Friedrich Nietzsche, the highly influential and controversial 20th century philosopher, created one of the most devastating critiques of Christian morality. His argument against Christianity makes up a large portion of Nietzsche’s philosophical writings. He critiques Christian morality for numerous reasons, most importantly because it promotes a life-denying existence. Life affirmation, or flourishing, is one on Nietzsche’s primary concerns in regard to moral thought.

Life-affirmation is what is primarily at stake for Nietzsche in his study of morality. He believes that the optimum state of existence for human beings is when they are capable of flourishing, or living to their maximum potential. The concept of human flourishing is scattered throughout Nietzsche’s works. Some Nietzschean scholars, like David Allison, believe that the concept is idealized in Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra*, while other scholars view figures that Nietzsche mentions like Goethe, Beethoven, and Nietzsche himself to be the ideal state of human being (Leiter, 115). Perhaps both characterizations are true; Nietzsche never gives a definitive answer on this. However, he does leave a trail of definitive characteristics throughout his work, in which we can conceptualize human flourishing. Nietzsche is critical of Christian morality because it inhibits life-affirming individuals from achieving their maximum potential. Living to maximum potential, or flourishing, is one of the major issues at stake in his critique of Christian morality. In order to further understand how Christianity is life-denying, we must take a look at flourishing, in Nietzsche’s terms. One primary characteristic of a life-affirming human being is a healthy and strong natural disposition. He describes, “spirits strengthened by war and victory, for whom conquest, adventure, danger, and even pain have become needs” (GM, 24). For Nietzsche
this natural physical fortitude is further enhanced by “wanting to be oneself, being able to be different, standing alone and having to live independently” (BGE, 212). This focus on independence and self-assurance is an important characteristic of human flourishing in Nietzsche’s work. He further describes a life-affirming individual as having a firm grounding in reality. This involves a rejection of metaphysical truths, like Christianity (GM, 24). Most importantly, flourishing for Nietzsche involves the acceptance of his concept of eternal recurrence. Eternal recurrence can be characterized as the desire and willingness to live one’s life over again, exactly as it was. It is the acceptance of all that was good and bad in one’s life. This concept is explained through an imagined conversation with a demon in the Gay Science (GS, 341). The willingness to accept all that is painful and beneficial in life is intertwined with human flourishing. According to Nietzsche, “to ‘give style’ to one’s character” is the process in which flourishing individuals are able to find purpose in their weak and strong characteristics. The acceptance of all that it is to be human is instrumental in achieving flourishing, and affirming one’s life (GS, 290). Nietzsche calls this healthy, strong, independent, and self-sufficient type of human being a redeeming human. Also understood as the Overman, Nietzsche assigns this type of individual the task of turning around the harmful aspects of Christian morality, and steering humanity away from decadence, the lowest and most pathetic form of human life. Nietzsche’s creation of the concept of such an individual is based of his understanding of how Christianity and moral norms affect human beings. Nietzsche views Christianity as promoting a life-denying psychology through the creation of mistaken ideals.

For Nietzsche, Christian morality does not allow for individuals to flourish; instead it offers a weakened and tamed way of existence, life-denial. Nietzsche devotes a major portion of his philosophical work to the question of the benefits of morality and is particularly critical of
Christian morality because he views it as promoting life-denying characteristics. Nietzsche explains life-denying characteristics as those concepts with a moral system that encourage followers to live at a diminished form of existence. The major example that Nietzsche uses for explaining life-denying characteristics in Christianity is the ascetic ideal. By encouraging self-denial and sacrifice, Nietzsche believes that Christianity (and other religions, like Buddhism) promote an un-healthy form of existence.

In order to understand Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity as a life-denying religion, I have chosen three major components of his argument. First, I will discuss Nietzsche’s perspective on the origins of morality, and how it developed negatively. Then, I will discuss his critique of the concept of free will (or human agency) as it pertains to Christianity. Finally, I will introduce his critique of Christianity as a nihilistic religion, and discuss Nietzsche’s own position as a nihilist.

Nietzsche’s explanation of the origins and development of Christian morality:

In explaining the origins of his critique of Christian morality, Nietzsche develops a story, or fable of sorts, which I will call the Master/Slave Dichotomy. The Master/Slave Dichotomy is Nietzsche’s attempt to shed some light onto the origins of morality. His story is not an attempt to reveal some truth about the history of human beings; instead it is a parable that opens up a number of important questions about morality. His work in On the Genealogy of Morality is not intended to be “an actual history of morality” but instead intended to tell us something about “the truth about human excellence” (Berkowitz, 75). The Master/Slave Dichotomy is the launching pad for his project.
First, Nietzsche describes humanity as comprised of two halves, the master class and the slave class. Nietzsche describes the masters as healthy, brave, and inherently overflowing with power. In opposition to them are the slaves, whom Nietzsche characterizes as weak, unhealthy, utterly overworked, and most importantly resentful about their status in life. The master class holds all the power in their relationship with the slaves. Because Nietzsche makes no attempt to root the Master/Slave Dichotomy in any historical record, one is left to imagine a time in which such a civilization existed (whether it be feudalistic or primitive).

Having explained the social structure of these two classes, Nietzsche describes the sort of ethic that is characteristic of these two classes. In order to explain the development of the Master/Slave Dichotomy, Nietzsche introduces a number of real etymological examples that serve as evidence for his view of the origin of morality. Nietzsche explains that the masters distinguish themselves as “good”, in the sense that their lives are good, healthy, happy, and strong. Nietzsche uses the Greek word, *agathos*, which can be defined as good, well-born, noble, brave, and capable. The numerous meanings of this word point to how in the master’s ethic being considered good and noble, or of the higher rank, were conflated. Naturally, it follows that the masters characterize their opposite, the weak slaves, as “bad”. One etymological example that Nietzsche gives of this is in the German word, *schlecht*. This word for bad is identical to the German word, *schlicht*, which means common, plain, or simple, thus, associating the word “bad”, with the slave class. Nietzsche uses these etymological examples, as well as numerous others from different languages in order to create a “sign system” to discern the underlying psychology of the master and slave classes (GM, 4-5).

He attempts to explain how the creation of such ideals came about, first *In Beyond Good and Evil*, and later in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. He creates a story of the creation of Christian
morality, by using etymological evidence concerning the words “good” and “evil”. The purpose of his project is not to give a true historical account of Christian morality, but to demonstrate what is of value in cultural moral practices. The account he gives of master and slave morality, once understood, explains the negative psychological aspects of Christianity. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche gives an account of the development of European moral mentality by launching a historical account of the etymology of the words “good” and “evil”. According to Nietzsche, in pre-Christianized moral thought the word good was related to a master class that dubbed themselves “good” as a description of their healthy and powerful status. In contrast to themselves, the master class called their opposite, the slaves, who were weak and unhealthy, “bad” in order to describe their opposite. Nietzsche believes that seeing the masters thriving, while they suffered, the slave class created the idea of “evil” in reference to the master class, and used the term “good” to describe themselves. Thus, the slave class turned things that were once associated with goodness, like health and wealth, into evils. This concept, which Nietzsche calls *slave morality* elevated the status of the slave. Nietzsche believes that slave morality was created in order for the slave class to regain some power within the master’s ethical system. Nietzsche sees two groups within the slave class, the general population which continues to be weak and oppressed, and a subset of a priestly class who lead this reaction against the master morality. The priestly portion of the slave class already has certain values which they uphold, mainly purity and the valuation of ascetic ideals. Nietzsche calls these priests the *most evil of enemies*, because they are completely and utterly powerless, and in their powerlessness grows the most venomous kind of hatred of the master class.

This hatred that exists within the slave class leads to what Nietzsche calls *spiritual revenge*. The priest class develops a schema in which they invert the masters’ ethical system.
The priests declare, “the miserable alone are good; the poor, powerless, lowly alone are the good; the suffering, deprived, sick, ugly are also the only blessed in God, for them alone is there blessedness,—whereas you, you noble and powerful ones, you are in all eternity the evil, the cruel, the lustful, the insatiable, the godless, you will eternally be the wretched, accursed, and damned!” (GM, 16-17). Nietzsche attributes this revenge specifically to the Jewish priestly class, and declares that with them begins the *slave revolt* against morality (GM, 7). With this move the slave class has changed the stakes of the ethical game. Moral goodness or badness is no longer dependent on the conditions under which you exist in this world, it has been moved to an otherworldly place. “Good” and “evil” for the slave class are staked on one’s belovedness by God. In this way the ascetic ideals practiced by the priestly class and the moral value of weakness as “good” become conflated. By practicing ideals of self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and self-denial one increases their weakness, and becomes more blessed, or “good”. This brings us to one of Nietzsche’s most important critiques of Christianity: that this morality is life-denying in the sense that it promotes a hatred of life. Nietzsche describes two of the most important characteristics of slave morality as “pessimistic suspicion” towards the masters who thrive naturally, and an elevation of qualities like, “pity, the complaisant and obliging hand, the warm heart, patience, industry, humility and friendliness.” These qualities are honored by the slave class because they are useful in alleviating one’s suffering (BGE 260). An extraordinary focus on the alleviation of earthly suffering is central to slave moralities, like Christianity. One way that slave morality retreats from earthly suffering is through the rejection of all that is natural and instinctual in human beings. The suppression of human instincts and passions is a major component of Nietzsche’s critique of Christian morality as a life-denying religion.
A substantial portion of Nietzsche’s critique of Christian morality is dedicated to the concern that this morality suppresses human instincts. However, Nietzsche is not calling for anarchy in which humans let their passions run wild. He realizes that much of humans’ instincts and passions lead to stupid and harmful behavior (TI, p. 21). In fact, he credits Christianity with stifling instincts in an attempt to make a more livable world. For instance, not coveting thy neighbor’s wife is useful for both personal and social reasons. Nietzsche’s problem with Christianity is the extent to which it has suppressed all human instincts and passions. Christian morality works against the passions by attempting to demonize them, or destroy them completely. Nietzsche sees this sort of annihilation of passions and instincts as motivated by the moral persons, “inability to react to stimulus” (TI, p. 22). By this he means that morality is created by and for the most weak-minded people, those who cannot control their instincts. They become Christian moralist because total abstinence is the only way that they can control themselves. Nietzsche believes that this is a radical and harmful approach towards the control of stupid behavior as a result of instinctual needs. In contrasts, he insists that people can and should be trained in the art of controlling their instincts, and using them for their beneficial qualities. Nietzsche characterizes this as an educational pursuit in which people are taught to have a *strong will* in reaction towards harmful instincts, but they are also taught to enjoy and use their beneficial passions and instincts (TI, p. 41). In order to elucidate how Christianity promotes life-denial through the suppression of human instincts he explains that, “in saying ‘God looks at the heart’ it says no to the lowest and highest of life’s desires, and takes God to be the *enemy of life*… The saint, in whom God is well pleased, is the ideal castrato… Life ends where the ‘kingdom of God’ *begins*…” (TI, p. 23). For Nietzsche, Christianity’s aversion to all that is instinctual and passionate in human behavior places this morality squarely against the
affirmation of human life. The anti-nature ideology of Christianity further stifles human life through inhibiting one’s ability to achieve maximum potential, or flourish.

The process of the suppression of instincts, for Nietzsche, leads to the creation of bad conscience. Nietzsche explains bad conscience as the result of Christian morality’s battle against human instincts and passions. He is of the opinion that suppression, in the case of Christianity, does not lead to the reduction in these instincts. Instead, it just bottles up the natural inclinations. Being a predominate instinct in humans, the inclination towards causing pain in others begins to act out against the host. The introduction of moral ideals by Christianity turns natural human instincts and passions parasitic and they lash out against their previously healthy host. Nietzsche attributes a lot of power towards instincts and sees their ability to act and release themselves as crucial in human health and flourishing. In the Second Treatise of On the Genealogy of Morals, Nietzsche states, “I take bad conscience to be the deep sickness into which man had to fall under the pressure of that most fundamental of changes he ever experienced—the change of finding himself enclosed once and for all within the sway of society and peace” (GOM, p. 56). Nietzsche sees the civilization of man from animal into his current state as being the primary destructive force in his well being, most importantly because society has taught man how to punish and restrict himself. For Nietzsche, natural instincts like, “hostility, cruelty, pleasure in persecution, in assault, in change, in destruction,” were suppressed by society within the individual and turned against man himself (GOM, p. 57). Nietzsche does not believe that this turning inward of consciousness happened by chance; he spends a considerable amount of time in his work mapping out the development of this sentiment.

As it did so, it also affirmed their lower, unhealthy status, as being beloved by God. Nietzsche believed that the inspiration for this turn of events was the slave classes’ feelings of
ressentiment. Ressentiment, the French term for resentment, is said by Nietzsche to be the imaginary revenge created by the slave class (GM, 10). Slave morality bred individuals prone to weakness and self-denial. This affirmation of the least desirable values caused a mentality that was life-denying. Slave morality is life-denying because it promotes belief in an imaginary metaphysical truth that elevates ideals that would be considered feeble in nature. The principles of slave morality work, “to instill in those induced to adopt it the slave’s ‘evil eye’ for human nature and the condition of human life…ressentiment lingers on, casting a pall over human life and poisoning the wellsprings of human growth and development” (Schacht, p. 438).

Christianity’s hindrance of human instincts and flourishing is primary in promoting a hatred of life in human beings. Nietzsche sites such a hindrance as primary in the decline of a species, or the path towards decadence. For Nietzsche, decadence is the decline of society caused by the belief in moral truths, like those of Christianity. This decline is characterized by a loss of strength and spirit in the human condition, and an overall weakness that festers in the human character (Schacht, p. 27). The root cause of this move towards decadence is the suppression of human instincts and passions. Christianity can be seen as part of a whole of society which suppresses humans’ instincts. Nietzsche chooses Christianity to look at specifically because it is a case that is relative to his own experience and a vivid example in which naturally occurring passion are suppressed. Social institutions that teach concepts of self-denial and sacrifice as an ideal are the major culprit in leading humans down the path towards decadence. For this reason he often critiques other similar social or religious institutions, like Buddhism which teaches a very strict doctrine of self-sacrifice. In saying that these societal institutions promote a hatred for human life, I do not mean that they promote lashing out against other humans or an inclination towards suicide. Nietzsche views Christianity, and its co-conspirators, as promoting a way of
thinking in which human beings settle for living at marginal utility, in a materialistic, physical, and intellectual sense. By creating concepts like “love thy neighbor”, Christianity promotes a way of thinking that is utterly unegotistical. For Nietzsche, egotistical actions are not only beneficial for human beings, they are our natural disposition. He does not deny humans’ capability for unegotistical, or altruistic actions, but instead believes that in order to be healthy they must come from a ideal that first embraces human instincts and passions.

Slave morality created the ideals of bad conscience and the overall movement of humanity towards decadence. By exposing Christianity as life-denying and promoting a hatred of life, Nietzsche hopes to lay the groundwork for future healthier incarnations of morality. His critique of Christian morality as being life-denying is a major aspect of his overall critique, and is referenced constantly in his work.

Nietzsche’s Critique of Christianity’s Concept of Free Will:

Nietzsche is highly critical of Christianity because of its concept of agency or free will. The concept that human beings are completely in control of their actions, and have the ability to direct their will permeates moral theory, religious and non-religious, alike. Nietzsche’s critique of the concept of agency is based on his unique understanding of human will. He sees human actions as a result of a complicated web of deterministic factors, and also as a result of competing unconscious drives. As a result, he rejects the Christian moral concept of human agency completely. Further, he critiques Christian morality for implementing the concept of free will as a tool for inflicting responsibility and guilt onto human beings. The function of free will in Christian morality is to further tame and weaken human beings. For Nietzsche, the moral
value placed on the false concept of human agency further leads human beings towards a life-denying existence.

Nietzsche can be characterized as a determinist, in the sense that he believes that human action is controlled by external and psychological factors, over which humans have no control. This places Nietzsche entirely against the Christian concept of free will. The belief in free will, or human agency, is based on the belief that human beings have the ability to navigate the world through an ability to choose one’s actions. This is an instrumental concept in Christian morality because without a belief in free will human beings cannot be held responsible for their actions. Nietzsche regards the Christian viewpoint as a misunderstanding and manipulation of human beings. Morality, in general, is dependent upon an understanding of how human intention and action function. According to Nietzsche, a person who believes in the doctrine of Christian morality finds himself able to say, “I know what I want, what I have done, I am free and responsible for it, I hold others responsible, I can call by its name every moral possibility and every innermost will which precedes action” (D, 116). This type of thinking allows for morality to hold a person completely responsible for actions that might have been caused by other determining factors. Also, it allows for one to be judged, punished, and have guilt inflicted upon them. This according to Nietzsche is evidence that, “the primeval delusion still lives on that one knows, and knows quite precisely in every case, how human action is brought about” (D, 116).

Nietzsche further critiques the moral concept of human agency because it mistakenly places intention at the heart of human action. In his thoughts on morality’s creation of a false concept of agency, he views the focus on the intention of an action and not the action itself, as a major misconception of morality. “To be sure, a calamitous new superstition, an odd narrowness of interpretation, thus become dominant: the origin of an action was interpreted in the most
definite sense of origin in an intention; one came to agree that the value of an action lay in the value of an intention” (BGE, 32). In this passage, Nietzsche attempts to articulate how the Christian idea of “know thyself” has transformed moral value. By inserting free will into the psyche of its followers, Christianity has created a false sense of responsibility, and completely ignored deterministic factors in the world. He reacts to these concepts later in the same passage, which gives us an understanding of Nietzsche’s concept of human intentionality. Nietzsche expresses his own deterministic beliefs in calling to his fellow thinkers, “we immoralists have the suspicion that the decisive value of an action lies precisely in what is unintentional in it, while everything about it that is intentional, everything about it that can be seen, known, ‘conscious,’ still belongs to its surface and skin—which, like every skin, betrays something but conceals even more” (BGE, 32). Here he demonstrates his belief that conscious action that would appear to be a result of free agency, is merely a symptom of unconscious forces at work.

Nietzsche considers human beings unaware of the majority of factors that constitute their actions. This places him acutely opposed to the Christian moral concept of free will, and solidifies his position as an immoralist. Nietzsche rejects modern understanding of the human condition in stating, “however far a man may go in self-knowledge, nothing however can be more incomplete than his image of the totality of drives which constitute his being. He can scarcely name the cruder ones: their number and strength, their ebb and flood, their play and counterplay among one another and above all the laws of their nutriment remain wholly unknown to him” (D, 119). Nietzsche demonstrates how human beings and morality come to be mistaken about free will, through his interpretation of language and reality. He cites language as being the major culprit in giving human beings a false sense of understanding reality and the forces that drive human action. He points out that humans tend to believe that reality ends where
language looses words for it, but according to Nietzsche there is a complex web of interconnected emotions and drives that lack words. Language deceives us into believing that we are only what we are conscious of. In regards to this he states, “we are none of us that which we appear to be in accordance with the states for which we alone have consciousness and words, and consequently praise and blame; those cruder outbursts of which alone we are aware make us misunderstand ourselves, we draw a conclusion on the basis of data in which the exceptions outweigh the rule, we misread ourselves in this apparently most intelligible handwriting on the nature of our self” (D, 115). He follows this later in *Daybreak* by exclaiming that, “mankind has in all ages confused the active and the passive: it is their everlasting grammatical blunder” (D, 120). This linguistic misconception is guided by the fact that human beings only have words for the most crude and radical of our emotions and desires. Nietzsche believes that there exist entire subsets of lesser drives that human beings are ruled by, but cannot articulate. He sees human action as driven by the competition of these drives, and the idea that one’s conscious drive rules action as ridiculous. His specific deterministic view of human action leads to his critique of Christianity as promoting the false concept of free will (DB Intro from C/L, xxviii).

Nietzsche is critical of Christian morality’s concept of human agency, or free will, for more than the fact that it is a misinterpretation of reality. Nietzsche believes that the concept of free will and acts that are ruled by consciousness have been used by Christianity in order to inflict an evil upon humanity: guilt. Guilt, or “bad conscience” (as he more frequently refers to it), is one of the primary life-denying concepts of Christian morality. In considering the function of free will in moral systems he states, “we no longer have any sympathy nowadays for the concept of ‘free will’: we know only too well what it is—the most disreputable piece of trickery the theologians have produced, aimed at making humanity responsible is their sense, i.e. at
making it dependent on them…” (TI VI: 7). In order to examine how the concept of bad conscience came into being, Nietzsche hypothesizes that “the feeling of guilt, of personal obligation—to take up the train of our investigation again—had its origin, as we have seen, in the oldest and most primitive relationship among persons there is, the relationship between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor” (GM II: 8).

In the Second Treatise of On the Genealogy of Morals, Nietzsche examines what he calls the debtor-creditor relationship, which has transformed into Christian moral responsibility and guilt. His evaluation begins by introducing the idea that human beings enjoy inflicting suffering on others, and through the debtor-creditor relation the infliction of pain onto another became just payment for a wrong done. Here humanity found an outlet for the instinct and desire to cause pain. But as society developed it suppressed this instinct, morality replaced the infliction of pain on another with the infliction of guilt upon them. However, Christian morality needs individuals to be free agents in order for the moral system to function. Nietzsche explains, “people were thought of as ‘free’ so that they could be judged, punished—so that they could become guilty: consequently every action had to be thought of as willed, the origin of every action had to be located in the consciousness” (TI VI: 7). Bad conscience emerges, for Nietzsche, when the avenue for inflicting pain upon others is blocked. Instead, the inclination manifests itself in the feeling of guilt, having turned itself against the individual. Nietzsche says that, “this man of bad conscience has taken over the religious presupposition in order to drive his self-torture to its most gruesome severity and sharpness.” It is in “guilt before God: this thought becomes the instrument of torture for him” (GM II: 22). Christian morality uses God as the ultimate ideal in which man must hold himself up against and be in debt to. His animal instincts are totally denied, yet not extinguished. This guilt is completely reliant upon the creation of the
false concept of free will. Morality manipulates the ideal of free agency and will in order to inflict ‘bad conscience’ onto human kind, further taming and weakening followers of Christian morality and non-follower, alike.

Nietzsche is critical of Christian morality’s dependency and use of the concept of free will. He views free will as developing out of a misinterpretation of reality through language. He supports a more deterministic view of reality in which human beings are not entirely capable of willing their actions. He views the area of human desires as a complicated network of conflicting passions. Further, he blames Christianity for manipulating the concept of free will, in order to inflict guilt and bad conscience as a means of controlling people. Through its concept of free will, Nietzsche demonstrates Christianity’s continuing promotion of life-denying values that weaken the human race.

Nietzsche and Nihilism:

Nietzsche’s critique of Christian morality is often understood as a diagnosis that Christianity leads towards nihilism. A term coined by the Russian novelist Turgenev, nihilism is: the extreme view that there is no justification for values and, in particular, no justification for morality” (OC, 623). In the beginning of his book, The Will to Power, Nietzsche explains his own understanding of the term in this quotation, “What does nihilism mean? That the highest values devaluate themselves. The aim is lacking; “why?” finds no answer” (WP I, I: 2). For Nietzsche, nihilism is the point at which a value system or a morality becomes falsified and meaning falls out. People who subscribed to that value system are uprooted and left temporarily without anything to believe in. For Nietzsche, Christian morality is headed on the path towards nihilism.
In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche explores the value of Christian morality and how its own values turned the morality toward its own destruction. First, he explains the four purposes that Christian morality served. First it gave man’s existence some value and purpose compared to the vastness of the universe. Second, it was useful to those who created it out of need, giving them a way to gain power. Third, Christian morality elevated the sense that man had the ability to gain knowledge of absolute value. Last, it served as a means to preservation (WP, p. 10). Nietzsche credits Christian morality with keeping human thought from falling into nihilism, but only to the slightest degree. The ideals created and encompassed by Christian moral thought will eventually lead to its own demise, turning humanity towards nihilism. In particular, Nietzsche insists that the ideal of *truthfulness* eventually causes the deconstruction of Christian moral thought. Having created a necessity of truth, Christianity is unable to stand up to its own ideal, and falls as a result (WP, p. 10). For Nietzsche, truthfulness is the strongest and most important remnant of Christian morality. The emergence of atheism, “is the awe-inspiring catastrophe of two thousand years of training in truthfulness that finally forbids itself the lie involved in the belief of God” (GM III: 27).

Nietzsche is not a nihilist, in the sense that he rejects all morality and values and their purpose. In actuality he only rejects a particular type of morality, the life-denying kind. “Nietzsche's project is not that of a nihilist, not a rejection of all values, but rather a revaluation of all values” (Brobjer). Nietzsche admits that reevaluating values, like questioning the value of Christianity, is a long and grueling project, but one that is necessary in order for humans to achieve life-affirmation. Nietzsche absolutely has a positive argument for a new form of morality, and I will pursue my study of the affirmative portions of Nietzsche’s philosophical thoughts on morality next semester.
The movement of Nietzsche’s morality can best be seen through a short parable he tells in *Thus Spake Zarathustra: The Three Metamorphoses*. In this passage Nietzsche sees humanity as developing in three stages, the camel, the lion, and the child. The camel, he describes, carries the weight of society on his back. Morality and ideals like “loving your enemies” weighs the camel down. This would be the slave morality that Nietzsche critiques in his negative argument. Next, he describes the lion stage, in which human beings say “No” to their moral system. They find no value in anything they believed in, like God, or even the concepts of good and bad. This stage is nihilism. But, Nietzsche has one more stage, the child stage, where there is a reaffirmation of life and everything that was previously negated. This is a signpost for Nietzsche’s affirmative morality, and further affirms his position as non-nihilistic. Nietzsche’s critique of Christian morality is an observation of a flawed moral system, in order to provide an opportunity for a better, more affirmative, morality.

Friedrich Nietzsche developed a devastating and influential critique of Christian morality in philosophical discourse. His argument analyses Christian morality from its origins, and follows it to morality’s end, nihilism and atheism. Nietzsche’s primary purpose in his critique is to conduct a revaluation of modern day moral values, in order to make possible a more healthy and life-affirming morality.
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