Nietzsche is often typified as being entirely opposed to Christianity, of always advocating a position contrary to that of the Christian faith. However, Frank Scalabrino’s *Full Throttle Heart: Nietzsche, Beyond Either/Or* poses a significant challenge to that reading, pointing to a deep connection between Nietzsche and Christianity. This book, despite its thorough involvement with Nietzsche’s texts and thus scholarly appeal, is also open to a more general audience by its engaging style and clear explanations.

*Full Throttle Heart*’s broad audience is shown by its use of epigrams; Scalabrino frames the book with “On the night He was betrayed…He gave thanks” set alongside “all in all and on the whole: I wish to be only a Yes-sayer!” (vi). By starting with these quotes, Scalabrino reveals that he sees a love of life itself that is present in both Christianity and Nietzsche, which is fundamentally what he tries to demonstrate. This is to have “a heart for life” that will have “developed our human existence toward a spiritual *telos*” (8). The heart, the affective center of the self, is a regulative idea in that all experience flows through it and is conditioned by it (4). Experience is charged with a felt, emotional dimension, such that “the heart is the practical ground for the intellect.” Even the mind itself is influenced by the heart, since what is thought is thought as the result of love and affects. This passionate characteristic reveals that “the human sensorium in its immediacy to nature floods the heart” (15). The natural world experienced in sensation overwhelms the self, which feels the fullness of the world, leading to a bursting-forth of emotion. The human person plunges into an abyss, “the eternal abundance encountered as chaotic overflowing” (47). Rather than chiefly consisting in the matter that is observed by the senses, nature is an intensive magnitude that is felt by the heart (61).

Scalabrino also relates the Resurrection to Nietzsche, pointing out that “to deny the ‘death of God’ is to not be able to affirm the saving work of the Resurrection” (29). Rather than reacting against Nietzsche’s proclaimed death of God, *Full Throttle Heart* suggests that Christianity, with Nietzsche, must affirm that God is dead; for then it could never speak of a resurrection. There is no Resurrection without the Crucifixion. Tying this theme back into the heart, Scalabrino says one should not “immediately judge the phrase the ‘death of God,’” but instead “consider the heart from which it is being spoken” (30). The question being raised here is whether the heart has the courage to affirm the death of God, which it must do to look toward the Resurrection. The Resurrection, as a return to life, can only be affirmed by a “heart overflowing with gratitude…[for] the new life” (36). The Resurrection corresponds to Nietzsche’s Eternal Return, since both spring from the eternal fountain of vital chaos, the spiritual ground of life (73, 83). This chaos flows through the heart, eternally bringing individuated hearts into being along with the world that the heart experiences; existence itself as a whole is conditioned by the heart. There is “a mysterious depth to the human experience of Nature, and that depth…is Spirit in Nature” (83). For Scalabrino, this Spirit is the Holy Spirit, which emerges into nature, such that the latter is the painting of Spirit, the mask of Spirit (60, 65). All that is, emerges from Spirit through Nature into the human heart, the core of the soul of the self. The experienced world is generated by Spirit in its
interaction with the person (61). The individual herself, though, only exists insofar as Spirit has become in her (74). Since the self depends on Spirit, then the perfection, the completion of the heart “culminates in the Yes and Amen directed at the work of the Holy Spirit and the life it has given us. Amor Fati” (92). The Christian, like Nietzsche, affirms life and all that it contains, both for good and for ill, since life is given to the person who is herself not responsible for that life. The heart is thrown into a world in which it is to fully love necessity and fate themselves, Nietzsche’s Amor Fati.

Scalambrino sets forth well a joint Nietzschean-Christian metaphysic, without becoming lost in logical claims, which is perhaps not surprising given his emphasis on the heart. By heeding the affective, felt dimension of life, Full Throttle Heart is able to establish a metaphysic within the boundaries set down by the Critique of Pure Reason. This task therefore in a way completes the critical project, by working out the heart as a regulative ideal, which Kant himself never did. The only possible metaphysic in the present day is one that feels its way about, rather than reasoning. Since Christianity is of the heart, as is Nietzsche’s philosophy, there is thus a unique space in which Scalambrino operates, where both Christianity and Nietzsche complement one another as they let the fullness of life speak through them. Perhaps the primary shortcoming of Full Throttle Heart, though it contains numerous references to the history of philosophy, incorporating valuable insights from previous thinkers, is its failure to engage with Augustine. There are multiple places where time spent with Confessions would have added greater depth to the work, if only because Augustine alongside Nietzsche is arguably the most heartfelt and erotic philosopher. However, Full Throttle Heart does get along without Augustine, which perhaps testifies to Scalambrino’s ability to let the full throttle heart and its Yes-saying speak in his work. With Nietzschean critique, Scalambrino brings Christian thought, which can become lost in dogmatic, rational concepts, back to its vital roots.

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