

Nietzsche and Ethics

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Abstract

Prima facie, Nietzsche and morality seem to be strange bed-fellows. To some extent, it is an image Nietzsche himself has influenced and shaped. A self-styled “immoralist,” Nietzsche engages doctrines that implicitly undermine principles Christianity promotes. To be sure, doctrines such as the *Übermensch*, (overman), eternal recurrence, and will to power are intended to demean concepts such as heaven, hell, free will, the soul, divine justice among others. In this way, Nietzsche might be read as rejecting the traditional morality of the society of his day. Europe of his day would have struggled with his new-found value-system. Although born and raised a Lutheran Christian, Nietzsche lost his faith in the process ditching Christianity for atheism. However, his rejection of Christian morality should not be confused with the rejection of morality as such. Thus, it could be fairly argued that Nietzsche has an ambivalent relationship with morality: on the one hand, he rejects a morality type; on the other hand, however, he accepts morality as such. In light of the following, therefore, the present discussion will defend the position that although Nietzsche rejects Christian morality, he nevertheless accepts the ethics of nobility or affirmation.

Keywords: Eternal Recurrence, the *Übermensch*, Will to Power, Ressentiment, Master Morality, and Slave Morality

Introduction

Prima facie, Nietzsche and morality are unlikely bed-fellows. To some extent, it is an image Nietzsche himself has shaped or influenced. A Self-professed “immoralist,” Nietzsche engages themes that implicitly undermine principles that Christianity promotes. For example, doctrines such as the will to power, the

Übermensch (overman), eternal recurrence, and the death of God are aimed at demeaning concepts such as heaven, hell, free will, the justice of God, and the soul. Nietzsche's implicit and explicit assault on Christianity is well-publicized. Without question, Nietzsche's atheism generated a lot of hostility and criticism, as it stood in stark contrast to his upbringing. For example, Robert Solomon reports David Levine's caricature of Nietzsche in the *New York Review of Books* as a mad dog foaming at the mouth.¹ This caricature depicts the way Europe viewed Nietzsche's atheism and his alleged anti-Semitism. Nietzsche was born and raised a Lutheran Christian and came from a family with a rich history of ministerial pastoring and, moreover, was "expected to follow the family tradition and become a minister himself"².

Nietzsche's problems may further have been compounded by the politicization of his thought by members of the Nationalist Socialist Party and his sister, Elizabeth, who was married to a leading anti-Semitic figure, Bernhard Foster. The employment of Nietzsche by the Nazi war effort to inspire German soldiers during the Second War II did not help Nietzsche's cause either. National Socialist ideology contributed to the Holocaust, the monumental evil of the twentieth century that claimed between six and eight million lives. For better or for worse, in the immediate wake of World War II, Nietzschean scholarship tended to see Nietzsche in relation to Hitler. Nietzsche's alleged Nazi ties cost him a great deal taking the intervention of Walter Kaufmann to rehabilitate and return him to the canon of mainstream philosophers. Kaufmann's *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist and Antichrist* did a lot to distance Nietzsche's anti-Semitic connection, even as not everyone was convinced.

¹. Robert C. Solomon *From Hegel to Existentialism*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), Pg. 105.

². Salaquarda, Jorg. "Nietzsche and Judeo-Christian Tradition" *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*. Bernd Magnus and Kathleen M. Haggins (Ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Pg. 92.

The case could be fairly made that Nietzsche is an esoteric thinker with an ambivalent relationship to morality: on the one hand, he rejects a specific morality; on the other hand, however, he accepts morality as such. To put the matter somewhat differently, Nietzsche rejects Christian morality, the dominant morality of the Europe of his day; nevertheless the rejection in question should not be confused with a rejection of morality in the wider sense. He accepts the ethics of affirmation. Following from this, the present inquiry will defend the view that although Nietzsche opposes Christian morality, he nevertheless accepts the ethics of nobility.

The essay will proceed in the following manner. Section one will sketch Nietzsche's death of God declaration. Nietzsche is best known for his death of God declaration, perhaps the most explored but less understood aspect of his thought. Since the present inquiry aims to examine Nietzsche's ethical philosophy, a rehearsal of his death of God thesis may be the right place to begin. Section two will rehearse Nietzsche's opposition to Christian morality. That Christian has significantly inspired Western culture is seldom in doubt. Section three will engage Nietzsche's ethics of nobility or affirmation as an alternative to the Christian morality. Nietzsche rejects Christian morality, insisting that it negates human life; a negation he claims fits the narrative of slave morality. By contrast, Nietzsche advocates a noble morality that affirms life and existence broadly understood. Thereafter, the essay will draw its conclusion.

Nietzsche and the Death of God

Nietzsche is best known for his death of God declaration, even as it remains a complex matter needing careful consideration. Nietzsche's announcement of God's death is spread across several of his titles, however, his most elaborate announcement occurs in section 125 of the *Gay Science* and qualifies as what Maudemarie Clark aptly describes as a "metaphor." Understood in this way, the death of God declaration resists a literal interpretation and,

moreover, cannot be reduced to a catch phrase. To be sure, Nietzsche's death of God declaration continues to be a subject of intense debate in the scholarship. For example, lending his voice to the debate, Clark delineates that Nietzsche does not only declare God dead, but has also made the Churches his tombs and all of us God murderers. Continuing the conversation, Clark asserts:

The "death of God" is a metaphor for cultural event that he believed has already taken place but which, like death of a distant star, is not yet visible to normal sight; belief in God has become unbelievable, the Christian idea of God is no longer a living force in Western culture".³

For Clark, the death of God signals a major cultural crisis that had already engulfed Europe without anybody paying attention. For Nietzsche, god is a socially constructed phenomenon, and mirror what human beings cherish. Among the pagans gods were assigned qualities human beings saw and cherished among themselves. But the Christian God was assigned qualities that placed Him beyond the reach of human beings.⁴

Curiously, Nietzsche is not the first philosopher to declare God dead but follows closely in the steps of G. W. F. Hegel⁵. Solomon hypothesizes that Hegel was an atheist, a well-maintained secret for fear of ramifications. Paradoxically, the original announcer of God's death is not as badly hurt by this announcement as Nietzsche. Nevertheless, it is a price Nietzsche has to pay for his "bad boy" image. Europe of Hegel and Nietzsche's time was ill-equipped for atheism, something Hegel understood better than

3. Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche Friedrich (1844-1900)" *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edward Craig (Ed.) Vol. 6. (London: Routledge, 1998), Pg. 844-867.

4. Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche Friedrich (1844-1900)" *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Pg. 852.

5. Robert C. Solomon *From Hegel to Existentialism*, Pg. 59.

Nietzsche. Perhaps Hegel learned an important lesson from the experiences of his predecessors. Solomon explains:

Hegel had seen Spinoza's Ethics condemned in Germany. He had seen Kant, whom he considered to be unquestioningly orthodox, censured and censored by the narrow-minded regime of Frederick Wilhelm II. He had seen Fichte dismissed from the University of Jena for views that were (incorrectly) construed as atheistic.⁶

Solomon further suspects the timing of the take-off of Hegel's professional career: "Is it only coincidence that the year of Hegel's "great conversion" (1800) is also the beginning of his professional philosophical career, and that the writing of the *Phenomenology* (1806) is simultaneously the time of his first professorship?"⁷ Notwithstanding the complex nature of Nietzsche's death of God metaphor, his criticism of Christianity is also scarcely in doubt.

Nietzsche and Religious/Christian Morality

Gabriel Vahanian observes the extent to which the Christian religious tradition has significantly inspired and shaped Western culture.⁸ Inherent in this Vahnian observation is that in Nietzsche's time, as it concerns morality it was either Christian or nothing. This was not lost on Nietzsche. So when he launched his spirited attacks on morality, either implicitly or explicitly, Nietzsche knew precisely what he was targeting. Aside from what might be considered Nietzsche's implicit swipes at the Christian moral code, his explicit rejection of Christianity is also well-publicized. For example, in the *Antichrist*, Nietzsche writes: "I call Christianity the great curse, the one innermost corruption, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means is poison, stealthy,

^{6.} Robert C. Solomon *From Hegel to Existentialism*, Pg. 57.

^{7.} Robert C. Solomon *From Hegel to Existentialism*, Pg. 57.

^{8.} Vahanian, Gabriel *The Death of God: The Culture of our Post-Christian Era*. (New York: George Bazaller, 1961), Pg. xxxi.

subterranean, small enough-I call it the one immortal blemish of mankind".⁹

Nietzsche's anti-religious or anti-Christian stance evolved over an extended period of time. In the Preface to the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche intimates that he first entertained doubts about Christian morality as a thirteen year-old boy.¹⁰ However, like Rene Descartes and others before him he had to wait for the appropriate time to make his move in terms of developing the requisite intellectual capacity and platform to go public with his criticism of Christianity. The offering of historical criticism as part of his curriculum at Schulforta during his formative years provided the opening. Schulforta was the leading protestant boarding school in Germany at the time. Historical criticism was intended to assist the students at Schulforta with the interpretation of Greek and Latin texts. Most importantly, it reminded Nietzsche's of the Christian moral world view and the context that necessitated their emergence and that these facts negated the totalizing approach adopted by Christianity.¹¹

Nietzsche may have further been encouraged, according to Salaquarda, by the ideals of the Enlightenment. Loosely considered, the Enlightenment was an eighteenth century intellectual and cultural movement that sought to subordinate everything, including faith and politics to the authority of reason. The movement held reason alone to be capable of critiquing itself as well as external space.¹² The insistence that everything should

^{9.} See Section 62 of Nietzsche's *Anti-christ*.

^{10.} Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Trans. Maudemarie Clerk and Alan J. Swensen. (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), 1: 13.

^{11.} Robert C. Solomon *From Hegel to Existentialism*, Pg. 107.

^{12.} Casirrer, Ernst. *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*. Trans. Fritz C. A Koelin and James P. Pettegrove. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), Pg. 6.

surrender to the authority of reason marked a significant departure from the divine epistemological paradigms that tended to elevate faith over reason.¹³

This romance was short-lived as Nietzsche's subscription to the Enlightenment's ideals was not wholesale or uncritical. The Enlightenment movement's insistence on reason alone to be able to solve the problems of the world was unacceptable to Nietzsche and furnished part of his criticism against the movement and Kant. For example, If the mad man who announces the death of God in the Parable of the Mad Man in the *Gay Science* symbolizes chaos or disorder, then Nietzsche could be read as granting that, contrary to the Enlightenment movement, reason alone fails to resolve issues of humanity, and that it was time we gave chaos or disorder a chance.¹⁴ For Nietzsche, unlike Kant and other Enlightenment advocates, order is a symptom of a diseased mind. In this way, Nietzsche anticipates the postmodernist movement with its rejection of foundations and structures in philosophy. Postmodernist philosophers include Michele Foucault, Richard Rorty, and Jacques Derrida. Nietzsche may have rejected what he thought was the Enlightenment's romanticism of reason but benefited from the liberal currents it ignited.

With the requisite capacity and platform to articulate his philosophical system, Nietzsche launched his attacks on Christianity in the hope that over time it would be replaced by a higher alternative morality.¹⁵ He supposes:

Perhaps the day will come when the most solemn concepts which have caused most flights and suffering, the concepts of "God" and "sin," will

^{13.} Robert C. Solomon *From Hegel to Existentialism*, Pg. 12.

^{14.} Nietzsche, Friedrich *Gay Science* (Trans. Walter Kaufmann) (New York, Vintage Book, 1974), Pg. 125.

^{15.} Salaquarda, Jorg. "Nietzsche and Judeo-Christian Tradition" *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, Pg. 90.

seem no more important to us than a child's toy and a child's pain seem to an old man –and perhaps “the old man” will then be in need of another toy and another pain-still enough, an eternal child!¹⁶

It should be added that Nietzsche also had his predecessors in mind, especially the ones whose systems bear striking resemblances to the principles of Christian morality. He is weary of some of his predecessors, including Plato, Kant and Schopenhauer. For present purposes, however, we will limit ourselves to Plato and Kant because of the impact of their systems on Western or European philosophy.

Nietzsche faults Plato for his dualism that creates a distinction between reality and appearance. For instance, his doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same has this dualism in mind. For Nietzsche, distinguishing between the real and appearance is tantamount to separating the flash from lightening.¹⁷ The present discussion does not think Nietzsche's relationship with Plato was cordial as painted by some Nietzschean interpreters, for example, Kaufmann, as is suggested by the unsavory remarks he makes about Plato and his mouth piece, Socrates. For example, Nietzsche accuses both Plato and Socrates of decadence.¹⁸ Additionally, not persuaded by Socrates' status as the secular saint of saint of Western civilization,¹⁹ Nietzsche claims that Socrates was a buffoon taken seriously.²⁰ Curiously, Nietzsche is not the only one critical of Plato's dualism. Aristotle had earlier criticized the same

^{16.} Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), Pg. 57.

^{17.} Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*, I: 13.

^{18.} Nietzsche, Friedrich. “Twilight of the Idols”. *The Problem of Socrates*, No. 2.

^{19.} Stone, I. F *The Trail of Socrates* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1988), Pg. 138.

^{20.} Nietzsche, Friedrich. “Twilight of the Idols”, 5.

doctrine, but for a different reason. For Aristotle, the primary thing that exists is substance. And the Forms reside in substance as attributes.²¹

Relative to Kant, Nietzsche rejects the notion that moral principles or ideals are timeless and objective, and worries that this thinking obscures the circumstances that necessitated their emergence in the first place. He notes:

One more word against Kant as a moralist. A virtue must be our own invention, our own necessary self-expression and self-defense: any other kind of virtue is merely a danger. Whatever is not a condition of our life hurts it: a virtue that is prompted solely by a feeling of respect for the concept of "Virtue," as Kant would have it, is harmful. "Virtue," "duty," the "good in itself," the good which is impersonal and universally valid—chimeras and expressions of decline of the final exhaustion of life....The fundamental laws of self-preservation and growth demand the opposite—that everyone invent his own virtue, his own categorical imperative. A people perishes when it confuses its duty with duty in general....How could one fail to feel how Kant's categorical imperative endangered life itself!²²

Kant's duty ethics holds morality to be dictated by practical reason. In this way, Nietzsche fears that Kant believes that he alone knows what constitutes right and wrong and moreover, that his determination has universal implication irrespective of time and

^{21.} Aristotle, *Metaphysics* in the *Complete Works of Aristotle*. (Trans. Jonathan Barnes), Vol. 2. Princeton University Press, 1984), 1040 27-31.

^{22.} Nietzsche, Friedrich "The Antichrist" Walter Kaufmann (Ed.) *The Portable Nietzsche*(New York: The Viking Press, 1958), Pg. 11.

space.²³ Understandably, he considers genealogy an important tool in philosophy.

Nietzsche's Noble/Affirmative Ethics

Nietzsche proposes his noble (master) ethics as an alternative to the Slavish morality he charges Christianity with. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he writes: "There are master morality and slave morality"²⁴. In the first of the three essays of the *Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche claims that people have employed the "good" in reference to their living condition and qualities, further delineating that each employment was dependent upon whether the person had the disposition of a master or slave. Nietzsche writes:

Of the case of the noble one, who conceives the basic concept "good" in advance spontaneously, starting from himself that is, and from there first creates for himself an idea of "bad"! This "bad" of noble origin and that of "evil" out of the brewing cauldron of unsatiated hate-the first, an after creation, something on the side, a complementary color; the second, in contrast, the original, the beginning, the true deed in the conception of a slave morality-how different the two words "bad" and "evil" stand there, seemingly set in opposition to the same concept "good."²⁵

The person with a master disposition described his condition as "good," while describing that of the slave as "bad." Noble groups described themselves as "good" and contrasted their goodness to

²³. Kaufmann, Walter *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (New York: Anchor Books, 1960), Pg. 208.

²⁴. Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Pg. 260.

²⁵. Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. 1: 11.

“bad,” the weak, plebian, and inferior.²⁶ Reacting to their domination by the masters, the slaves substitute the masters' “bad” for “evil” in condemnation of the conduct or behavior of the masters. Nietzsche supposes that people of both master's and slavish dispositions think their approach is objective. For negating life, Nietzsche believes that Christianity morality fits the narrative of resentment.

Nietzsche seems to blame Paul for the sentiment of resentment that has come to define Christianity. He distinguishes between the Christianity of Jesus Christ and that of Paul, seeming to privilege that of Christ over that of Paul: “In Paul was embodied the opposite type to that of “bringer of the glad tidings”: the genius in hatred, in the vision of hatred, in the inexorable logic of hatred” (A, 42). At least in Christ, Christianity was into the business of affirmation. Nietzsche makes the institutional Church the invention of Paul. According to him the world has known only one Christian, Jesus Christ, and that he died on Good Friday,²⁷ and that even at the time of his death, he prayed for the forgiveness for his executioners. That the “institutional” Church with the spirit of resentment it embodies is the invention of Paul.

Consequently, Christianity has,
 waged a deadly war against this higher type of man; it has placed all the basic instincts of this type under the ban; and out of these instincts it has distilled evil and the Evil one: the strong man as the typically reprehensible man, the “reprobate.” Christianity has sided all that is weak and base, with all failures; it has made an ideal of whatever contradicts the instinct of the strong life to preserve itself; it has corrupted even the reason of

^{26.} Maudemarie Clark, “Introduction” Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Pg. xxvii.

^{27.} See Nietzsche's *Anti-christ*. Pg. 39.

those strongest values in spirit by teaching men to consider the supreme values of the spirit a something sinful, as something that leads into error-as temptations. The most pitiful example: the corruption of Pascal, who believed his reason through original sin when it had in fact been corrupted by Christianity.²⁸

Nietzsche may have had other concerns with Christianity but chiefly among them is the spirit of the so-called resentment rather than that affirmation.

Following this disposition of resentment, Christianity tends to negate life, in the process celebrating mediocrity over excellence.²⁹ Nietzsche says:

In my *Genealogy of Morals* I offered the first psychological analysis of counter-concepts of noble morality and morality of resentment-the latter born of the No to the former: but this is the Judeo-Christian morality pure and simple. So that it could say No to everything on earth that represents the ascending tendency of life, to that which has turned out well, to power, to beauty, to self-affirmation, that instinct of resentment, which had here become genius, had to invent another world from whose point of view this affirmation of life appeared as evil, as reprehensible as such. (A, 24)

Nietzsche is concerned that Christianity has come to celebrate passivity, weakness, and indeed mediocrity as virtue. Nietzsche is

^{28.} See Section 5 of Nietzsche's *Anti-christ*.

^{29.} Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Trans. Maudemarie Clerk and Alan J. Swensen. (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), 1: 9.

concerned that slave morality signals the triumph of mediocrity over excellence: “The Masters are deposed; the morality of the common people has triumphed”.³⁰

He further rejects Christian morality for its “imaginary and “fictitious” origins. He writes:

In Christianity neither morality nor religion has a single point of contact with reality. Nothing but imaginary causes (“God,” “soul,” “ego,” “spirit,” “free will” -for that matter “unfree will”), nothing but imaginary effects (“sin,” “redemption,” “grace,” “punishment,” “forgiveness of sins”). Intercourse between imaginary beings (“God,” “spirits,” “souls); an imaginary natural science (anthropocentric: no trace of any concept of natural cause); an imaginary psychology (nothing but a self-misunderstandings, interpretations of agreeable or disagreeable of general feelings-for example, of the state of the nervous sympathicus-with the aid of sign of language of the religio-moral idiosyncrasy: “repentance,” “pangs of conscience,” “temptation by the devil” “the presence of God,” “the last judgment,” “eternal life”). (Section 15)³¹

Nietzsche is concerned that despite imaginary and fictitious nature of Christian principles or ideals, Christianity continues to make claims to universality or objectivity.

One major fall out from its negation of life is that Christianity has been ill-prepared to deal successfully with evil and tragedy, in the process encouraging flight out of this world through asceticism.³¹

^{30.} Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 1. 9.

^{31.} Higgins, Kathleen Marie *Nietzsche's Zarathustra*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), Pg. 41-2.

Curiously, Nietzsche is not the only one with a favorable disposition towards tragedy or evil. Reminiscent of Nietzsche, Robert Solomon does not think that good is more natural than evil. He thinks that part of the Christian moral code's struggle with tragedy stems from that fact that it thinks good more natural than evil and, therefore, is ill-prepared to deal with it, in the process making it God's problem. Solomon observes that since antiquity bad things have typically happened to good people just like good things happen to bad people.³²

Nietzsche compares Jesus Christ, Socrates and Zarathustra and ranks Zarathustra ahead of them because he is the prophet of eternal return of the same: "the notion that all things happen again and again, in infinite number of times".³³ Zarathustra is a fictional figure in Nietzsche's thought, even as Nietzsche is influenced and shaped by the Persian founder of Zoroastrianism.³⁴ Nietzsche uses Zarathustra as his mouthpiece the way Plato uses Socrates for getting his teaching out. For example, Zarathustra urges humans to invest in their bodies as everything begins and ends here: "For too long, dreaming of the afterlife, Western humanity has treated the body as a source of sin and error. Zarathustra, in contrast, insists that the body is the ground of all meaning and knowledge, and that wealth and strength should be recognized as a virtue"³⁵.

^{32.} Solomon, Robert. *The Joy of Philosophy: Thinking Thin Versus the Passionate Life*. (New York: Oxford Books, 1999), Pg. 122 – 123.

^{33.} Solomon, Robert. "Nietzsche *Ad Hominem*: Perspectivism, Personality, and ressentiment revisited". *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*. Bernd Magnus and Kathleen M. Higgins (Ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Pg. 181.

^{34.} Magnus, Bernd & Higgins, Kathleen Marie "Nietzsche's Works and their Themes" in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*. Bernd Magnus and Kathleen M. Higgins (Ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Pg. 38)

^{35.} Magnus, Bernd & Higgins, Kathleen Marie "Nietzsche's Works and their Themes" in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, Pg. 49.

Nietzsche uses the doctrine of the eternal return to foreclose flight out of this world and allows the process to refine itself through the return of what is positive. Very importantly, it privileges circular justification over its rival linearity. An argument is said to be circular “in so far as the truth if the system of philosophy is supposed to be a function of the truth of its starting point; whether, in truth is supposed to be demonstrated by the same system in question”.³⁶ So-characterized it could rightly be opposed to linearity, the view that a philosophical argument “presupposes explicit beginning or ending points of a chain of arguments or reflection, points which are taken as absolute in some sense or another”.³⁷ Like Fichte, Nietzsche attempts to rehabilitate a strategy that many still associate with vicious circularity or error in the reasoning process.

One advantage of Nietzsche's proposal of alternative ethics is that one must not be necessarily religious or Christian in order to be a moral person. From the author's perspective, our humanity alone challenges us to be moral. Of course, Nietzsche is not the only philosopher that rejects a religious ground for ethics. Kant also does. Although born and raised a Lutheran, Kant refuses to base morality on religious motivation. His de-ontological approach to ethics privileges reason over faith as the ground of ethics. Kant wants to craft a theory that is universally valid irrespective of time and space. The different though is that Kant makes morality the dictate of practical reason but does not feel the need to put down Christian morality to achieve his objective. For Nietzsche, it is neither faith nor reason that furnishes the ground of morality. To be sure, Christian morality may contain some shortcomings

³⁶ Brazeale, D. “Circles and Grounds in the Jena Wissenschaftslehre” in Daniel Brazeale and Tom Rockmore (Ed.) *Fichte: Historical Context/Contemporary Controversies* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1994, Pg. 44.

³⁷ Stoehr, L. Kelvin “The Virtues of Circular Reasoning” *Epistemology: The Proceedings of the World Congress of Philosophy*. Richard Cobb-Steven (Ed.). (OH: Bowling Green University, 2000), Pg. 163-164.

Nietzsche outlines, however his proposal fail as an alternative. Moreover, it has served humanity well in terms of regulating human conduct.

On the negative side, it remains to be seen how one may take Nietzsche seriously since he does not believe in a fixed notion of truth. For Nietzsche, truth is contextual and a product of power relations.³⁸ The author thinks that if Nietzsche is willing to grant that all the competing frameworks stake their claims in order to allow the winner carry the day, an associated problem arises: When morality focuses on one's living condition and its qualities can we escape the social Darwinism charge? Social Darwinism could be viewed as "a competitive arena in which the 'fittest' would rise to the top"³⁹, especially in an environment like ours where corruption is celebrated? Nietzsche's alternative ethics, since it does not question behavior or conduct but affirms one's living condition may encourage corruption.

Conclusion

The present inquiry explores Nietzsche's ethical system. Nietzsche's opposition to Christian ethics is well-known. For rejecting Christian morality some read him as opposed to morality as such. Nevertheless, the present inquiry has been able to show that Nietzsche is opposed to Christian morality, a morality type and therefore advise that the rejection in question should not be confused with rejection of morality in the wider sense. Understood as such, Nietzsche could be said to have an ambivalent relationship with morality. On the one hand, he dismisses Christian morality; on the other hand, however, he is open to ethics as such. Although Nietzsche is opposed to Christian morality because of what he claims is its negation of life, Nietzsche offers what he considers the ethic of affirmation or the higher man.

^{38.} Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Pg. 43.

^{39.} Bannister, R. C "Social Darwinism" *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Ted Honderich (Ed.). (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), Pg. 829.

Overall, it remains to be seen how Nietzsche's affirmative enhances society better than the morality it seeks to replace.

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