

“ONLY A GOD CAN SAVE US”

Le dieu à venir de Nietzsche ou la rédemption du divin

Abir Taha

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Reviewed by Michael O'Meara

“Nur ein Gott kann uns noch retten.”

—Martin Heidegger, 1966

Can the white man survive the decline and decay of “modern civilization” without, at the same time, awakening new forms of sensibility and interests and especially without reorienting his “Aryo-Western” spirit?

This question is *implicitly* addressed in Abir Taha’s small but important work: “The God to Come from Nietzsche: The Redemption of the Divine.” A Lebanese diplomat with a doctorate in philosophy from the Sorbonne, Taha has written several books on Nietzsche, one of which has appeared in English.¹ Though Taha acknowledges Nietzsche’s destructive side—the side that is currently emphasized in deconstructionist and postmodern studies—he is not, for her, simply or primarily a destroyer of idols, though he dealt the reigning illusions an often decisive blow. Rather, her Nietzsche is the most pious and spiritual of the godless philosophers.² In barely a hundred pages,

¹ *Nietzsche, Prophet of Nazism: The Cult of the Superman* (Bloomington, Ind.: AuthorHouse, 2005).

² Taha’s argument bears comparison with much recent work in the Anglophone world, where, in the last decade, scholars have also begun to probe the religious dimension of Nietzsche’s thought. For example, Tyler T. Roberts, *Contesting Spirit: Nietzsche, Affirmation, Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Alistair Kee, *Nietzsche against the Crucified* (London: SCM, 1999); J. Lippitt and J. Urpeth, eds., *Nietzsche and the Divine* (Manchester: Clinamen, 2002); Giles Fraser, *Redeeming Nietzsche: On the Piety of Unbelief* (London: Routledge, 2002); Julian Young, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Bruce E. Benson, *Pious Nietzsche: Decadence and Dionysian Faith* (Bloomington: Indi-

she describes a Nietzsche whose anti-Christian polemics attacked all that was false and life-denying in the Judeo-Christian heritage. His “philosophical hammer” is seen thus as countering the nihilism that grew out of Christianity and now infects the modern order, just as his notions of a higher man and the Will to Power relate to his concept of a life-affirming divinity.

Though Taha is no racist, her work lends itself not just to a racial appropriation of one of our great thinkers, but to an understanding of the role religion plays in enabling a people or race to assert itself as an ascending life form.

Best known for pronouncing “the death of God” and donning the mantle of the “Anti-Christ,” the iconoclastic Nietzsche, Taha argues, was preeminently concerned with the spiritual birth of a man capable of redeeming his organic *Kultur* from the crepuscular *Zivilisation* opposing it. His entire project, she claims, can, in fact, be seen as a reaction to the religious crisis of the modern age. Against those inclined to treat religion cynically, as simply a system of superstitious belief, her Nietzsche holds that “a people which still believes in itself still also has its own God.”³ The spiritual synthesis of culture and community, religion, he saw, enables members of a community to feel they belong to a reality higher than their own.⁴ This imbues their existence with meaning and direction. At the same time its symbols and rituals formalize a community’s ethos, unifying it on the basis of its ethnocultural identity. From an evolutionary-psychological perspective, we might say that religion fosters social cohesion and enhances a community’s survival prospects. Any breach in a people’s religious-spiritual heritage, it follows, involves a corresponding breach in its identity – and existence.

1. ANTI-CHRISTIAN

For Taha’s Nietzsche, it wasn’t coincidental that the modernist assault on the divine – and, I would add, on white identity – grew out of Europe’s distinct religious heritage. In his deconstruction of Christian

ana University Press, 2008), et al.

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 126. Cf. Thomas Molnar, *Twin Powers: Politics and the Sacred* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), viii.

⁴ “Religion” derives from the Latin *religare*, which means “to bind back” – that is, to bind members of a community back to their common origins and thus to bind them to the common faith that makes them a community.

belief, the cult of the Crucified is depicted as inherently nihilistic.⁵

There are several dimensions to his critique. At one level he sees Christianity as a "slave revolt" against the aristocratic ethos of the ancient world. This inversion occurred as Judea (in the figure of Paul) triumphed in imposing its morality on Rome. Through this inversion, the empire's "chandala class"—its wretched, enslaved masses—succeeded in dethroning the aristocracy's virile morality and establishing its democratic reign of *homo vulgaris*. This made Christianity an "anti-Aryan"—an anti-noble—religion of the weak, a "herd" religion that, in the name of morality, anathematized the superior traditions of the Ancients. In this spirit, it spurned paganism's tragic sense of life, which accepted the harsh, cruel, amoral character of the world and, in face of it, exalted the self-affirming values of strength and vitality.

What was revered in the Christian God, Nietzsche claims, wasn't even "godlike . . . but a crime against life."⁶ Following the collapse of aristocratic paganism, the ancient hierarchical values were not merely forced to cede to the resentful egalitarian values of the Church. The world itself, as cosmos, was desacralized. Positing one God who created and knows all things, the Christian concept of the sacred (which the pagan saw as immanent) was henceforth dispensed to a distant, otherworldly divinity. This privileged man's individual moral relationship to God, not his place in a cosmos whose order reflected his higher ideals. "The weak, base, and ill-constituted," who needed this otherworldly God, before whom all could and must be equal, also needed another world to compensate for the injustices of this world. God's heavenly realm was thus situated in opposition to the existing

⁵ Often straying into the realm of caricature, Nietzsche's philosophical critique doesn't fully account for the different historical expressions of Christianity. For if Christianity began as a Hebraic inversion of the European spirit, in time its alien origins were similarly inverted, becoming the conduit of Roman and Germanic cultural norms. The literature on this subject is vast. Let me simply mention the pioneering work of our own James C. Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), which argues, among other things, that Medieval Christianity was more a Germanic/European folk religion based on traditional Indo-European beliefs than the de-Europeanizing ecumenicalism that today passes for Christianity.

Nietzsche (who never quite shed his Pietist origins) also thought it was the Church that had distorted the original message of Jesus, but, as Charles Maurras observed, without the Church (tradition-bound, hierarchical, and conservative), His gospels were an unadulterated communism.

⁶ Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*, 162.

world. By placing its highest values—God, Truth, Salvation—in an afterlife, Nietzsche argues that Christianity ended up negating real life. For this projection of hope beyond life denigrated earthly existence, making the Christian indifferent to the ascending forces that are life's essence.

Christian belief in the beyond could not, however, guarantee that its God would remain the focus of man's concerns, especially given that its transcendent values favored "the truth."

When the Christian God "died" in the scientific and materialist nineteenth century, the result was not a liberation of the spirit, but an even more devastating nihilism.

2. NIHILISM

Because it favored an idealized, inaccessible "reality," Nietzsche claims Christianity fostered an ethic at odds with man's nature (a nature he defines in terms of growth, appropriation, overcoming, "will to power").

Christian nihilism, however, was more implicit than actual, given that the high culture of the Catholic Middle Ages—"this magnificent era of youth"—was one of the great flourishings of European man. It was the modern age that brought nihilism, this devaluation of the highest values, into the foreground.⁷

Provoked by science's wreckage of the Church's insupportable truth claims, the "death of God" revealed that man's faith had been an illusion. Though this exposed the "lie" of Christianity, modern rationalism continued to perpetuate its anti-life impetus. For in positing a universe in which quality and value had no meaning and everything was reduced to quantifiable expressions of matter and energy, this "second nihilism" destroyed whatever remnant of purpose or meaning that had survived the destruction of the pagan cosmos and the personalization of the Christian God.

No longer nestled in a divinely created world, modern man found himself stranded in a disenchanted universe, alien to any signifying sense of the sacred, except as manifested in its ephemeral technological

⁷ Actually, Nietzsche sees nihilism as having a positive as well as a negative register—what he calls "active" as opposed to "passive" nihilism. For simplicity's sake, I use the term here only in its more common negative sense. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968), 17.

achievements. Life, as such, lost its sense of meaning and was reduced to a form of animal existence.

God's death may have liberated man from the "longest error" and thus potentially from the anti-life forces associated with it, but the way God died, Nietzsche believed, created problems of another sort. Descartes and the proto-modern thinkers who followed him in shattering Christian faith with scientific reason, ended up promoting a form of thought and a way of life that divorced reason from the natural world (even if this wasn't their intent). At the same time, they transformed reason into a form of subjective will independent of natural necessity (Kant's "metaphysical freedom") and emancipated European man not just from his former illusions, but from his nature, history, culture—from all, in other words, that was exceptional in him. The world's logical and hence amenable order became, thus, another way to evade the Ancients' tragic view of life.

In pre-modern thought, reason had been part of nature's encompassing wholeness. As such, it supported custom and laws, helping to situate man in his community and achieve unity with God's oneness. By contrast, the modern tradition inaugurated by Cartesian rationalism posits a universe bereft of meaning, and thus bereft of a sense of the sacred, but nevertheless one whose mechanical laws can be manipulated to man's benefit. In effect, it opposes reason to nature, seeing it as a means of freeing man from his past, his traditions, even the limitations of his biological heritage—but above all as a means of re-ordering the world on the basis of reason's ameliorative capacities.

This makes the world a resource to be exploited, specifically by the will of those who believe that meaning, measure, and law are products solely of man's reason and that society and state are best founded on the rational faculty of a self-grounding, disencumbered subject shorn of history, tradition, and nature.⁸

Once the traditional social model rooted in a shared, though mainly unarticulated ethos gave way to one in which society rested on nothing but subjective reason, rights and values were henceforth legitimated not in reference to the sacred, but to the primacy of individual autonomy and self-interest. The core of every religion and every people, the

⁸ This critique ought not to be taken as a rejection of scientific reason *per se*. Rather, it's a critique of its misuse. Nietzsche fully accepted science's materialist representation of nature—not naively as metaphysical truth, but as a dispassionate method for examining the world of appearances.

sacred was, in this way, driven from the world. Indeed, if any sense of it continues into the modern age, it's reserved for individual (human) rights. The first and only religion born of modernity, Protestantism, likewise privileges the individual's ethical consciousness, turning it into the sole "locus through which God speaks to humanity." Society for this individualizing conscience ceases to be an organic whole, with a hierarchy of related parts, and is reconceived as the collective will of numerous atomistic egoisms regulated by principles akin to those of scientific materialism.

Such an individualism is necessarily universal, egalitarian, abstract—without an organic fundament—oriented to the ego and the secular humanist fiction that the individual, though supposedly without an essence or a nature, is the meaning and measure of all things.

In making reason a virtue and dismissing the "morality" of the noble few who had survived the Christian millennium and whose rule had been based on instinct and good breeding, rationalism destroyed not only what custom and tradition had unconsciously created, its leveling impetus led to the hegemony of the plebeian, the ignoble, and the anarchistic—this time not just in the spirit but in society. Given, moreover, that this rabble hegemony opposed "the instinct for growth, for continuance, for accumulation of forces, for power," it favored a globalizing homogeneity hostile to ascending life. All values were consequently made equivalent, and all contradictions, qualities, and orders of rank were dissolved. God's death thereby undermined not merely Christian belief, but the white man's ability to believe in the distinct worth of his people and culture. Nietzsche called this a state of "beingless becoming," for the higher values, as well as God, were hereafter rendered valueless.

In this sense, rationalism's atheistic materialism was no alternative to Christian otherworldliness. This was especially the case since after dismissing the Christian God, it felt "obliged to cling all the more firmly to Christian morality."⁹ For against life's inherent suffering, inequality, and contingency, it took refuge in the secular transformation of Christian hope and salvation into an ideology of progress and social betterment.

This secular illusion failed, however, to arouse the spirit, for it

⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 69.

lacked that signifying quality associated with the sacred – which alone enchants the world.¹⁰

With the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, when rationalism assumed a political form, the most nihilistic of modern ideologies made its appearance in the form of liberalism, whose mission has been to promote individual mediocrity at the highest levels of the state. Armed with the quantifying materialism and utilitarianism of the economic powers, the liberal state (first in America, then in revolutionary France) rejected any idea of aristocracy and any recognition of rank and hierarchy. The heroic individualism Nietzsche thought the spur to the great cultures was, of course, alien to liberalism's atomized individual (though Anglo-American commentators often read him this way).¹¹

Rather, liberal individualism leads to "the last man," who threatens the abolition of all differences and qualities.¹² Exemplifying modernity's democratic and humanist ideals, this last man exalts himself as a comfort-loving, security-seeking creature, whose emptiness is lived out in senseless gratifications. Inevitably, he accelerates the centrifugal forces tearing at the historic communal body responsible for the great endeavors of the European spirit. Worse, he infects the white man's soul, leaving him dispirited before "the world that is coming."

3. THE REDEMPTION OF THE DIVINE

There are several ways to understand the decline of the European race. Nietzsche's concept of nihilism seems especially pertinent in unconcealing the deep structure of white malaise and revealing why whites have been so easily deceived by aliens and opportunists willing

¹⁰ Cf. Julius Evola, "Sur le néo-humanisme," in *Explorations: Hommes et problèmes*, trans. P. Baillet (Puisseaux: Pardès, 1989).

¹¹ The classic example is Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (New York: Vintage, 1950). Though this interpretation has long dominated Anglophone studies, it conflicts with both the older and more recent scholarship. One notable example of the latter tendency is Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, trans. C. F. Atkinson (New York: Knopf, 1926), vol. i, 370, in which the great critic of the "herd" is depicted as a "socialist" (in the Prussian, not Marxist sense) – i.e., he is depicted as the opposite of the individualist – for Nietzsche, Spengler argues, sought not just the elevation of individual man, but that of European culture.

¹² In the popular Hollingdale translation of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), "the last man" (*der letzte Mensch*) is rendered as "the ultimate man."

to exploit liberal principles for their own sake.

His concept also implies an alternative civilizational model. Instead of being simply the “philosopher of the hammer,” whose principal intent was to smash the old idols, he was also part of the *völkisch* tradition of late nineteenth-century conservative German thought, which opposed the grim, nihilistic slave world of industrial modernity.¹³ Against the technoscientific order of the last men, whose nihilism rejects not just all previous ideals, but all prior means of valuation, Nietzsche posits the need for new values to rearm the spirit. His deconstructionist emphasis on the nihilistic side of liberal civilization is not, then, an end in itself (as his postmodern interpreters assume), but prelude to the birth of a new divinity. For God’s death, he saw, offers man the chance to right Christianity’s inversion of values.

Nietzsche’s notion of divinity is admittedly unlike the monotheistic concept, but it nevertheless provides man with the “mythic” values to live a more vital—meaningful—existence. His “transvaluation of all values” thus rejects both Christian transcendence, which situates the higher values in the beyond, and modernity’s materialist metaphysics, which reduces life to self-preservation, material comfort, and the bovine happiness of the herd. Accepting that there is no ultimate ground or purpose to life, that life is its own rationale, that its value cannot be assessed, except in its own terms, Nietzsche seeks the divine in the real world, specifically in life’s ascending force. His “morality” is a morality of life that favors its force, energy, and creative will. The tragic, heroic attitude he admired in the Greeks is here reconceived as a new standard of divinity—a standard that doesn’t turn away from, but seeks to surpass life, as man himself becomes something of a god.

It’s “the will to power”—life’s essence—that most shapes Nietzsche’s sense of this new divinity. The will to power, he posits, has the capacity to overcome both Christian morality and modern nihilism. For the “morality” inherent in its “spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, form-giving forces”—a morality that realizes rather than “reforms” life—is “beyond good and evil,” beyond the slave morality of the one and the last man ethics of the other. Like the Greek gods, who knew “the terror and horror of existence,” but who nevertheless lived it, justifying the life of man, the assertion of this will calls forth the antithesis of the

¹³ Young, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Religion*; also Thomas Rohkrämer, *Eine andere Moderne? Zivilisationskritik, Natur und Technik in Deutschland 1880–1933* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1999).

last man: It calls forth the free spirit, the *Übermensch*, the noble, the higher man, whose values are their own justification.¹⁴ The will to power becomes in this way a means of imposing Being upon Becoming—doing so for the sake of the exceptional individual and his community.

In the will to power Nietzsche sees the possibility of a "religion" of the strong and healthy, a religion that affirms earthly existence and elevates man into something more than man. Opposing the Judeo-Christian, fallen from divinity because of original sin, and modernity's last man, whose frame is the lowest common denominator, Nietzsche advocates an ethic that recognizes life's tragic, often irrational nature, that accepts the innate differences between men, and, at the same time, favors the grandeur of spirit that singles out the superior man and the social orders sustaining and sustained by his superiority. The new divinity he announces is consequently neither universal nor absolute, but oriented to that rare minority whose abundance of will makes it possible, among other things, for a community to overcome the challenges threatening it, becoming in the process something greater than itself.

When he speaks of superior and inferior, it is, it needs emphasizing, in the philosophical or spiritual sense. He has nothing but contempt for the reigning "elites." Their values are no different from the herd—based on materialist accumulation and animal comforts corrosive of the higher life forms. Seeing equality as unjust and anti-natural, Nietzsche appeals to the creation of a new aristocracy, a caste of superior beings (like the rulers of ancient Greece and Rome) who embody a great will to power expressed not just in their superior energy, self-mastery, and high spirit, but in their self-sufficiency and love for their own possibility. Nietzsche's noble caste accordingly feels no need to justify itself, but acts with the confidence that what it does is "right." As he argues in *Beyond Good and Evil*, such an aristocracy "experiences *itself* as determining values; it does not need approval; it judges, 'what is harmful to me is harmful in itself'; it knows itself to be that which first accords honor to things; it is *value-creating*."¹⁵

Only through the creation of this superior type, Nietzsche claims,

¹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), 42–43.

¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1966), 205.

can a people gain a new sense of meaning—a meaning that exalts the essence of its specific life form and favors the living incarnation of its collective will to power. In inventing a new meaning for the earth, his concept of the *Übermensch* creates, in effect, a new god, the god who lies within and needs to be drawn out in the rituals whose appeal is to all that is highest in man. The god-man that grows out of this affirmation and becomes a “creator” is what Taha calls “the god to come from Nietzsche.”

4. PRAXIS

The most important lesson to be drawn from Nietzsche’s religious philosophy, I believe, is the need, in this godless age of ours, to prepare for a “return of the gods.” We can never resuscitate the ancient pagan divinities, nor can we artificially restore the old traditions which venerated them.¹⁶ They are now dead to us. But we can follow Nietzsche in jettisoning the nihilism that bequeaths to the white man the inexorability of his own demise, and we can look to ourselves for whatever remains strongest and most vital in our will to power. To this end, whites—Europeans in general, but especially those identifying with our “racially conscious community”—must acknowledge that the old values and the old gods are implicated in our present predicament and that new values and new gods, positing the primacy of the white man’s will to power, are necessary, if we are to survive as a race and culture.

What does this mean in practice?

First, like Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, we have to accept that we cannot preach the “truth” of the overman to the last man. Because most whites today are more concerned with comfort and security than with the welfare of their race and culture or even the future of their children, and because virtues associated with character and strength no longer have a role to play in their lives, they are not likely to welcome the return of the gods—whose reappearance would lead to the transvaluation of all that presently defines them. Indeed, the painful fact is that not just most whites, but the historic United States is now lost to us. With a hundred million aliens planted on our soil and a political-economic system bent on white extinction, European-Americans committed to their children’s future can only hope, through the eventual

¹⁶ Alain de Benoist, *On Being a Pagan*, trans. John Graham, ed. Greg Johnson (Atlanta: Ultra, 2004).

creation of a white homeland (which will be born in the way all self-asserting nations are born), to secure a small part of the North American territory their ancestors occupied.

The writers associated with TOQ, would do well, therefore, to engage their metapolitics with the conviction that our cause is not about ideas *per se*, but about the formation of a counter-hegemony that will, beyond competing interpretations and rival hermeneutics, meet force with force when the moment of decision strikes.

Like morals, ideas at root are reflections of our instincts, desires, and beliefs. In an age that disparages the worth of white existence, it is, of course, important to publicly articulate the ideas that serve our cause. But what's historically significant is less the ideas themselves than the validation of the life form – the race and people – they represent.

Life, Nietzsche never stops emphasizing, stands higher as a value than "truth" (which, like "fact," is ultimately mere interpretation).¹⁷ Moreover, it is *our* life, that of Americans of European descent, not life in general, that matters to us. "A people," he writes, "perishes if it mistakes its own duty for the concept of duty in general."¹⁸ Indeed, a people begins to decline once it feels the need to justify itself.

Unlike Christian moralists and modern rationalists, our goal is not to make sacrifices to "the Moloch of abstraction" or prove ourselves "right" (especially not in the ruling terms), but rather to promote ideas, morals, actions that uphold our cause in the real world – ideas, morals, actions that help us discover the gods affirming our specific worth as a people, that testify to the ontological illegitimacy of the existing regime, and anticipate a new order supportive of who we are.

To this end, we will need new myths and gods to shape our sense of community, represent our specific will to power, but, above all, to lift our spirit above present contingencies, redeeming our destiny as free men faithful to our ancestors and our descendants. If we fail to identify our race-nation with the divine, we are, and will remain, nothing. Our "no-saying" (our assault on the reigning illusions) must, therefore, be accompanied by a no less insistent "yes-saying" that affirms everything "strong, brave, masterful, and proud" in us. Instead of endlessly disproving the established racial falsehoods (products of

¹⁷ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 11-14.

¹⁸ Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*, 112.

liberalism's decaying theoretical consciousness), we – those Nietzsche calls “the children of the future” – need to devote more energy to the mythic representations of the coming battles in which our cause is certain to triumph – representations which are “mythic” not in the sense of being fanciful or imaginative, but in validating that ethnocommunitarian ethic which presses “the stamp of the eternal” upon our people. This is the way the great social and national movements of the past prepared their victories – it is the way of all re-spiritualization animating a rising people. The mythic projections provoking such risings (projections which Sorel described in specifically Nietzschean terms) are, accordingly, “not descriptions of things, but expressions of a determination to act.”¹⁹ As such, they prepare whites for the redemption that will come in their self-assertion.

Our myths, our truths, our gods are not, then, those of the existing anti-white system, for they speak to our genetic-cultural heritage and to what is most life-enhancing in our future. Above all, they speak the language of a “morality” – a *Herren-Moral* – that holds that everything which harms us as a people is bad and everything which promotes the founding of an independent white homeland and an ennobling future for white children is good. In affirming our people's ownmost sense of good and bad in this way, we simultaneously assert its collective will to power, anticipating, in this dying world, the spiritual birth of a new European America.²⁰

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¹⁹ Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, trans. T. E. Hume and J. Roth (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1950), 57.

²⁰ One extraordinary mythic anticipation of a “free and sovereign white nation” is H. A. Covington's Northwest Quartet: *Hill of the Ravens* (Bloomington, Ind.: 1stBooks, 2003), *A Distant Thunder* (Bloomington, Ind.: Authorhouse, 2004), *A Mighty Fortress* (Bloomington, Ind.: Authorhouse, 2005), and *The Brigade* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2007).