

Is a Nietzschean Defense of the Christian Valuation of Human Life Tenable?¹

Alexis Deodato S. Itao

Abstract: This paper asks whether a Nietzschean defense of the Christian valuation of human life is tenable. Nietzsche has long been noted for his anti-Christian stance in his writings. Despite his candid revulsion and antipathy towards Christianity, however, there are scholars who argue that Nietzsche is a “Christian,” because we can actually find a good number of Nietzschean ideas that coincide with the teachings of the Christian faith. Foremost of these ideas is Nietzsche’s insistence that life must be affirmed and valued at all times — a position that perfectly resonates with the Christian doctrine on the value of human life. For this reason, in this paper, I aim to examine whether a Nietzschean defense of the Christian valuation of human life is tenable, given that Nietzsche’s writings abound with direct and scathing attacks against Christianity.

Keywords: Nietzsche, Christianity, Christian morality, human life

Nietzsche and Christianity

It is common knowledge that the German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) wrote plenty of harsh criticisms and acerbic diatribes against Christianity. For him, Christianity is simply “the greatest disaster for humanity so far.”² As such, it rightly deserves condemnation. “I

¹ I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Edward Kanterian (University of Kent, U.K.) for generously sharing his research work on Nietzsche with me. I am equally immensely grateful to Prof. Dr. Paolo A. Bolaños (University of Santo Tomas, The Philippines) for introducing me to Nietzsche’s philosophy of affirmation, in an unforgettable semester full of profound intellectual discussion and exchange.

² Friedrich Nietzsche, “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,” in *Twilight of the Idols: Or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, ed. by Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. by Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), §47. Henceforth, *Twilight of the Idols* will be referred to as *TI*. Nietzsche

condemn Christianity,” he said. “I indict the Christian church on the most terrible charges an accuser has ever had in his mouth. I consider it the greatest corruption conceivable.”³ From these two pronouncements alone, one can readily suppose that “Nietzsche really *hates* Christianity, and he makes the reader feel it. He hectors; he insists ... He is ... someone who finds Christianity genuinely maddening.”⁴ That is why, in his view, “it is indecent to be a Christian.”⁵ And he would underline this point by adding, “*And this is where my disgust [for Christianity] begins.*”⁶

Certainly, we can add a lot more to these anti-Christian vitriols that Nietzsche seemed to never run out of. But it would not be necessary as, at the bottom, what he wanted to drive at is the same: Christianity is, in many respects, a flawed religion. Obviously, if we solely consider Nietzsche’s overly negative and highly critical statements against Christianity, that’s already the end of the story. Nietzsche and Christianity would only stand as contradictories, fundamentally opposed to and irreconcilable with one another. I believe, however, that Nietzsche has a Christian side to him that has remained largely unexplored. In fact, if we closely examine his writings, we will find that Nietzsche actually had plenty of good words for Christianity — though perhaps not as plenty as his criticisms.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche had this to say: “The way in which respect for the *Bible* has, on the whole, been maintained in Europe might be the best piece of discipline and refinement in manners that Europe owes to Christianity.”⁷ Nietzsche supported this observation in a fragment that he later wrote, expressing how “the most estimable people I know were Christians without any falsehood in them ... My own ancestors were Protestant clerics [who gave] me a noble and pure sense.”⁸ A similar appreciation, this time combined with some sense of pride, can also be found

wrote *TI* in late 1888, a few months before he would have a mental collapse in Turin, Italy on 3 January 1889, from which he would never recover.

³ Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, §62. Emphasis original. Henceforth, *The Anti-Christ* will be referred to as *AC*.

⁴ Aaron Ridley, Introduction to Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, ix. Emphasis original.

⁵ *AC*, §38.

⁶ *Ibid.* Emphasis original.

⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed. by Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Judith Norman, trans. by Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), §263.

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe*, Vol. 13, 622, quoted in Edward Kanterian, “Life’s Affirmation and Denial: Nietzsche as a Christian,” in *Nietzsche on Morality and the Affirmation of Life*, ed. by Daniel Came (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 202. The *Kritische Studienausgabe* (*KSA*) is the critical edition of Nietzsche’s works and notebooks compiled together and published in 15 volumes between 1967 and 1988, with both Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, two well-respected Nietzschean scholars, serving as editors. Many scholars consider the *KSA* as the most authoritative and scholarly edition of Nietzsche’s writings.

in another work, in which Nietzsche proudly declared: “I consider it an honor to descend from a family which in every respect has taken seriously its Christianity.”⁹ Then, in *Daybreak*, albeit he filled it with bitter harangues against Christianity, Nietzsche could still not help but admit how Christianity is “a great comfort to the exhausted and despairing in the wilderness.”¹⁰ And it is perhaps due to his deep admiration and esteem for Christianity that Nietzsche would affirm that “the Church is under all circumstances a *nobler* institution than the state.”¹¹ Nietzsche is explicitly and plainly saying here “under *all*” and not “under *some*” circumstances—a crystal clear indication that he held the Church, and in effect Christianity, in high regard.

That Nietzsche had a high regard for Christianity is further evidenced by a letter he wrote to his friend Peter Gast (whose real name was Johann Heinrich Köselitz), in which Nietzsche confessed: “[Christianity] is still and all the best piece of ideal life that I have really known; I have followed it since I was a child, into many nooks, and I think that in my heart, I have *never* been scornful against it.”¹² A similar letter, sent to another friend Franz Overbeck two days later, contains almost the same confession. Nietzsche wrote: “I have never, in my heart, been scornful against [Christianity] and have since childhood made an inner effort for its ideals, though in the end, admittedly, the outcome was always a pure impossibility.”¹³

We can therefore find in Nietzsche’s *oeuvre* two seemingly conflicting positions: his popular stance *against*, and his largely unrecognized stance *in favor of*, Christianity. But is there really a conflict in Nietzsche’s views? Was

⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsches Werke* (Leipzig, 1914), IV (*Nachgelassene Werke*), §223, quoted in Hans Kelsen, “Nietzsche the Christian,” in *Secular Religion: A Polemic Against the Misinterpretation of Modern Social Philosophy, Science and Politics as “New Religions”* (New York: SpringerWien, 2012), 199.

¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, ed. by Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. by R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), §59. According to scholars, *Daybreak* “marks the beginning of Nietzsche’s central philosophical project: a reevaluation of all values, a thorough-going critique of morality itself ... More importantly, it is the book that first develops in a substantial way themes that mark the ‘mature’ Nietzsche.” So, his words of appreciation for Christianity here are something that must have come from an already mature perspective. For details, see Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, Introduction to *Daybreak*, viii.

¹¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, ed. by Bernard Williams, trans. by Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), §358. Emphasis original. Nietzsche himself considered *The Gay Science* “the most personal of his books.” That being so, his esteem for the Church here, and subsequently for Christianity, could also be something very personal. For details, see Bernard Williams, Introduction to *The Gay Science*, xi.

¹² Friedrich Nietzsche, “Letter to Peter Gast (21 September 1881),” quoted in Kanterian, “Life’s Affirmation and Denial,” 201. Emphasis original.

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Letter to Franz Overbeck (23 September 1881),” in *KSB* 6, 110, quoted in Kanterian, “Life’s Affirmation and Denial,” 201.

he only contradicting himself by criticizing and admiring Christianity simultaneously?

Aaron Ridley observes that while “Nietzsche’s increasingly obsessive attitude toward Christianity” began early on “it is only in 1888, the last of his productive life, that Christianity begins in a serious way to be equated with everything that Nietzsche finds most objectionable in modern culture.”¹⁴ And yet, a fragment from that very same year reveals that Nietzsche actually “distinguishes between Christianity as a cure against contemporary man’s rawness and as the very symptom of the illness of *décadence*.”¹⁵ This distinction is paramount because it clarifies that the Christianity he subjected to the fiercest attacks is *not* the same Christianity that he had always admired. As Thomas Nevin emphasized, “Nietzsche’s animus [was] against the bourgeois and hence pseudo-Christianity of his time.”¹⁶ In other words, he was never really after mainstream Christianity, whether Protestantism (the dominant religion in Germany in Nietzsche’s lifetime) or Catholicism (the dominant religion in southern Europe, particularly Italy, which he liked to frequent); rather, his vehemence was specifically directed “against the bogus-Christianity of Bismarck’s new Germany.”¹⁷ And this so-called pseudo- or bogus-Christianity, which he found “most objectionable in modern culture,” had a name: Christendom.¹⁸

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)—who, like Nietzsche, is considered a towering figure in the history of philosophy—offered a succinct explanation of how Christendom substantially and significantly differs from genuine Christianity. He said:

Christendom for Nietzsche is the historical, world-political phenomenon of the Church and its claim to power within the shaping of Western humanity and its modern culture. Christendom in this sense and the

¹⁴ Aaron Ridley, “Guilt Before God, or God Before Guilt? The Second Essay of Nietzsche’s *Genealogy*,” in *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 29 (2005), 38, <<https://doi.org/10.1353/nie.2005.0008>>.

¹⁵ Kanterian, “Life’s Affirmation and Denial,” 201, citing *KSA*, 13, 448.

¹⁶ Thomas R. Nevin, *Nietzsche’s Protestant Fathers: A Study in Prodigal Christianity* (London: Routledge, 2019), 267.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 263. Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) was Germany’s first-ever Chancellor (*Reichskanzler*) from 1871 to 1890, which practically covered the entire duration of Nietzsche’s active literary career. Labeled as the “Iron Chancellor,” Bismarck was the main architect of the so-called “new Germany” — that is, the newly established German Empire. Its historic establishment in 1871 marked the unification of Germany, which hitherto comprised several small kingdoms, states, duchies, and principalities. For further reading, see Jonathan Steinberg, *Bismarck: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁸ See Nevin, *Nietzsche’s Protestant Fathers*, 269 and 273.

Christianity of the New Testament faith *are not the same*. Even a non-Christian life can affirm Christendom and use it as a means of power, just as, conversely, a Christian life does not necessarily require Christendom. Therefore, a confrontation with Christendom is *absolutely not in any way an attack against what is Christian*, any more than a critique of theology is necessarily a critique of faith.¹⁹

Heidegger is not the only one who has this view. The equally influential Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) held that “Nietzsche’s struggle against Christianity arises out of his own Christendom.”²⁰ That means that what Nietzsche had been lambasting all along was not really the Christian faith *per se* but the prevalent “Christian” culture and practice in Europe—in short, Christendom—which he found scandalous and loathsome. As Patrick Moroney confirms, Nietzsche was not truly anti-Christian but anti-Christendom; for although he would hurl ruthless and pointed attacks at “Christianity,” they were, in reality, attacks against Christendom.²¹

So, despite his candid revulsion and antipathy towards “Christianity,” if we look at his works more closely, Nietzsche is far from being completely hostile towards it. On the contrary, he continually expressed admiration for it. That explains why there are scholars who argue that Nietzsche is a “Christian,” or at least someone who shares some affinity with the Christian faith: because we can actually find a good number of Nietzschean ideas that coincide with the teachings of Christianity. These

¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, “The Word of Nietzsche: ‘God is Dead,’” in *The Question Concerning Technology*, trans. with an introduction by William Lovitt (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), 63–64. Emphases mine.

²⁰ Karl Jaspers, *Wahrheit und Leben: Ausgewählte Schriften* (Stuttgart-Zürich-Salzburg, 1965), 356, quoted in Kanterian, “Life’s Affirmation and Denial,” 209. Jaspers is among the most renowned existentialist philosophers. Due to the unavailability of English translations of Jaspers’ *Nietzsche und das Christentum*, I consulted and perused the available Italian translation that I could comfortably understand, see Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche e il Cristianesimo*, trans. by Maria Dello Preite (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1952).

²¹ Patrick Moroney, “Nietzsche: Anti-Christendom, Not Anti-Christian,” in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 54:4 (1988), 304, <<https://doi.org/10.1177/002114008805400404>>.

52 NIETZSCHEAN DEFENSE

scholars, among others, include Georg Simmel,²² Karl Jaspers,²³ Karl Löwith,²⁴ Roger Hazelton,²⁵ Patrick Moroney,²⁶ Giles Fraser,²⁷ Bruce Ellis Benson,²⁸ Daniel Came,²⁹ and Edward Kanterian,³⁰ to name a few.

In this paper, I would like to center my inquiry on Nietzsche's insistence that life must be affirmed and valued at all times—a position that perfectly resonates with the Christian doctrine on the value of human life. I aim to examine whether, in view of Nietzsche's unwavering pro-life³¹ stance,

²² Georg Simmel (1858-1918) was one of the early scholars to study Nietzsche's writings seriously. In *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche* (originally published in 1907 as *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche: Ein Vortragszyklus*), Simmel noted: "Even though Nietzsche cannot understand the transcendence of Christianity, he testifies conspicuously to the success of that transcendence, which blinded him to the close relation of his own thought to Christian doctrine" (emphasis mine). For details, see Georg Simmel, *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*, trans. by Helmut Loiskandl, Deena Weinstein, and Michael Weinstein (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 142.

²³ See Jaspers, *Nietzsche e il Cristianesimo*.

²⁴ Karl Löwith (1897-1973) was a respected German philosopher, famous for being a student of both Husserl and Heidegger and for his voluminous writings. In Löwith's observation, "all the general topics of Christian apologetics against pagan philosophers recur in Nietzsche's philosophy." For this reason, he came to regard Nietzsche as someone who "was so thoroughly Christian." See Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949), 220–221.

²⁵ In an attempt to respond to the perennial question, "Was Nietzsche an anti-Christian?", Roger Hazelton claims that Nietzsche was technically not. Instead, the German philosopher was more of "a religious liberal ... for he shared with Christian liberals some of their most important distinctions and insights." For details, see Roger Hazelton, "Was Nietzsche an Anti-Christian?" in *The Journal of Religion*, 22:1 (January 1942): 65, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1197505>>.

²⁶ See Moroney, "Nietzsche: Anti-Christendom, Not Anti-Christian," 304 and 311.

²⁷ "Despite Nietzsche's enormous hostility to the Christian account of salvation it is important to recognize the extent to which his own position is related to, and clearly comes out of, the Christian tradition." See Giles Fraser, *Redeeming Nietzsche: On the Piety of Unbelief* (London: Routledge, 2002), 67.

²⁸ Benson maintains that "the extent to which Nietzsche remains connected to the logic—and perhaps even the substance—of Christianity is more significant than he realizes." See Bruce Ellis Benson, *Pious Nietzsche: Decadence and Dionysian Faith* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 190.

²⁹ Came suggests that Nietzsche "is *malgré lui* a Christian thinker," meaning, "that despite his avowed hostility to Christianity he may be deeply entangled in an interpretation of life and the world that he inherits directly from Christianity." It is precisely because of this deep entanglement that "Nietzsche was unable to fully extricate himself from the Christian worldview despite his most radical attempts to do so." For further reading, see Daniel Came, "Nietzsche as a Christian Thinker," in *Nietzsche on Morality and the Affirmation of Life*, 45 and 57.

³⁰ Kanterian believes that "the affinities between the Christian and Nietzsche's ethical outlooks, both taken as ways of coping with the problem of human existence ... [are] deeper affinities." Kanterian argues that in his "unwillingness to rest content with this world in all its brutality lies Nietzsche's deepest similarity with Christianity." See Kanterian, "Life's Affirmation and Denial," 201 and 216.

³¹ By pro-life, I refer to Nietzsche who proudly identifies himself as one of the "advocates of life" (*Fürsprecher des Lebens*). Such identification is significant for it is Nietzsche's open admission of his perceived philosophical mission, that is, as a champion of life and an enemy of

a Nietzschean defense of the Christian valuation of human life is tenable, given that despite having certain ideas that correspond with Christianity, Nietzsche's writings abound with direct attacks against Christian morality. To do this, I first briefly present Nietzsche's philosophy of affirmation. I next present, also briefly, the Christian valuation of human life. I then expose the prevalent anti-life position as a form of nihilism. I finally conclude this paper by responding to the question of whether a Nietzschean defense of the Christian valuation of human life is tenable. For my purposes, I limit my discussion to the topics that I just outlined above.

Nietzsche's Philosophy of Affirmation

One of the most repetitive themes throughout Nietzsche's corpus is his uncompromising position that life (*Leben*) must at all times be affirmed and prized with the highest value. It can easily be said as one of his central philosophical concerns since "Nietzsche has a long-standing interest in the question of the 'value of life' (*Werth des Lebens*)."³² For Bernard Reginster, however, the value of life and its affirmation is something more; it represents Nietzsche's "defining philosophical achievement. We truly 'understand' him, he warns us, only insofar as we understand what the affirmation of life amounts to."³³ Tom Stern holds a similar view, maintaining that "[a]ffirmation is the pinnacle of Nietzsche's ethics and any attempt to outline a positive project in his work must grapple with its nature and its significance."³⁴ But what exactly is this life that we must affirm? Does it refer to all life forms, to life in general, or solely to human life? And what does affirmation mean in the first place?

In Nietzsche's works, while he no doubt recognizes all organisms to possess life, "his attention is overwhelmingly focused on one particular kind of organism, the *human*."³⁵ As Julian Young also confirms, Nietzsche's

nihilism (I will discuss about nihilism in the next section). For details, see Friedrich Nietzsche, "Book One: European Nihilism," in *The Will to Power*, §263, ed. by Walter Kaufmann, trans. by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968). Emphasis original. Henceforth, *The Will to Power* will be referred to as *WP*.

³² John Richardson, "Nietzsche on Life's Ends," in *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*, ed. by Ken Gemes and John Richardson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 770.

³³ Bernard Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism* (London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 2.

³⁴ Tom Stern, "Against Nietzsche's Theory of Affirmation," in *Nietzsche on Morality and the Affirmation of Life*, 170.

³⁵ Richardson, "Nietzsche on Life's Ends," in *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*, 765. Emphasis original.

54 NIETZSCHEAN DEFENSE

“interest is clearly confined to *human* life.”³⁶ His philosophy of affirmation is anchored on his firm belief that human life is of “absolute value.”³⁷ For this, it has to be affirmed, not denied; appreciated, not depreciated; valued, not devalued; respected, not disrespected; and loved, not hated. “But *what is life?*”³⁸ Nietzsche himself asked, then offered his own response: “Here we need a new, more definite formulation of the concept of ‘life.’ My formula for it is: Life is will to power.”³⁹ But what does it mean?

According to Gilles Deleuze, for Nietzsche, the *will to power* “doesn’t mean (or at least doesn’t primarily mean) that the will *wants* power or *wishes* to dominate.”⁴⁰ To clarify Nietzsche’s definition of life, Paolo Bolaños further elaborates Deleuze’s interpretation of Nietzsche, saying:

Deleuze understands power not as the object of the will, as it were outside it. According to Deleuze, power is the “motor” of the will and not that which is desired by the will. As the very principle that animates the will, power thus is never separated from willing. Every willing entails a manifestation of power. This means that there is no willing without power, for in the first place it is power which determines whether the moment of willing itself is either affirmative or negative.⁴¹

Therefore, if life itself is *will to power* for Nietzsche, then based on Deleuze’s explanation, it all boils down to two directions: either to the affirmation of life itself, or to its negation. That is to say, you can either live your life affirmatively, embracing its ups and downs, as well as its moments of joys and sufferings; or, you can live your life in a negative—or, to be precise, nihilistic—way, denying life itself any value. Yet for Nietzsche, life itself “is the highest expression of all values—beyond good and evil.”⁴²

³⁶ Julian Young, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 126. Emphasis original.

³⁷ *WP*, I, §4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, II, §254. Emphasis original.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. by Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 73. Emphasis original.

⁴¹ Paolo A. Bolaños, *On Affirmation and Becoming: A Deleuzian Introduction to Nietzsche’s Ethics and Ontology* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 21.

⁴² Paolo A. Bolaños, “Nietzsche’s Critique of Nihilism and the Possibility of the Eternal Return as Ethical Imperative,” in *Thought-Pieces: Nietzschean Reflections on Anti-foundationalism, Ethics, and Politics* (Davao City: ALETHEIA Printing and Publishing House, 2021), 72.

Human existence is thus not a problem, but it starts to become problematic when nihilism starts to creep in.⁴³ Deleuze concisely describes a nihilistic life:

Life takes on the value of nil insofar as it is denied and depreciated. Depreciation always presupposed a fiction: it is by means of fiction that something is opposed to life. The whole of life then becomes unreal, it is represented as appearance, it takes on a value of nil in its entirety. The idea of another world, of a supersensible world in all its forms (God, essence, the good, truth), the idea of values superior to life, is not one example among many but the constitutive element of all fiction.⁴⁴

So, this is the principal basis for Nietzsche's call for a reevaluation of all values (*Umwertung aller Werte*): nihilism has already blinded many to the point that they can no longer see the value not only of life but even of this world; they have been glued to the fictional, forgetting that what is right before their eyes is what is real. Hence, as a form of remedy, Nietzsche prescribes his affirmative philosophy, which Bolaños perfectly summarizes in this way: "We have to respond to life — we have to affirm it, come hell or high water!"⁴⁵ But does the Nietzschean affirmation of life also presuppose valuing life in the womb?

It might be surprising to some, but in *WP*, Nietzsche actually denounced abortion as "the most fatal kind of megalomania there has ever been on earth."⁴⁶ Not only that, but he also further considered abortion as something "cadaverous"⁴⁷ and "repellent"⁴⁸—meaning, it is a repugnant act, "full of hatred for the impulses of life, full of mistrust of all that is beautiful and happy in life."⁴⁹ Of course, one could argue that Nietzsche here is speaking of abortion in a metaphorical sense. Even so, I would like to think that Nietzsche had an unstated commitment to the unborn; abortion for him

⁴³ Dominic Yates provides a succinct description of nihilism. He says: "Nietzsche, though he used various senses of 'nihilism', had two main conceptions: nihilism as the belief that life is meaningless (which I term 'value-nihilism'), and nihilism as negation of life." For details, see Dominic Yates, "Nietzsche on Nihilism," MPhilStud thesis (Birkbeck College, University of London, 2020), 3, <<https://doi.org/10.18743/PUB.00040217>>.

⁴⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 147.

⁴⁵ Bolaños, "Nietzsche's Critique of Nihilism and the Possibility of the Eternal Return as Ethical Imperative," 83.

⁴⁶ *WP*, II, §202.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, §226.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, §239.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, §397.

would have very much qualified “as a *crime against life*.”⁵⁰ As he lamented in *WP*, today’s (it was, of course, the today of his time, but what he said still remains valid in our time) valuation of human life “is antibiological ... a fruit of the decadence of life.”⁵¹ This particular lament more than reaffirms that Nietzsche’s “is a life philosophy, one that embraces not merely the actual (i.e. existents) but the *Bios* of the world and organic nature—what in German is bound up with *Naturphilosophie*.”⁵² In this sense, Nietzsche can be said to be pro-life,⁵³ even to life (*Bios*) that is still in the womb. That is why nihilism must be overcome with a solid philosophy of affirmation; it is nothing but “the frustration of, in Nietzsche’s view, the most fundamental of all impulses.”⁵⁴

Speaking of fundamental impulses, one of these—the procreative impulse—is of great significance to the German thinker’s affirmative philosophy. As John Mandalios explains: “Affirmation is linked in various ways by Nietzsche to the procreative impulse in nature.”⁵⁵ Why? The answer is that life, as will to power, essentially entails having the power of a creator (*Schaffender*)—a power that is driven by the impulse to procreate, which is what makes it capable to beget.⁵⁶ And what is to beget if not “the capacity to give life, to endow through creation the gift of living, thereby bestowing descendants upon the face of the earth.”⁵⁷ Nietzsche’s affirmation of life, hence, includes valuing this procreative power, this very capacity to beget new life. These telling lines from *TSZ* support this point: “Where is innocence? Where there is will to beget. And whoever wants to create over and beyond himself, he has the purest will.”⁵⁸

It might be construed as stretching a bit much Nietzsche’s philosophy of affirmation, but I think it can be safely supposed that for Nietzsche, to affirm life also entails allowing our procreative impulse, our inherent power to beget, to function as it should. Otherwise, Nietzsche himself would be reproaching us, saying: “Indeed, you do not love the earth as creators, begetters, and enjoyers of becoming!”⁵⁹

⁵⁰ *AC*, §47. Emphasis original.

⁵¹ *WP*, I, §53.

⁵² John Mandalios, *Transcendence, the Divine, and Nietzsche* (Newcastle upon Tyre: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023), 120.

⁵³ See Footnote 31.

⁵⁴ Young, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Religion*, 124.

⁵⁵ See Mandalios, *Transcendence, the Divine, and Nietzsche*, 150.

⁵⁶ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, I, “On Old and New Tablets,” §11, ed. by Adrian del Caro and Robert B. Pippin, trans. by Adrian del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Henceforth, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* will be referred to as *TSZ*.

⁵⁷ Mandalios, *Transcendence, the Divine, and Nietzsche*, 175.

⁵⁸ *TSZ*, II, “On Immaculate Perception.”

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

The Christian Valuation of Human Life

With his philosophy of affirmation, Nietzsche insists that life must be affirmed and valued at all times. This Nietzschean position, perhaps unbeknownst even to Nietzsche himself, actually perfectly resonates with the Christian doctrine on the value of human life. While today there is no uniform stance across all Christian churches in regard to the value of life, it was not so in Nietzsche's time. Although there were obvious differences in several doctrinal and theological teachings in mainstream Christianity, they had fundamentally the same valuation of human life. As a Catholic priest reveals,

It is a historical fact that no Christian church accepted contraception before 1930. In fact, up until 1930 every Christian church strongly condemned the use of unnatural forms of birth control. It was only in 1930 that the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Church first allowed the use of such things in certain select cases. It is a historical fact in the last century, our Protestant legislators passed laws which prohibited, under penalty of law, the purchase and manufacture or even possession of contraceptive devices. It was against the law. Finally the leaders of the Protestant Reformation and in particular, Martin Luther, strongly condemned the use of unnatural forms of birth control. So, we see that at least for nineteen hundred and thirty years of Christianity, contraception was condemned by all Christians and was seen as a great evil.⁶⁰

Unfortunately, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, practically every Christian church has already welcomed not only contraception, but also abortion and euthanasia. Only the Catholic Church is left standing, refusing to change its traditional doctrines.⁶¹ Given this fact, I have to refer to official Catholic documents in explaining the Christian valuation of human life as no other Christian church has continued to embrace what all Christian churches used to hold in common.

While Church teachings have remained the same throughout the two millennia of its existence, in Nietzsche's time, there were no official

⁶⁰ Anthony Kopp, O.Praem., "The Church's Moral Teaching on Contraception, Part 1," in Jason T. Adams, *Called to give Life: A Sourcebook on the Blessings of Children and the Harm of Contraception* (Dayton: One More Soul, 2003), 81.

⁶¹ For brevity, the Roman Catholic Church will henceforth be simply referred to as "the Church" or "Church."

documents that elaborated and clarified its perennial position against contraception, abortion, and euthanasia. It was only in recent years that, in response to the spread of anti-life culture across the globe, the Church began to put into writing what it has always taught from the very beginning. The Church's official teaching about the value of human life is, therefore, not something new albeit it did not exist in written form when Nietzsche was alive. This is what the Church says:

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person—among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.⁶²

For this reason, abortion is seen as “a grave offense” as it is primarily a “crime against human life.”⁶³ To further highlight this teaching, the CCC emphasizes: “Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.”⁶⁴ Even before the new CCC was promulgated in the early 1990s, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith had already issued an official document, in which it affirmed: “The gift of life which God the Creator and Father has entrusted to man calls him to appreciate the inestimable value of what he has been given and to take responsibility for it.”⁶⁵ Then, more than two decades later, the same Vatican Congregation reaffirmed the unchanging nature of the Church's teaching on abortion, saying:

God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of

⁶² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002), no. 2270. Henceforth, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* will be referred to as CCC.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, no. 2272.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 2274.

⁶⁵ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation: Replies to Certain Questions of the Day” (22 February 1987), <https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19870222_respect-for-human-life_en.html>. This particular document is also commonly known as *Donum Vitae*.

conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.⁶⁶

So, there is no question that for the Church, life is sacred and, therefore, must be affirmed “especially at the more significant moments of existence: the moment of birth and the moment of death.”⁶⁷ Yes, even at its very last moments, the Church still considers human life inviolable. That is why, euthanasia, and even more so suicide and capital punishment, are unacceptable.⁶⁸ Sadly, despite the clarion call by the Church for humanity, particularly Christians, to do away with any act that deliberately terminates a human life, many are doing the opposite, so that we can now see “the more alarming symptoms of the ‘culture of death’, which is advancing above all in prosperous societies.”⁶⁹

The Culture of Death as a Form of Nihilism

The so-called “culture of death” that Popes since Paul VI down to Francis have strongly condemned is a relatively new social and cultural phenomenon that has characterized modern society in the last sixty years. Such a “culture” is built upon an anthropological philosophy that says every person has the right to do as they wish with their own life, and this includes the right to terminate it if the person so chooses (either via euthanasia or suicide), not to mention the right to terminate a pregnancy at any stage should the couple involved, especially the woman, choose to do so. This is how this particular philosophy has come to be known as “pro-choice”: because at its core is the person’s liberty to choose what is “best” for their life, even if that should translate into the literal loss of a life.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Clarification on Procured Abortion,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (11 July 2009), <https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20090711_aborto-pr_ocurato_en.html>.

⁶⁷ Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), no. 18. Henceforth, *Evangelium Vitae* will be referred to as *EV*.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 65–66. See also CCC, nos. 2277 (on euthanasia) and 2280 (on suicide). In August 2018, Pope Francis even ordered that the catechism be revised so there would be no room for doubt that capital punishment “is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person.” See Cindy Wooden, “Pope Revises Catechism to Say Death Penalty is ‘Inadmissible,’” *Catholic News Service* (14 August 2018), <<https://www.archstl.org/pope-revises-catechism-to-say-death-penalty-is-inadmissible-2755>>.

⁶⁹ Pope John Paul II, *EV*, no. 64.

⁷⁰ A comprehensive and critical study of the pro-life philosophy that I recommend is *Persons, Moral Worth, and Embryos: A Critical Analysis of Pro-Choice Arguments*, ed. by Stephen Napier (London: Springer, 2011).

The pro-choice philosophy, especially following the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling *Roe v. Wade* that legalized abortion across the United States,⁷¹ has since grown to become a vast movement, even becoming “a significant force in American politics.”⁷² The pro-choice movement’s growth and subsequent transformation into a prevalent culture, however, has been a cause of major concern for the Church. In the view of the Church, the major problem with the pro-choice philosophy is that it promotes a culture of death. And the culture of death is, in every respect, an anti-life position; as such, it is a form of nihilism.⁷³ As Dominic Yates explains, nihilism, particularly from Nietzsche’s viewpoint, may be mainly understood in two senses: either “as the belief that life is meaningless” or as the very “negation of life.”⁷⁴

Now if we go back to Nietzsche, he saw nihilism precisely “as a symptom of decay or sickness of what has hitherto been called culture—and by culture, we understand it to be a collective way of thinking—a mode of being or a typology.”⁷⁵ It is something pathological⁷⁶ that has become prevalent in the present—a pathology which, as if by foresight, Nietzsche correctly foresaw as the “predicament of the modern age.”⁷⁷ And, based on how Nietzsche described nihilism, it is all too clear that the culture of death can be categorized as such. For, as Bolaños notes, nihilism “operates whenever one’s sensitivity to life is disparaging, and that life itself is rendered dispensable.”⁷⁸ And this is exactly how the culture of death, the pro-choice philosophy, also operates: life is looked upon as something that can be discarded at will; it is dispensable. Given their very close resemblance, I would say that both nihilism and the culture of death can be taken as two sides of the same coin: because whichever side is on display, what you get is the same nemesis of life. Incidentally, Nietzsche has a fitting name for all

⁷¹ In the middle of 2022, after nearly five decades, the U.S. Supreme Court finally overturned *Roe v. Wade*, declaring that “the [U.S.] Constitution does not confer a right to abortion.” For details, see Nina Totenberg and Sarah McCammon, “Supreme Court Overturns *Roe v. Wade*, Ending Right to Abortion Upheld for Decades,” in *NPR News* (24 June 2022), <<https://www.npr.org/2022/06/24/1102305878/supreme-court-abortion-roe-v-wade-decision-overturn>>.

⁷² Suzanne Staggenborg, *The Pro-Choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 148.

⁷³ See Columbus Nnamdi Ogbujah, “The Culture of Death and the Crises of Modernity,” in *IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 6:8 (2020), 126 <<https://www.acjoi.org/index.php/iaajah/article/view/971>>.

⁷⁴ Yates, “Nietzsche on Nihilism,” 3.

⁷⁵ Bolaños, *On Affirmation and Becoming*, 9.

⁷⁶ *WP*, I, §13.

⁷⁷ Bolaños, “Nietzsche’s Critique of Nihilism and the Possibility of the Eternal Return as Ethical Imperative,” 60.

⁷⁸ Bolaños, *On Affirmation and Becoming*, 13.

those nihilists who embrace the culture of death: “despisers of life.”⁷⁹ And that’s what they really are.

The Tenability of a Nietzschean Defense of the Christian Valuation of Human Life

With how zealously passionate Nietzsche was in his fight against nihilism, it is plausible to think that if he were alive today, he would be as passionate in mounting violent attacks against the prevalent culture of death that characterizes modern society. But the question is: is a Nietzschean defense of the Christian valuation of human life tenable? As we have seen, there are plenty of “deeper affinities”⁸⁰ (to use Kanterian’s words) between Nietzsche’s own valuation of human life and the Christian valuation of human life: Nietzsche considers life as having absolute value, and so does Christianity. However, before answering the question above, let us first make some clarifications.

Nietzsche did not just attack “Christianity”; he accused it of being the very root of nihilism.⁸¹ Nietzsche thought that Christianity’s focus on the afterlife is exaggerated, such that this present life takes on a lesser, if not an altogether zero, value. But is Nietzsche really right in his appreciation and interpretation of the Christian valuation of human life? In this regard, I concur with Georg Simmel that when it comes “to the ultimate meaning of Christian valuation, Nietzsche completely misinterprets Christianity.”⁸² Because if we carefully apply a correct hermeneutics of its fundamental doctrines, we will see that it is not true that Christianity is nihilistic. On the contrary, Christianity is on the same page as Nietzsche with regard to the absolute value of human life. In addition, it is also not true that Christianity teaches people to despise this world and the body, as Nietzsche would like us to think; instead, the Church attaches great importance to life on earth, encouraging integral human development,⁸³ the development of a just society,⁸⁴ respect for the dignity of human labor,⁸⁵ and responsible stewardship of the environment,⁸⁶ among others, in its various official

⁷⁹ See *TSZ*, I, Prologue, §3.

⁸⁰ Kanterian, “Life’s Affirmation and Denial,” 201.

⁸¹ *WP*, I, §1.

⁸² Simmel, *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*, 141.

⁸³ See, for example, Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009).

⁸⁴ See, for example, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004).

⁸⁵ See *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ See, for example, Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015).

62 NIETZSCHEAN DEFENSE

documents. So how come Nietzsche got this all wrong? The answer, according to Simmel—and which I again concur—is due to “a great misunderstanding on Nietzsche’s part”⁸⁷ of what Christianity’s true teachings really are. As Patrick Moroney argues, what Nietzsche attacked was not really Christianity but Christendom; what he thought was Christianity was, all along, Christendom.⁸⁸

Certainly, one may argue that Simmel’s views are already passé, especially that his *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche* was first published more than a century ago. However, Kanterian does not think so, claiming that Simmel’s answers remain important for anyone who tries to reconcile Nietzsche’s seemingly conflicting positions about Christianity.⁸⁹ Another scholar, Dominika Partyga, likewise has similar thoughts, suggesting that “a more sustained investigation into Simmel’s engagement with Nietzsche ... [still] resonates with contemporary discussions on the ethics [of life].”⁹⁰ Thus, it would be unwise to simply dismiss Simmel as obsolete.⁹¹

Having made the necessary clarifications, let us now return to the question: is a Nietzschean defense of the Christian valuation of human life tenable? My answer is Yes. Because there are, to borrow from Kanterian again, plenty of “deeper affinities” between how Nietzsche viewed life and what Christianity teaches about the value of life. Both hold life as something extremely precious and too valuable to be just destroyed, denied, or devalued. Nietzsche, very much in congruence with Christianity, maintains that life must be protected and, at all costs, defended. I would even suggest that Nietzsche could be taken as anti-abortion (something that Nietzsche found as repugnant) and anti-contraception (contraception literally stops our procreative impulse). It is obviously in this sense that a Nietzschean defense of the Christian valuation of human life is tenable. Hence, to be able to offer a Nietzschean defense is simply to be able to take the side of life without having to resort to religious doctrines, standing firm that life must be valued at all times and at all costs. It is being able to repeat with Nietzsche these words from Paolo Bolaños: “We should affirm life and preserve the dignity of every human being.”⁹²

⁸⁷ Simmel, *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*, 140.

⁸⁸ Moroney, “Nietzsche: Anti-Christendom, Not Anti-Christian,” 310–312.

⁸⁹ Kanterian, “Life’s Affirmation and Denial,” 208.

⁹⁰ Dominika Partyga, “Simmel’s Reading of Nietzsche: The Promise of ‘Philosophical Sociology,’” in *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 16:4 (2016), 1, <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468795X16656267>>.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁹² Bolaños, “The Quest for Peace amidst the Death of God: Perspectives on Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Affirmation and Camus’s Ethics of Solidarity,” in *Thought-Pieces*, 139.

The Graduate School,
University of Santo Tomas, Manila

Social Sciences Department,
Cebu Normal University, Cebu
The Philippines

References

- Benson, Bruce Ellis, *Pious Nietzsche: Decadence and Dionysian Faith* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).
- Bolaños, Paolo A., *On Affirmation and Becoming: A Deleuzian Introduction to Nietzsche's Ethics and Ontology* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).
- _____, *Thought-Pieces: Nietzschean Reflections on Anti-foundationalism, Ethics, and Politics* (Davao City: ALETHEIA Printing and Publishing House, 2021).
- Came, Daniel, "Nietzsche as a Christian Thinker," in *Nietzsche on Morality and the Affirmation of Life*, ed. by Daniel Came, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 38–59.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002).
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Clarification on Procured Abortion," *L'Osservatore Romano* (11 July 2009), <https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20090711_aborto-procurato_en.html>.
- _____, "Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation: Replies to Certain Questions of the Day" (22 February 1987) <https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19870222_respect-for-human-life_en.html>.
- Deleuze, Gilles, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).
- _____, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. by Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001).
- Fraser, Giles, *Redeeming Nietzsche: On the Piety of Unbelief* (London: Routledge, 2002).
- Hazelton, Roger, "Was Nietzsche an Anti-Christian?" in *The Journal of Religion* 22:1 (January 1942), 63–88, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1197505>>.
- Heidegger, Martin, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead,'" in *The Question Concerning Technology*, trans. with an introduction by William Lovitt, 53-114 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977).

64 NIETZSCHEAN DEFENSE

- Jaspers, Karl, *Nietzsche e il Cristianesimo*, trans. By Maria Dello Preite (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1952).
- Kanterian, Edward, "Life's Affirmation and Denial: Nietzsche as a Christian," in *Nietzsche on Morality and the Affirmation of Life*, ed. by Daniel Came, 193–218.
- Kelsen, Hans, *Secular Religion: A Polemic Against the Misinterpretation of Modern Social Philosophy, Science and Politics as "New Religions"* (New York: SpringerWien, 2012).
- Kopp, Anthony, O.Praem., "The Church's Moral Teaching on Contraception, Part 1," in Jason T. Adams, *Called to give Life: A Sourcebook on the Blessings of Children and the Harm of Contraception* (Dayton: One More Soul, 2003).
- Löwith, Karl, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949).
- Mandalios, John, *Transcendence, the Divine, and Nietzsche* (Newcastle upon Tyre: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023).
- Moroney, Patrick, "Nietzsche: Anti-Christendom, Not Anti-Christian," in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 54:4 (1988), 302–312, <<https://doi.org/10.1177/002114008805400404>>.
- Napier, Stephen, ed., *Persons, Moral Worth, and Embryos: A Critical Analysis of Pro-Choice Arguments* (London: Springer, 2011).
- Nevin, Thomas R., *Nietzsche's Protestant Fathers: A Study in Prodigal Christianity* (London: Routledge, 2019).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed. by Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Judith Norman, trans. by Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- _____, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, ed. by Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. by R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- _____, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, ed. by Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. by Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- _____, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, ed. by Bernard Williams, trans. by Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- _____, *The Will to Power*, ed. by Walter Kaufmann, trans. by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968).
- _____, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ed. by Adrian del Caro and Robert B. Pippin, trans. by Adrian del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- Ogbujah, Columbus Nnamdi, "The Culture of Death and the Crises of Modernity," in *IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and*

- Humanities*, 6:8 (2020), 123–137, <<https://www.acjoll.org/index.php/iaajah/article/view/971>>.
- Partyga, Dominika, “Simmels’s Reading of Nietzsche: The Promise of ‘Philosophical Sociology,’” in *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 16:4 (2016), 1–24, <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468795X16656267>>.
- Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004).
- Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009).
- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015).
- Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995).
- Reginster, Bernard, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism* (London: Harvard University Press, 2006).
- Richardson, John, “Nietzsche on Life’s Ends,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*, ed. by Ken Gemes and John Richardson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 756–783.
- Ridley, Aaron, “Guilt Before God, or God Before Guilt? The Second Essay of Nietzsche’s *Genealogy*,” in *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 29 (2005), <<https://doi.org/10.1353/nie.2005.0008>>.
- Simmel, Georg, *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*, trans. by Helmut Loiskandl, Deena Weinstein, and Michael Weinstein (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991).
- Staggenborg, Suzanne, *The Pro-Choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- Steinberg, Jonathan, *Bismarck: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- Stern, Tom, “Against Nietzsche’s Theory of Affirmation,” in *Nietzsche on Morality and the Affirmation of Life*, ed. by Daniel Came, 170–192.
- Totenberg, Nina and Sarah McCammon, “Supreme Court Overturns Roe v. Wade, Ending Right to Abortion Upheld for Decades,” in *NPR News* (24 June 2022), <<https://www.npr.org/2022/06/24/1102305878/supreme-court-abortion-roe-v-wade-decision-overturn>>.
- Williams, Bernard, “Introduction,” in *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, ed. by Bernard Williams, trans. by Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- Wooden, Cindy, “Pope Revises Catechism to Say Death Penalty is ‘Inadmissible,’” Catholic News Service (14 August 2018), <<https://www.archstl.org/pope-revises-catechism-to-say-death-penalty-is-inadmissible-2755>>.

66 NIETZSCHEAN DEFENSE

Yates, Dominic, "Nietzsche on Nihilism," MPhilStud thesis (Birkbeck College, University of London, 2020), <<https://doi.org/10.18743/PUB.00040217>>.

Young, Julian, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).