Thou Art In Paradise Today:

A Nietzschean Treatise On the Life-Affirming Properties of Post-Modern Christianity

Written for Dr. Cynthia Coe, who expertly facilitated a consistent stream of forever-impactful dialectic this quarter in Existentialism

בהתחלה היה אדם, והאדם היה אלוהים

Introduction

In this paper I will elucidate the conditions under which Christianity can be employed as a subjective psychological tool to realize the Nietzschean conception of the good conscience. At first glance, this may appear as a project of the highest irony considering Nietzsche's grating criticisms of Christianity are typically seen as the biggest afront to the Judeo-Christian god since Lucifer's descent from paradise, and as he was the self-proclaimed Antichrist of John's *Revelation*, the concept of *God* as a metaphysically distinct being to whom the conscientious animal owes an eternal debt has surely been killed in just the way Nietzsche's madman prophecies in *The Gay Science.* It is just this kind of *dogmatic*[1] theology that gives rise to the ascetic denial of life found in traditional Christian orthodoxy, and it is due to this anti-human quality that Nietzsche categorizes modern Christianity as both a *nihilistic* sickness to be recovered from, and a necessary

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[1] *Dogmatic* refers to a belief or belief system that is seen as critically impenetrable, unquestionable, or absolutely true. For the purposes of this essay, it will be treated as more or less synonymous with the following terms: *modern, traditional,* and *supernatural*.

developmental stage preceding the arrival of his ideal psychological state, that of the *OverMan*. Before I justify my claim that Christianity can be reappropriated by the contemporary Nietzschean thinker in order to realize the good conscience, self-determined human flourishing, or the state of the OverMan, there are several terms and key Nietzschean concepts that require severe qualification. In the following order, I will provide the necessary background for the terms: Master and Slave Morality, Asceticism, Bad and Good Conscience, Nietzschean Nihilism, and the OverMan. After a sufficiently deep explication of Nietzsche's psychological project, I will qualify post-modern Christianity as the most immediately available symbolic framework through which the contemporary sojourner can emancipate themselves from their slavery to externally determined ideals, and consequently actualize Nietzsche's formulation of the good conscience in accordance with the affirmation of one's subjective constitution of health.

PART I

General Explication of Nietzsche's Genealogy

As one of his most prodigious collections of essays to ever force its way into the history of Western philosophy, Friedrich Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* is a psycho-historical account of the origins, teleology, and future of what he declares to be purely subjective moral concepts. Along with a genealogical retracing of moral progression through careful etymology and historical analysis, this book provides the clearest existing organization of Nietzsche's re-evaluative conditions through which he aims to emancipate the "interesting animal" from the self-imposed chains of bad conscience that made it so,

and thus synthesize the frameworks of moral understanding that have hitherto dominated the past: that of the Master and the Slave (*GM,* section 6, pg. 33). To illustrate the psychological archetypes of the Master and the Slave, as well as the progression from the former to the latter in the moral conceptions of all persons both master and slave in social standing,[2] Nietzsche uses the bird of prey and the lamb as an analogous relationship (*GM,* section 13, pg. 44).

The Master's Self-Ascription of Goodness

The avian hunter evolved with talons and an appetite for small defenseless mammals while the lamb evolved as a herbivore with no means to defend against the brutality of the food chain. The eagle has a will to eat lambs and the power to bring that desire to fruition, while the lamb is hopeless to fight against it. Abstracted to the relationship between physically powerful and weak humans, Nietzsche explains that the lionous predators naturally abuse and dominate the vulnerable, resulting in "a disgusting procession of murder, arson, rape, and torture, exhilarated and undisturbed of soul . . . convinced they have provided the poets with a lot more material for song and praise" (*GM,* section 11, pg. 40). The moral principles held by these savage but positively egoistic[3] champions of self-ascribed nobility revolved solely around power, or their capacity to modify the world according to their will. From this psychological disposition towards the

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[2] There's a distinction here between the psychological archetypes and social roles because Nietzsche traces the development of the archetypes throughout the history of society, meaning that both the masters and slaves of humanity en masse once operated within the conceptual confines of Master morality, and eventually transitioned into the psychological framework of Slave morality.

[3] Nietzsche sees egoism as a necessary condition for human flourishing, only it must be constrained under self-determined principles. This will be developed later on.

inherent quality of oneself came the divergence of goodness and badness. The aforementioned Master formulates goodness as a classification of their own power, and badness as a classification of exterior weakness observed in contradistinction. With the same viciousness as an eagle with borborygmus, the Master consumes with no regard for the feelings of what they see as distinct kinds of things, conceptually separated by the natural law of *might makes right*.

The Slave's Demarcation of Evil and the Ascetic Ideal

Growing resentful of the incessant subjugation and unfortunate social circumstances wrought upon them by the self-determined power of the Masters, the weak, previously allegorized as lambs, devise the most dangerous kind of subterfuge; they invent what Nietzsche nominalizes as Slave morality. Brought about and popularized by another psychological type Nietzsche refers to as the priest, Slave morality arises through designating the Master and their expression of power as evil, and classifying the qualities of the lamb, namely weakness, as good in comparison *(GM,* section 13, pp. 44-45). It is from this point in the development of moral psychology that evil becomes associated with the expression of power, and virtue with weakness, thus laying the foundation for the invention of guilt, bad conscience, and the life-denying *nihilistic* disposition towards one's body that is the ascetic path. Delivered to the world like drops of poison by priests such as Jesus Christ and Siddhartha Gautama, the ascetic ideal functions as a soteriological methodology in conjunction with the guilt and bad conscience generated by Slave morality's dichotomy of good and evil. Having been convinced by the robe-donning lambs that fulfilling their natural desires is in fact *evil,* the eagle is first introduced to the concept

of guilt: the sense that they owe a debt to their fellow creatures (*GM,* pp. 63-64). Whereas

the creditor/debtor relationship of Master morality was a soul-less[4] transaction between

the debtor's typically economic shortcoming and the creditor's reciprocal infliction of

cruelty, once humanity's conscience developed past that of the simple blond beast to the

corporeally shackled soul of the ascetic ideal, punishment became a phenomenon of

"inward pain" due to the guilt now experienced by both scourger *and* scourged (*GM*, pp.

63-64).

We have now arrived at what Nietzsche proclaims to be the most dangerous aspect

of the ascetic ideal: punishment directed inward as recompense for one's inability to attain

to a non-earthly standard. The practice of self-flagellation common among monks in

Medieval Europe[5] serves as an indubitable example of the ascetic path's prohibition of

human flourishing as Nietzsche formulates it. The Catholic monk identifies the locus of

their personhood as a soul; an ethereal other-worldly ectoplasm whose eternal fate is

subject to the enforced ideals of a metaphysically distinct being. Consequently, they

perceive the body to be a mere corporeal cask through which all distractions, desires, and

sins arise, leading them to invertedly express their will to power through the mauling of

their own flesh in an attempt to both sow rewards for themselves in the afterlife and repay

the "primal ancestor" to whom they owe the incalculable debt of eternal salvation (*GM,* pg.

92). This disdain for the body exalted in the ascetic ideal is what Nietzsche refers to as the

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[4] In this context, the soul refers to the fabricated sense of guilt and shame made commonplace by the priest's slave-revolt in the general conception of values.

[5] Self-fagellation has occurred within most ascetic traditions in some form or another and is still practiced to varying extents today. Nevertheless, the Medieval Catholics had a subtle affinity for it, and that is why I mention them specifically.

"bad air" that he chokes on, the nihilism[6] that makes one "weary of *man"* as a being whose earthly life could be worth living; worth cherishing (*GM,* section 12, pp. 43-44).

Life-Affirmation and the OverMan

This brings us to the criterion by which Nietzsche evaluates the value that our fabricated moral frameworks hold for the flourishing of the profane,[7] corporeal, mammalian existence: the affirmation or denial of what makes one human. While Nietzsche does hold that we are animals bound by instinct and nature, he distinguishes the Homo Sapien from eagles, lions, and lambs by the metric of value instantiation. In other words, human beings create, modify, and preserve. We express this productive capacity in material and psychological substrate alike, resulting in technological as well as teleological achievements of profound stature. Stated in layman's terms, Nietzsche argues that we manufacture our values, meaning, and purposes in the exact manner that we erect cities and produce tools. Values, just like cities, didn't exist before us and will not exist without us. This is the basis of Nietzsche's perspectivism, which I will explicate further as the paper germinates. Despite his disdain for its heinous consequences regarding the pigeon-holed potential of human existence, Nietzsche reserves a critical and antagonistic respect for the priest and their invention of Slave morality, only he characterizes the construction of good and evil in much the same way as the climate scientist writing on the

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[6] Nietzsche's historical relationship to nihilism is obscure for a multitude of reasons, among which is the fact that although he referred to *himself* as a nihilist in an unpublished *Nachlass* he wrote in 1887, the term carries a distinct and specific meaning when he used in the *Genealogy,* which was incidentally published the same year.

[7] This term typically implies a negative quality, but I am using it merely as the antonym of divine. The fact that many readers will still associate inferiority and impurity with a word that directly translates to "not of God" is evidence in favor of Nietzsche's observations.

products of the Industrial Revolution. He tears out his mustache in frustration. He frantically warns his fellow inhabitants of the global ecosystem. He eventually collapses in exhaustion, staring up at Plant Scherer transfixed in a tortured state of rapture. His message has fallen on deaf ears, and as the Madman prophecies in section 125 of *The Gay Science,* he has "come too early."

We now return to the culminating project of Nietzsche's fifteen-steed chariot of a literary corpus, the revaluation of values taking place in the *Genealogy* and beyond point to a future progression of moral understanding, a psychological state of flourishing standing proudly above the preceding generations of thoughtless eagles and self-tortured lambs, a radically self-determined ideal: the OverMan. Written as *Übermensch* in the original German, Nietzsche's cryptic ideal has been the source of extensive scholarship preceding the inception of my phenomenal awareness, but it is possible to piece together a general framework with the appropriate skill. First appearing in *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* the OverMan is characterized as the rare breed of soul who is capable of emancipating themselves from the trappings of the ascetic ideal in favor of radical self-determination and subjective creation of life-affirming internal values. The OverMan finds comfort in their cosmic solitude, delighting in their position as the sole originator of value; the deified profane. This sojourner who has followed in Nietzsche's footsteps and successfully renounced the will to truth worships the very qualities that make them human. In a synthesis of the psychological types: Master and Slave, the emancipated OverMan once again exerts their will to power upon the external world instead of their own body, only they do not return to the Master's standard of incredulous damage output. Since the OverMan

is already accustomed to restraint, having once been a Slave to their guilt and bad conscience, they are now in a position to constrain the negative freedom of the Master in accordance with their self-determined and life-affirming principles.

Now that I have explicated the evaluative criterion Nietzsche applies to the OverMan's self-determined principles, namely their propensity to affirm human life and our external expression of the will to power, I must establish exactly what constitutes *affirmation of life* in Nietzsche's egoistic ideal. Nietzsche's denial of absolute truth, which I have hinted at throughout the paper with phrases such as *fabricated moral values* and *renouncement of the will to truth*, has been broadly referred to as *perspectivism*. The most crucial element of his epistemological position in relation to life-affirmation is Nietzsche's subjective account of health. The following quote from section 120 of *The Gay Science* colors in his view quite clearly: "There is no such thing as health in itself, and all attempts to define a thing in that way have lamentably failed. It is necessary to know thy aim, thy horizon, thy powers, thy impulses, thy errors, and especially the ideals and fantasies of thy soul, in order to determine what health implies even for thy body." The fulfilment of one's unique and individual needs, both physiological and psychological, constitutes affirmation of life. Thus, one's subjectively defined condition of health is the self-obscured and subconscious goal of the ascetic ideal, and the openly celebrated end of the OverMan.

PART II

Qualification of Post-Modernism

Now that Nietzsche's revaluative project has been sufficiently borne out for the purposes of this inquiry, I shall move on to my formulation of post-modern Christianity and my argument that it is a viable method of Nietzschean self-actualization. Initially arising as an architectural movement characterized by Avant Garde departures from typical building models, post-modernism, defined most plainly, is a rejection of modernity. The sphere of modernity one is referring to shifts according to the type of post-modernism one is engaging with, so seeing as this is not a paper on architecture or art, the modernity in question is the *modern period* of philosophy, which occurred roughly between the 17ᵗʰ and 19ᵗʰ centuries. Beginning with Rene Descartes and dying in a confused and tragic state with Friedrich Nietzsche,[8] the modern period contains the development and championing of absolute rational truth, while Nietzsche's deductive disembowelment of the Judeo-Christian *God* and all of his subsequent shadows marks the inception of post-modernist philosophy. The denial of absolute truth, order, and reason is, for Nietzsche and every perspectivist to follow him, a rejection of the very substratum of nihilistic life-denial itself. The post-modernist OverMan exchanges the illusion of absolute security for the practical toolset of absolute power; they "become Gods" themselves (*GS,* section 125).

A Positive Angle to Nietzsche's Characterization of Christ

Before I display the concept of *Christ Consciousness* and analyze the symbolic value of the cross as a safeguard against psychological self-flagellation, as well as a viable

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[8] Despite positing structured rationality in some form or another, Immanuel Kant, Georg Hegel, and Ludwig Feuerbach all made significant contributions to the destruction of a metaphysically distinct god's possibility, yet it was Nietzsche who attacked the notion of truth itself, which he saw as a lingering shadow emanating from the Judeo-Christian god's rotting ethereal corpse.

path towards overcoming the ascetic ideal, I shall begin this chapter with a quote from

section 35 of Nietzsche's *The Antichrist,* where he rewrites Luke's Biblical account of

Christ's conversation on the cross: "'That was verily a *divine* man, a child of God' - says the

thief. 'If thou feelest this' - answers the redeemer, - '*thou art in paradise,* thou art a child of

God.'" In the original passage of Luke 23:43, Christ says: "'today you will be with me in

paradise,'" insinuating that there is an eternal reward, an afterlife, waiting for him upon his

death. As it is written in Luke, this passage entails the proliferation of the ascetic ideal

within supernatural Christianity:[9] a denial of human life intrinsic to the acceptance of

death, in lieu of an ethereal continuity of consciousness whose position is determined by

its alignment with the divine and absolute conscience. For the reasons already explained

and more, Nietzsche detests this nihilistic style of scriptural interpretation. In presenting

the world with his own vision of Christ's mission and what it meant, Nietzsche hammered

the path forward for all post-modernist theology to come.

By replacing the prescient verb "will be" with "thou art," Nietzsche suggests that

Christ's heavenly ideal of sinlessness was not an other-worldly and inhuman ideal that one

must die to achieve, but actually a psychological state of withdrawn blessedness

exemplified by the natural life and death of Jesus as human being *in totum*. Nietzsche

admires Christ for living a life absent of ressentiment even amidst torture and execution,

which can appear ironic at first glance when transposed over Nietzsche's accusation of

Christianity as the primary drive of the "*slave revolt in morality"* (*Genealogy,* section 7, pg.

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[9] By "supernatural Christianity," I simply mean any sect or belief framework based on the teachings of Christ that posit a metaphysically distinct supernatural realm.

34). The Christian Slave revolt only occurred due to an intense hermeneutical error if one is to accept Nietzsche's post-modern interpretation of the Gospel, and now that the bad conscience has infected the Homo Sapien for two-thousand and twenty-four years, the contemporary sojourner can actualize the ideal of the OverMan using the symbolic framework of *Christ Consciousness.*

For Nietzsche, Christ's "psychological reality of 'redemption' [is] a new way of living, not a new belief" (*The Antichrist,* section 33). If the life of Christ is interpreted as a model for human self-actualization instead of the unattainable perfection of God, as is commonplace in dogmatic Christian theology, one can emancipate themselves from the elements of Slave morality within their own psyche using the very symbols responsible for its initial development. On page 5 of his impeccable paper titled *Nietzsche on the Deaths of Socrates and Jesus,* Morgan Rempel describes Nietzsche's psychological assessment of Christ in the following manner: "the Nazarene comes to trade largely in an 'inner world' of symbol and metaphor [] to psychologically distance himself from, and reduce the importance of, an external reality that causes this dangerously sensitive soul an inordinate amount of pain." The notion of escaping from a painful external world may sound the neurological alarm bell above one's conception file titled *ASCETIC IDEAL,* yet I will demystify how this presumption is not this case, proving that Christ's redemptive philosophy rests much closer to the Nietzschean ideal of the OverMan than the dogmatic interpretation portrays.

Post-Modern Interpretation of Christ's Psychology

Firstly, I will tackle Christ's avoidance of pain as Nietzsche purports[10] it. Despite his reluctance to ascribe to it an intrinsic essence of any kind, Nietzsche recognizes that pain is a physiologically necessary constant that provokes the mass of human conceptualization. In a quote from section 15 of *The Antichrist* that maps onto my overarching scheme rather well, Nietzsche says "the preponderance of pains over pleasures is the cause of this fictitious morality and religion." The *this* within this quote refers to the traditional Judeo-Christian worldview predicated on the ascetic ideal, whose entire symbology reinforces the bad conscience through the inverted expression of punishment I explicated earlier in the paper. Because the self-determined principles of the OverMan are just as fictitious as the purportedly absolute Christian dogma, the post-modernist thinker creates their worldview in response to those self-same pains of life, only they use these physical woes to their advantage by affirming pains necessary role in human life, as opposed to frustrating the issue by attempting to escape the body. While Christ's self-determined symbology of Heaven and God the Father may have been coping mechanisms for the ever-present hatred and violence he encountered in the Roman-occupied ancient world, such a framework was necessary for a metaphysical wanderer brimming with so much compassion.

One of the most crucial elements of the renunciation of Slave morality is that the OverMan cannot return to the psychology of the Master. This is due in part, to the way that

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[10] This is a play on Nietzsche's denial of absolute truth. Sorry if this footnote ruined the joke.

a genealogy functions.[11] In much the same way that a chicken cannot physiologically return to the velociraptor, the Slave cannot psychologically return to the Master; Nietzsche holds that they are different kinds of things. It is only through a synthesis of the Slave and the Master that the OverMan can walk across the pond of self-reflection into a brighter future. For this reason, Christ's psychological distancing from the "inordinate amount of pain" he was so predisposed to experience was a necessary move to secure his personal mental health (Rempel, pg. 5). In his denial to reciprocally punish the world in an external expression of his will to power, Christ simultaneously managed to avoid turning this punishment inwards towards himself. The essential apparatus of his world-changing psychological framework is forgiveness: the denial of sins, which he extended to himself and all who he encountered. It is just this methodology that Christ immortalized when he was tortured to death for his radical free expression on the final day of antiquity, and just this methodology, when understood through the post-modernist lens, that will serve as the OverMan's hallucinated[12] right hand.

Christ as OverMan

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[11] Nietzsche also sees the blond beast as a dumb and uninteresting wreaker of chaos, which is a less essential reason for his case that the post-modern human cannot return to the Master, but it is worth mentioning all the same.

[12] It would be hallucinated because it is not ultimately real or true; it is fabricated. This also plays on Mark 14:62, wherein Christ explicates his vision of heaven. As power manifested, he sits at the right hand of Yahweh. This verse contains some fascinating symbolism when one considers the Master/Slave dichotomy between the figures of Yahweh and Christ. The Masterful Yahweh displays unmediated negative freedom, while the dogmatic interpretation of Christ displays the ascetic self-control of the Slave. Neither the Master nor the Slave are truly free, for the Master lashes out from a place of insecurity, and the Slave subjugates themself. It is only in the Nietzschean synthesis of the two does one have meaningful authority in the world, and the post-modern Christ realized this synthesis in his metaphorical vision of heaven.

Although he successfully abstained from expressing his will to power in both the savage external mode of the Master and the priestly internal mode of the Slave, Christ made a significant impact on the proximate minds and matters throughout his cosmic blink of an eye. Not only were the people and places of his lifetime dramatically influenced, but the entire course of history was bent in accordance with his Gospel. This was a nihilistic misunderstanding of his Gospel surely, but the potential for an affirmative and joyous human existence remains conceptually nailed onto the cross due to the sole will of this free-spirited arbiter of love. Not only is he the most apparent historical example of someone who radically expressed their individual will without subjugating themselves or their fellow beings, but the post-modern Christ fits Nietzsche's characterization of the OverMan in several more endearing fashions.

Christ's Profane Divinity

The most obvious of these is the fact that Christ, a human, identified himself as God; the sole instantiator of values, the locus of all existence. Not as the creator in flesh, but the creator *as flesh*. This is made evident in John 14:9 when Jesus says to his disciple Phillip: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." In John 10:30: "I and the Father are one." In John 14:20: "I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." This profane identification with divinity embodied in the character of Jesus is a core element of Nietzschean self-actualization, and when employed in conjunction with the forgiveness model, the contemporary sojourner may have a real chance at conscientious emancipation. There exists an age-old maxim behind the stained glass of Christendom, wherein one asks themselves "what would Jesus do?" This question is often posed in jest,

but when projected in earnest, the supernatural Christian compares their human desires

with their conception of the absolute moral ideal: the sinless life of a non-human Christ.[13]

Because the supernatural Christian believes in the metaphysical dichotomy between

profanity and divinity, this makes their moral life impossible, and leaves them in an endless

cycle of guilt and extradited redemption. In contradistinction, the post-modern Christian

posits the following answer: *Jesus would declare themself God, free themself of the entire*

concept of sin, and defy any dogmatic religious institution that would attempt to subjugate

their freedom.

Christ's Extension of Sinlessness

Having already delineated the Nietzschean implications of Christ's profane divinity,

I will now explore his sinlessness in a similar fashion. Speaking to his disciples in a

mystical locale of some kind, Jesus says the following in John 15:3: "Already you are clean

because of the word that I have spoken to you." Later on in John 15:15, he says "no longer

do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing." Although

Christ appears to have preached Slave moralism when his teachings are understood

through a supernatural framework, if one views his life as a practical example as opposed

to an unattainable emulsion of God and ape, the sinlessness detailed in the Gospels

becomes the Nietzschean renunciation of guilt and shame as concepts. Within

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[13] Some supernatural Christians may combat this framing, saying that Christ was both human and non-human, which appears to be the same claim I attributed to the post-modern Christian. The summit of distinction between these takes, and a tall one at that, is the fact that the supernatural Christian posits that Christ's divinity is metaphysically distinct, while the post-modern Christian declares that Christ's divinity is a self-ascribed human fabrication.

supernatural Christendom, the symbol of the cross is employed as a tool for psychological scapegoating,[14] an ascetic phenomenon that relies on the internalization of evil in the conceptual forms of sin, impurity, or base corporeal desires. This methodological approach to cross symbolism would be what Nietzsche refers to as a symptom of the slave revolt in morality, and it is only through the post-modernist conception of the forgiveness so barbarously represented on the cross that the practice becomes life-affirming. Because Christ embodied his ideals in action, he extended his personal dissolution of sin to everyone he encountered through the metaphorical medium of forgiveness. Christ didn't die on the cross so that the preponderance of future humanity could be trapped in an eternal cycle of guilt and self-diminution. He was executed as he lived: to proselytize the route to Nietzschean self-actualization, to invigorate the understanding of humanity's divinity, to demand of his compatriots to pick up their cross. One does not have a debt to Christ, nor to the primaeval ancestor. Christ's exemplification of the OverMan shows us that we have only a debt to ourselves; an obligation to realize our singular cosmic position and treat ourselves accordingly.

Christ's framework of forgiveness, symbolically represented by his final expression of true mastery,[15] offers the contemporary sojourner not only an affirmative example of personal transcendence of sin as a precept, but a practical methodology by which they

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[14] For an explication of this ascetic phenomenon, read my paper titled *The Self as the Personal Scapegoat of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism: A Comparative Analysis and Treatise on the Universal Manifestation of the Christ Figure*.

[15] Here I am referencing one of his final spoken phrases, wherein he forgives his torturers while hanging on the cross, before succumbing to his assortment of wounds. He not only affirms his principles in the face of death, but extends this potential for self-realization to his killers.

can relieve others of guilt and shame. The OverMan's compassion does not arise out of any absolute debt they owe to the world, rather, if they determine compassionate principles to be affirming of their uniquely healthy life, the truth of their proclamation cannot be called into question save a complete disowning of Nietzsche's perspectivism. The issue of whether Nietzsche considers *unegoistic* principles such as love and compassion to be life-affirming is a matter of controversy in contemporary scholarship, yet I take the position that they *have to be* if Nietzsche's project is to be saved from positing absolute values. At the end of **PART II**, I shall provide further justification for this claim.

Christ does operate within the good and evil dichotomy that the OverMan is supposed to break out of, yet within the post-modernist reading, he employs this framework in just the synthesized fashion that Nietzsche propped up. Jesus employs the self-relational conception of goodness that is idiosyncratic of the Master, and delineates evil in contradistinction to his self-determined principles. Since universally extended compassion and boundless love were the cornerstones of Christ's worldview, being that they were necessary for sustaining his individual sense of health, he had every Nietzschean right to decry all opposition to his fabricated way, truth, and life in the way that he did. Christ was not unfolding a universally applicable moral system by which certain individuals could be called evil and others good, as the supernatural interpretation maintains. Contrarily, he affirmed his human role as cosmic creator, dissolved the concept of sin in himself, nullified the guilt of others through forgiveness, and fabricated a personal metric of judgement by which he measured the world according to his subjective principles of loving compassion.

Christ's Blasphemy and Hinterland Isolation

Yet another decisive identifier of the OverMan is defiance of potential-constraining institutions such as organized religion and common social mores. Jesus explicitly breaks the laws of Moses by refusing to observe the Sabbath in Luke 6:1-11, speaking against the necessity of pre-meal ablution in Matthew 15:1-9, and taking personal ownership of God's divine power in Luke 5:18-26. Christ's entire mode of being, his "glad tidings" as Nietzsche refers to them in section 33 of *The Antichrist,* flew in the face of all tradition—so much so that he was eventually crucified for his radical blasphemy. Christ was a heretic who, despite gathering large crowds of intrigued followers, often found time to pursue the depths of his own psyche. These extended pilgrimages into the wilderness, where he would fast and pray, were not ascetic in the same way that a supernatural Christian's fasting is. As opposed to fasting in the purview of a metaphysically distinct absolute being, with the intent of repaying an external debt—Christ intentionally placed himself into altered states of consciousness with the goal of progressing his philosophical understanding, thus repaying a debt he owed to himself. The dichotomy of wilderness and society is a central theme in *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* and Christ's starved wanderings highlight the noetic quality of intentional isolation just as poetically as Zarathustra's.

The Miraculous as a Literary Device

As is the case with nearly every sage who experiences posthumous mythologization, miracles are a core component of Christ's legend. From transubstantiating water into wine to walking on it, the crucified OverMan performed a

litany of miraculous deeds before he met his end. In my post-modern reading, the miracle is a literary device employed to increase the significance of a teaching through metaphor and symbolism. Did Christ physically spawn an infinitude of fish and bread from his bare hands? What is more likely, if the story adheres to the physical world at all, is that Christ and his disciples engaged in significant acts of charity throughout their soul-searching, which were eventually construed in magical language due to their awe-inspiring scale. Many of the disciples were fishermen, so the idea that they could have caught lots of food for the poor is not too wild a proposition. This physically actualized magnanimity of the post-modern Christ is crucial for my Nietzschean analysis, since it directly aligns with Zarathustra's "gift giving virtue" which is an expression of generosity as an epiphenomenon of personal abundance and fulfilment of self-determined values (*Thus Spake Zarathustra,* pg. 103). This *cold* formulation of generosity is not an absolute value that is pursued for its own sake, but rather a consequence of Nietzschean nihilism and its effective self-reliance.

Nietzschean Compassion

Now that I have secured a sturdy throughline between the post-modern life of Christ and Nietzsche's characterization of the OverMan, I shall further expound upon the apparent contention between Christ's loving compassion and Nietzsche's denunciation of unegoistic principles. A truly unegoistic principle is impossible in Nietzsche's eyes, since all action is inherently an expression of an individual's will to power. Discussing perceivably selfless actions such as the care of a mother, Nietzsche asks in *Human, All Too Human* "Is it not evident that in all . . . cases man loves one part of himself, (a thought, a longing, an experience) more than he loves another part of himself?" (section 57, pg. 94).

Essentially, Nietzsche argues for a *cold* formulation of compassion, holding that all human action is self-motivated *will to power* at its core. As I previously laid out alongside his psychological study of Christ's necessary implementation of compassionate principles, Nietzsche outlines a value-judgement metric predicated on individual life-affirmation, not a non-existent absolute standard of health. If my hermeneutical opponent is to paint Nietzsche's characterization of the OverMan in contradistinction to my picture of Christ based on the conception that compassion is somehow *un-Nietzschean,* then his perspectivism falls out the window—and this is a mighty tall building I've constructed. This opponent could go on to say that Christ's level of compassion got him killed, so it could not have been life-affirming even to his subjective state of health. Firstly, Christ's life would have been in equal if not more immediate danger if he fought back against or fled from his aggressors—due to both the external and internal threats associated with such a renunciation of his principles. Christ's adherence to extended sinlessness and magnanimity was so radically actualized that he was willing to die before he abandoned the products of his personal overcoming. If this lion-hearted self-determination is not characteristic of the OverMan, then neither are the letters *O* and *M*.

PART III

Thou Art In Paradise Today

Having orchestrated a rather beautiful wordscape containing both the explication of Nietzsche's OverMan and its inextricable connection with the post-modern construal of Christ, I shall now endeavor to complete my thesis by fitting it with its complimentary

justification. At the outset of this paper, I inquired on what conditions, if it all possible,

Christianity could be life-affirming. I have thus far displayed that post-modern Christianity,

embodied in the life of Christ as I've interpreted him, sufficiently maps onto the

Nietzschean framework of the OverMan, and is therefore an amiable worldview for

realizing the good conscience through one's identification with sinlessness. *Post-modern*

Christianity can thus be employed as a psychological tool by the contemporary sojourner

in order to emancipate themselves from the confines of guilt, slave morality, or the bad

conscience, in exchange for the blissful freedom of corporeally realized divinity. Using the

symbolism of the cross as a reminder of this personal godhood, the post-modern Christian

exists in a state of dualistic ontological security, allowing them to meaningfully operate in

theological and analytical circles with equivocal tact. This non-disciple of the human

Christ acknowledges that the psychological phenomenon of loving God is numerically

identical to that of loving themselves, and carves out a self-imposed discipleship to what

they deem valuable in their life-long mission to impact the world in the unique form that

they are singularly capable of. If one is going to look up to a historical example during this

mission, be it Nietzsche, Christ, or anyone else, it is crucial for them to resist the will to

absolutism and external dogma. If thou instead go "the way of the creator" (*TSZ*, pg. 86),

then thou won't be in paradise later, ***THOU ART IN PARADISE TODAY***.

זה תמיד היה גמור

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