

An Analysis of Christian Criticism from Nietzsche's Perspective

Jiawei Zhan^{1,a,*}

¹Wuhan Britain-China High School, Gutian Road, Wuhan, China
a. writing@pathacademics.org

*corresponding author

Abstract: This article attempts to use Nietzsche's perspective to elaborate on his criticism of the original sin and heaven concepts in Christianity. Here, the author will first elaborate on Nietzsche's important tool for criticizing Christianity, which is the will to power. In Nietzsche's works, the will to power is described as an irrational, natural, and inherent desire for expansion in all things in the world. It is a combination of Schopenhauer's will to survive and the spirit of Bacchus. Next, the author will first clarify the essence of Christianity from Nietzsche's perspective, and then divide the criticism into original sin criticism and heaven criticism, both of which ultimately lead to the weakening of one's own spirit. The author will provide a partial explanation of how Christianity induces people to fall into weakness step by step, which will be divided into two parts: ticket theory and choice theory.

Keywords: power will, Christian criticism, Nietzsche, critique

1. Introduction

Christianity is one of the three major sects in the world, and it is also the religion with the longest history in the West and the longest dominant Western thought. In terms of its own value definition, Christianity is 'following God's guidance, so as to go to the holy other shore.' The other shore here actually refers to the 'heaven' in the Bible. The reason why the other 'shore' in Buddhism is quoted here is because of the meaning Speaking of 'the other shore' is more similar to the highest ideal in the rational sense pursued by many people, so it serves as a distinction. The idea of Christianity belongs to metaphysics, so many metaphysical theories based on Christianity were born in the ancient West, such as Augustine, who tried to analyze time in a rational way by relying on the basic theological concepts of Christianity. Christianity has long been an integral part of Western philosophy. Many Metaphysics based on Christianity and theologians who study Christianity have been born in the West. Most of them 'accept' or 'acquiesced' 'to the rationality of Christianity itself, and used it to explore the mysteries of the world, but Nietzsche was different. He thoroughly criticized and denied Christianity, 'Christianity stands on the side of all the weak, the humble and the losers, and it is in conflict with the preservation instinct of a strong life...' [1]. He believes that Christianity is actually rationalism, and rationalism is actually suppressing the overflow of vitality. He believes that Christian values reversed the life instinct of human beings, opposed the positive life instinct, and incorporated it into the Christian view of good and evil man, 'It waged a life-and-death battle, abandoned all the basic instincts of such people, and extracted from these instincts the

concept of evil and the villain' [1] and these mind was embodied by the concept of 'original sin' of human beings. At the same time, Nietzsche also criticized the value of Christianity's 'beyond shore' with a very high tone. He believes that it is precisely because many people are weak by nature and full of fear of the endless suffering in the world, so they try to find the unchanging, supreme things and principles to seek spiritual comfort, so they found Christianity. In the idea of Christianity, there is not only a supreme and omnipotent God who can redeem himself, but also a heaven full of endless beauty. This is a great surprise for them, so they pursue him without hesitation and become a People who believe in Christianity. They pursue Christianity, believe in it, and try to gain benefits from it. If it is heaven, it would be the best. Nietzsche pointed out here: 'They are all for themselves and not for anything else.' In *Analysis of Nietzsche's theory on nihilism and its transcendence*, it's author pointed out that belief in the reality and supremacy of rational categories is the 'negation of The nihilism' is the direct cause. 'The negative nihilist is essentially a rationalist, and those who believe in Christianity are rationalists.' Striving, in thought and in action, for an illusory world without pain, that is, into a rigid world of deaf-mute, self-surrendering, self-burying. Then man becomes another man (i.e., a nihilist)' [2] Therefore, the essence of the pursuit of heaven is the pursuit of ultimate order, which is the pure beauty understood by rationalists. The author believes that the 'original sin problem' and 'heaven problem' in Nietzsche's critique of Christian values have not yet been fully discussed, but the two play a link between Nietzsche's entire ethical theory, which was later developed by Nietzsche. The 'Superman' put forward has made ideological contributions. Therefore, the author will first introduce the basis of the two, that is, the essence of the will to power, and then conduct a relatively complete discussion of the two (both the Christian original sin and the nature of the heaven), and discuss 'the concept of original sin' and 'the concept of heaven' are how to make believers' vitality constantly weaken to clarify the implicit logic.

2. The Nature of the Will to Power

The will to power is also called the strong will. It is generally believed that Nietzsche's inspiration for the will to power comes from the spirit of Dionysus and Schopenhauer's will to survive. Dionysus refers to the ancient Greek god Dionysus. In ancient Greek mythology, he represented the wild nature, and the moral god Apollo was the mortal enemy. If Apollo represents reason such as self-discipline, then Dionysus represents irrationality, that is, barbarism. The spirit of Dionysian reflects a kind of 'intoxication', essentially away from pain, spiritually to a state of free and easy, returning to the truth, releasing the original instinct of life, and at the same time, it fully embodies the fullness of vitality in such a situation. Here, the will of power, Nietzsche once praised the spirit: 'I am a disciple of the philosopher Dionysus, and I would rather be a drunken man than a saint [3].' as Schopenhauer thinks, the will is the only principle of all things, the reason that all things in the world can constantly operate is because there is the will to constantly satisfy their own desires, the ultimate goal of anything is to satisfy the desire itself, nothing else is there there, the pain of unfulfilled desires drives itself to satisfy, suffering after satisfaction for the emptiness after satisfaction, and then continue to find ways to satisfy other desires, it is a painful cycle, 'Life is swinging like a pendulum between pain and boredom [4].' Schopenhauer therefore believed that people should have a negative and pessimistic attitude of conforming, denying and giving up, can only deny, give up and even destroy life. Nietzsche made the negative, he thinks the theory of will is worth recognition, but should never be such a negative attitude, Nietzsche thinks that will should never just not only desire to survive, such as breeding, hunger, etc., the most important is the desire of life or impulse, namely, positive, the desire of life is play vitality, this is a with Schopenhauer negative pessimistic very different will of life. On the basis of the two, Nietzsche further put forward the will to power: a natural 'force' that naturally exists in all things. It is the source of all

things, but also irrational, and the unique nature of life, that is, trying to expand itself and improve itself, which is a vigorous and upward desire and an impulse.

3. Christian Critique

3.1. The Essence of Christianity

The essence of Christianity is a kind of metaphysical rationalism, this and Plato rationalism is very similar, the ancient Greek philosophers especially Platonists advocate absolute rationality, and divide the world into real and false, they think, pursuing pure things such as good is a kind of noble pursuit, so in the way of metaphysics by false world, about the clues of the real world to get the truth, and constantly efforts to pursue the so-called ‘ultimate truth’ they think reason is really worth pursuing and think that sensibility is rational opposite should be suppressed. As philosophers deepen their study of metaphysics, discussing theology has become an inevitable process, because philosophers always shape certain things, such as God, pure good and evil. Platonists advocate pure things, which is never found. According to Nietzsche, this rationalism is actually a symbol of the decline of the vitality, the spirit of the rationalists is weak, they fear the endless disaster of reality, fear of the complexity and disorder of the world, being in it makes them feel insecure, and feel suffocated, they should have recognized the fact that this is, or have actually recognized the fact that, but they were weary and tired of this endless suffering, unwilling to try to accept this fact, try to think ‘the real world beyond reality’ they try to find the laws of everything in a rational way, and want to classify them, and argued that this knowledge belongs to the ‘real world’ they want to find the clues of the ‘real world’ in their imagination through reality, Nietzsche fiercely notes that this practice is absurd.’The rational category is originally the pattern of the individual power will to implement their own percept. It is completely humanized. ‘It does not contain a little ‘essence’ or any universally effective thing that is not transferred by people [3]’ that is to say, reason is only a rule for cognition invented for the realization of self-transcendence, and the rules constructed by all people are actually derivatives of their own cognition, so they are still irrational in essence. Rationalists regard the thought of ‘ideas beyond cognition ‘as objective things, but they do not know that these things, including the ideas themselves, are constructed by themselves and have nothing to do with the so-called objective environment. Until here, we can see the similarities between Christianity and Platonism. Christianity, like Platonism, advocates the existence of a “world on the other side” filled with the best things, pure things pursued by rationalists such as good and light in the abstract sense. Christianity is essentially the pursuit of pure beauty in the Christian sense. Therefore, it has made the same mistake as Platonism that reason is the source of objective things. Christianity also gives people an ‘ultimate’ goal or meaning to bring people comfort in the world of disorder and suffering, which is actually called heaven.

3.2. Critique of the Mean of the Christian Original Sin

In Jesus’ claim, he wanted to educate people that if they want to go to the sacred ‘other shore’, they must find ways to do enough practice in this shore. He introduced the concept of human guilt to be redeemed, which is a kind of original sin. As said in the Bible, god and humanity is one, god is the imitation of itself, it has essentially difference with other species, but in later Adam’s wife Eve by the snake steal wisdom fruit, god so rage, Adam and eve out of the garden of Eden, from the human sin was born and as a mark is engraved into the people’s children and grandchildren. And then leads people to such an ethical concept that the existence of modern life is unclean, guilty, not worth passing. Christianity advocates that in order to get rid of the heavy suffering of the present world, it must follow the guidance of God and act in accordance with the dogma issued by God, in order to

clear or redeem oneself and then go to heaven to enjoy endless happiness. Nietzsche believes that this 'original sin' arouses people's guilt, makes people always carry a sense of guilt, making people fear, and then use this inner psychological mechanism to make people become weak and obedient, only to atone for this life. The way of atone, namely asceticism, advocated by Christianity, Nietzsche pointed out that is completely wrong, it suppresses the will of life, so that the vitality cannot be released by expansionism. Asceticism advocates the suppression of sexual desire and regards it as wrong. Nietzsche said, 'The satisfaction of the desire as a prerequisite for life to make oneself happy and make others happy is a rare kind arrangement in nature [4,5].' Nietzsche thinks, this is a natural gift to human, it brings to human is essentially a kind of vitality, the power will, but Christianity thinks it is evil, want to suppress, but the root instinct is obviously difficult to suppress, its 'jumping resistance' will cause pain when people try to suppress it, even meet will bring moral (original sin) on self-reflection and condemnation to oneself, it is also a kind of pain.

3.3. Critique of the Nature of Heaven

From here, there is an important thing is that distinguishing between 'Christian believers,' and 'Christians,' and 'believers in the broad sense.' In order to point out the degree of Christian poisoning to mankind and the relationship with the degree of human belief in Christianity, Christian believers should be defined as someone who has accepted a fundamental sense of Christianity but has not conducted a deep study of Christianity, a 'Christian' is defined as 'some people who want to get happiness and be sure to the comprehensive Christian sense'. Both in the level of faith in Christ, the latter is higher than the former, the latter is also higher than the former in the knowledge of Christianity, this also means that the latter will inevitably think more deeply when faced with the problem of the rationality of their own beliefs. The author defines religious believers in the broad sense as the combination of the first two. As author have mentioned above, the ultimate goal of Christianity is to go to the other shore, the essence of the other side is the complex of sacred things, in such a other shore people can truly see all the pure sense of beauty or goodness. Nietzsche pointed out that such an 'ultimate goal' is the direct cause of nihilism, namely rationality. First of all, Nietzsche thinks, because many generalized believers dare not face the truth that the real world has endless suffering, to never end of suffering tired, so build the reality, ideal or rational world, they look forward to live in the ideal world and worship the ideal world, and the suffering in the real world with a negative attitude, superstition the so-called rational 'shore' to comfort themselves. This is because people are always afraid of the endless test of life, they give up the positive impulse of life, looking forward to warm and comfortable, so become more and more weak. The second is the rationalist's absolute belief in reason, think that it is the origin of the world, Nietzsche found that, rational things will oppress the force of human life, because people always follow the so-called asceticism to achieve their ideals, and to obey external objective things, 'generalized believer' see 'ideas beyond cognition' s objective, but these things, including the ideas themselves, are constructed by themselves, has little to do with the so-called objective circumstances, and in such ideas to suppress their own life and become weaker and weaker [7]. Nietzsche is pessimistic that many people have been pursuing the thought that they exist in the objective fact but actually only self-imagination, and it is a sad thing that does not exist in the 'reason' without knowing it. In today's era, with the continuous development of science, all kinds of scientific theory is attacking faith of general believer one by one, their super cognitive belief constantly lost deepening their disappointment for the world, 'generalized believers' is hit themselves faith in rational way, these ideas in those who are faithful to the state of real feelings and experience is easy to be falsified, because the truth of life always tell people: the other side of the real world is unreal [2,6], this process will deepen the nothingness of self, Nietzsche thinks the nothingness comes from Christian values, Christian values from the people think god on the broad believers think that there is a has

the ultimate goal of romanticism envelop the reality, and extremely dependent on the ultimate goal to life. When touched the ultimate goal actually came to a 'shore' the 'shore' has the Buddhist paradise characteristics and the Christian believers think this is real [7], however, such thought will hit by people who loyal to science and experience, because science and experience tell them, never 'ultimate goal' nor the end of the real suffering [8], only endless suffering. One of the reasons why people establish such an ideal world is that people try to affirm the meaning or purpose of their existence in this fictional way. For the idea of the ideal world completely collapse, 'negative nothingness' followed, when people realize that there is no pure good, only all kinds of complex, profound good and evil, realize that there is no pure justice only complex self cognition, body and mind will naturally tired, think that everything is nothing. This is actually a derogation of the so-called highest value. When a person's faith collapses and tends to be caused by his own nature or mood, people will always tend to pull the faith to the other extreme [9,10]. When the believers in the generalized encountered some events make their faith collapse, they will easily to nihilism, never believe in their pursuit, fear and overwhelmed, like empiricists think only what they see is real, for never seen will not believe things all think belong to the false things. When the rationalist because of 'negative nothingness' lose to their original idea for the ideal world, 'god' such rational things then lost the meaning for them, Nietzsche pointed out that people should not believe in god, people think god can bring happiness, get rid of suffering, but god is the root of suffering.

4. Implicit Logical Thinking

In many critical interpretations of Nietzsche's religion, many scholars have taken brief measures to describe the argument steps of how Christian believers continue to believe, and the author thinks that not only this point seems small but actually implies a layer of will to power structure, but also have a mind of 'choice'

In Christianity, Jesus argued that God saw desire as selfish and lowly, harmful, not only painful but also the source of evil, treating it as human original sin, and advocated its eradication through asceticism. According to Nietzsche, the essence of asceticism is the purpose of suppressing desire by suppressing the flesh, this is an extremely evil practice, he believed that, everything is born with the will to power, its essence is the expansion and overflow of vitality, the desire to expand his life through the will to power is essentially an instinct, Christ advocated repression through asceticism, but in fact, this 'root thing' is hard to quit, and Christians apparently knew that their desires were not quit, But their perception clearly lacks the concept of a 'will to power', so their cognition only stays on the 'desire is difficult to eradicate', that is, 'everyone have will to power but not all of them know the existence of the will to power'. 'believers in the broad sense' believe God is omnipotent, can help oneself out of their pain, and believe that there is a real other shore, on that other side is full of all the beautiful things in the world, but, In terms of reality, doing things to get to the 'other side' is itself difficult, this is also known to 'believers' in a broad sense, but according to Nietzsche's understanding of the Christian faith, their own weakness makes it difficult for them to withstand the hardships of the objective world, they have a negative attitude to suffering, therefore, author suspects that, what believers struggle to overcome suffering is not their subjective pure courage, but because they 'believe' that they think the 'other side' must exist, they were just trying to do it, they remain a negative attitude to courage and suffering, ignoring or despised their existence, what they want is to get a chance to heaven through a 'ticket' form, Nietzsche sees it like a deal. Because of the 'original sin' theory advocated by Jesus, 'trying to atone for oneself for the opportunity to go to heaven' is essentially a 'ticket theory', which is to try to get a ticket to heaven, and this ticket is actually through penance to prove to God that his soul is noble and flawless. On the 'ticket theory', we can see it in *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche claims that, as the ancient kingdom of Israel was in conditions of internal and foreign troubles, 'There is anarchy within, outside the

Assyrians’ [1] the role and meaning of God should be gradually lost, according to Nietzsche, god was originally a symbol of a nation’s self-affirmation, ‘They are grateful for the great destiny for their rise, They are grateful for the flow of the seasons, for all the luck in animal farming [1].’ this is in line with the laws of nature, but with the collapse of the empire, any expectation for God is not fulfilled, ‘The old God cannot do what he could do before now [1].’ he should have gone, but the Israelis forced themselves to hold him, to free God from nature, to make it against the will to power is against the law of nature, it eventually becomes ‘interpreting all happiness as a reward.’ which is why the basic meaning of Christianity came from. As mentioned above, the vitality of people is essentially difficult to eradicate, so difficult challenges for ‘generalized believers’ instead is a defense of Christianity, because ‘generalized believers’ think, ‘shore’ this fruit is the ultimate goal, must be very high price (that is, spend whole life to atone) to get such ‘ticket’ this is a kind of equal value, and the ‘heaven’ becomes a clearer goal to achieve, make this goal will not appear empty. Because the difficulty of the goal (original sin) strengthens the illusion of the ‘other side’ and sees it as an ultimate goal, which takes a lifetime to achieve, essentially intensifying the worship of Christianity and making this belief stronger.

‘Believers in the broad sense’ may encounter fundamental challenges to practice the dogma to pursue the ‘other side’, that is, to consider whether to continue their belief in Christianity. When believers in a broad sense face challenges to their beliefs, they will naturally think about the rationality of their beliefs, of course, by the weakness of the “believers in the broad sense” and their very strong faith in God, is supposed to choose the former in ‘continuing faith’ or ‘abandon faith’, but, In author’s opinion, when thinking about this question, we should divide ‘believers in the broad sense’ into ‘faith Christians’ and “Christians”, as already mentioned above, ‘generalized believer’ and ‘Christians’ have a difference in degree of faith, here author assumes that, ‘Degree of faith’ should be proportional to ‘the degree of knowledge of the teaching’ and ‘degree of faith’ should include ‘the degree of knowledge of the teaching’. Because Christian believers do not have a more comprehensive system of knowledge of Christianity, their understanding of the meaning of Christianity not to reach a deep level, and did not form a complete belief, when Christians are in the face of the coming ‘crisis of faith’, they cannot easily use their religious knowledge to dispel it, at the same time, their faith in Christianity is not very deep, their logic tells them that this belief is indeed wrong, their faith is not that deep, thus they could easily abandon Christianity, ‘Lost’ Christians will choose to belief again Christianity after a period of silence, this is because, compared to exposing the weak self to the cruel world, providing protection for your own spirit with a surreal belief is a better alternative, but, as mentioned above in the Critique of the Nature of Heaven, with the constant impact of rationalism such as scientism on Christian ideas, will lead to the constant loss confidence of their own religion, in author’s opinion, as long as the Christian faith still has the logical judgment, the complete collapse of its faith is a corollary, because the foundation of Christian faith is not strong. Christians, they can use its rich religious knowledge and the arrival of ‘choice crisis’ digestion, at the same time its deep belief in Christianity can let them to constantly meet the test of ‘choice’, but may because of other rationalism hit Christians lost confident of faith, eventually reached a state of ‘empty believe’.

The author thinks that the difference of the degree of believe cause the difference of choice, and ‘ticket’ makes ‘generalized believers’ faith maintenance time is extended as far as possible, because the heaven concept itself is deepened, so will let the faith Christian into a deeper pain.

5. Conclusion

This article tries to explain the Christian ‘heaven’ and original sin in the perspective of will to power. The will to power described by Nietzsche is essentially a statement of vitality, beyond itself, to affirm the self, with an upward spirit to achieve the ‘expansive’ self, the will to power is a

combination of the Dionysian spirit and Schopenhauer's 'will theory', Nietzsche shows that the will to power should contain an irrational passion, a wild nature, already rooted deep in the human gene, it is also an advanced will (compared to Schopenhauer's will to survive) and he affirms the will to guide men to action, but this will should be a passion for endless life, you should not only stay in the basic desire to survive and thus be pessimistic about life. As for the essence of Christianity, Nietzsche pointed out that because its essence is rational, it will lead to logical conflicts and eventually lead to the pain of the Christian believers, because it is always full of contradictions in the various rational logic of the present world, about the 'original sin problem' and 'heaven criticism'. 'Original sin' is essentially the use of the human guilt, Christian promote the original sin, make faith Christian have to always harbor guilt, make people from the heart full of fear, in order to eliminate the 'original sin' faith Christian had to use the method of god that abstinence to suppress the inner desire, and the desire itself belongs to the power, but due to its difficult to remove, and endure the pain of original sin, so this is a corrupt vitality of extremely evil way. Heaven in Nietzsche is also a way of oppression vitality, because it is in itself does not exist, Christian faith is looking forward to the ease of heaven against impermanence, full of unknown and crisis, the reality of the emergence of the concept of heaven actually intensified their expectations for ease, thus becoming more and more weak, and the modern scientism led rationalism in the thought makes heaven in the eyes of the 'broad believers' in the position of 'low' or 'nothingness' may eventually usher in the concept of complete collapse, fall into a deeper nothingness. And in Christian how to induce faith Christian how to become more and more weak in the author claims there is a 'ticket' logic, namely 'heaven' supremacy is strengthened, and tickets to go to heaven with 'life to practice Christian doctrine' this idea, because 'life to practice Christian doctrine' itself is very difficult, it and go to heaven actually has a kind of difficulty equivalent, so to a certain extent, affirmed the illusion of heaven, intensified the faith Christian worship of Christianity. The other layer is the 'choice' problem, that is, the degree of 'believers in the broad sense' and the relationship between the question of whether to give up because of the rationality of the belief itself, the author maintains that, the lower level of believers, namely Christian believers, due to their loyalty to the faith and the low grasp of the knowledge of the faith, such people are more likely to give up when face the choice, but because the spirit of such people itself is weak, they need such a supreme aim to soothe their weak hearts, but as faith is constantly hit by the rational logic of reality, and its position in the eyes of Christian believers has become increasingly underground, eventually led to the complete collapse of the faith in the mind; In the higher level of believers, namely Christians, due to their loyalty to the faith and knowledge of the faith, such people are more determined not to choose to give up faith in the face of choice, use their deep religious knowledge to try to resolve such problems, and in the long-term belief because of the Christian doctrine of the repression of their own spirit constantly becomes weak. This paper is limited to the two concepts of heaven and original sin themselves, which may lead to a slight deficiency in the nihilism introduced by heaven, thus making the concept of heaven not vivid enough. The author's implicit logical thinking as a result of its lack of literature support causes its essence is only based on conjecture and analysis on the basis of Nietzsche view, its compatibility of Nietzsche ideas remains to be discussed, at the same time because the author only consider the 'Christian believers' and 'Christian' belief ability in a state of 'static', for both beliefs (such as for faith loyalty and the faith knowledge) will change this is not mentioned, so the study may only be used as an auxiliary the subject and not dominant position.

References

- [1] Nietzsche. (2017). *The Anti-Christ*. Joint Publishing.
- [2] Yang.M. (2006). *Analysis of Nietzsche's theory on nihilism and its transcendence*. *Jiang-huai Tribune*, 3, 8.

- [3] Nietzsche. (1993). *Philosophy and Truth*. Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press.
- [4] Schopenhauer, *The World as Will And Idea*, The Commercial Press.
- [5] Nietzsche. (2003). *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Survival*, Kyushu Publishing House.
- [6] Wei.M & Zhai X. (2007). *Nietzsche's Critique of Religion: Its Strength and Limit*, *Journal of Sun Yat-sen University (Social Science Edition)*, 47(6), 7.
- [7] Zheng.Q. (2019). *The Ideal Type of Redeemer in the Antichrist*. Doctoral dissertation, East China Normal University.
- [8] Cheng.Y. (2019). *The Study of Nietzsche's Nihilism*. Doctoral dissertation, Sichuan International Studies University.
- [9] Dai.H. (2006). *The Distinction Between Transcendental Metaphysics or Reason and Self Religiously Critical Feuerbach*, *Jiangsu Social Sciences*, 2, 7.
- [10] Nietzsche. (2007). *Morning Glow*, East China Normal University Press.