejects Schopenhauerian compassion, arguing that suffering is necessary for human elevation and self-transformation: The discipline of suffering, of great suffering– do you not know that only this discipline has created all enhancements of the human being so far? […] And our compassion– do you not understand for whom our reverse compassion is when it defends itself against your compassion as the worst of all mollycoddling and undermining? (BGE, 225).

Ultimately, Nietzsche does not advocate complete denial of suffering but rather a reorientation toward it. Suffering should not be absorbed through compassion for others, but transformed into a force for self-overcoming and personal growth.

Buddhist Compassion

On the contrary, compassion in Buddhist terms is invigorating and stimulating rather than depressing. It is not vulnerability when witnessing people's plight; rather, it is active engagement with others' unfortunate circumstances. In the novel, while the mother is very much concerned about the issues of others and believes in "goodness" and "giving" as well as "the accumulation of kindness," the daughter is very much concerned about her own matters and is not willing to dedicate her time to compassionate practices: She was looking at me then, and I knew that she wanted me to be with her on this, to follow her, but to my shame I found that I could not and worse, that I could not even pretend. Instead, I looked at my watch and said that visiting hours were almost over, and that we should probably go (CEFS, 121).

In fact, Buddhist loving-kindness is a practice aimed at cultivating goodwill towards oneself as well as other sentient beings. People need to systematically extend their compassion and joy to other individuals, even adversaries. Accordingly, they can transcend personal limitations and biases, which would foster a sense of peace and harmony while radiating goodwill and positive energy to others. This exercise can encourage a sense of interconnectedness with all beings. Tiloka, in "Compassion in Theravada Buddhism: A Comprehensive

Exploration," contends: Practitioners strive to live in accordance with the Five Precepts, which include refraining from harming living beings, refraining from taking what is not freely given, refraining from sexual misconduct, refraining from false speech, and refraining from intoxicants that cloud the mind (Tiloka, 2025, 3295).

Hence, compassionate practices can encourage integrity and mindfulness, contributing to a more harmonious society.

The mother in the novel is deeply concerned about warmth and kindness not only within her own family but also toward others, to the extent that her wish would be that if she were to experience a kind of coldness, it would be like snow that is easily melted.

CONCLUSION

In Jessica Au's Cold Enough for Snow, many instances of both Buddhist and Nietzschean thought can be observed. While Nietzsche's concept of the Overman shares with Buddhism the need to turn inward and exercise mindfulness, they differ in that this internal journey, for Nietzsche, encourages the Will to Power, whereas in Buddhism it is imbued with the idea of emptiness and non-attachment to worldly phenomena.

They also differ in their approach to compassion. Whereas Nietzsche sees compassion as an obstacle to self-transcendence, Buddhism regards it as essential and therefore obligatory for every individual. Likewise, both the mother and daughter in the novel are concerned with mindfulness in life, which is why they symbolically embark on a journey to Tokyo, where they carefully observe their surroundings. They take the trip in autumn, their favourite season, when contemplation is most expected. During this journey, they explore their perspectives on life and discover both their differences and shared interests.

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